



# Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

## AGM – Minutes

**Date:** 14/12/2020

**Time:** 17:00

**Venue:** Zoom

**Interpreters:** Christian Leyland, Louise Beck

**Present:** David Melling, Gill Behenna, Claire Wickham, Alasdair Grant

**Minute Taker:** Daisy Williams (Minutes), Karen Pritchard (Captioning)

**Apologies:** N/A

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Apologies received from David Jackson (trustee).

1.2 The CfD AGM is late due to problems with our accountants which meant that the accounts were late in being approved. This AGM should have taken place in June 2020 but due to COVID-19 the trustees did not want to do an online AGM, but the trustees agreed that the AGM couldn't wait any longer and it would have to be done online. This AGM is looking at the year 2018-2019.

1.3 CfD do not currently have any members because when CfD switched from the old charity to the new charity the members were for only 1 year. As CfD do not have any members with the agreement of the trustees anyone who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing will be able to vote. If anyone is hearing you cannot be a member and do not have any voting right.

Question: There are hearing trustees, how does that work? Gill Behenna explained that trustees are not members and you do not need to be a member to be a trustee. Only certain decisions can be made by members and part of the constitution is that over 50% of the trustees must be Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

### 2. Approval of Minutes 2019

2.1 Members were happy to take the trustees recommendation that the 2018 AGM minutes were acceptable.

### 3. Chair's Report – Claire Wickham

3.1 Claire Wickham confirmed that the Chair's report covered 2018-2019 and the new charity started 04/12/2017.

### 3.2 Vision as new charity:

- A world where hearing loss doesn't mean you are isolated
- A world where Deaf and Hearing communities are integrated into one society where everybody is equal
- A Bristol and South Gloucestershire where communication is no longer a barrier for people who use BSL or have acquired hearing loss so everyone can be part of one community

### 3.3 What CfD did during 2018-2019:

- Expanded our Equipment Service
- Provided support and equipment to local organisations to improve access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People
- Refurbished the resource room at The Vassalls Centre
- Developed Deaf equality training to public and private sectors
- Continued to develop new partnerships – in particular: The Care Forum, Link Age and Bristol Ageing Better
- Brought in new funding for new projects such as the Smart Meter Project
- Strengthened the voice of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community
- Started Coffee Morning which have been successful and have run through COVID-19
- Continued to represent Deaf and Hard of Hearing People at conferences, workshops, and network meetings.
- Became a member of the Deaf Health Partnership board.

3.4 CfD need more Deaf and Hard of Hearing trustees to help with the work we are doing. It is a very rewarding role and makes a difference to help improve lives. If you are interested in becoming a trustee, please contact David Melling who can give you more information.

## 4. Review of the Year – David Melling

4.1 David Melling explained that during lockdown he noticed that Deaf and Hard of Hearing People were not able to access things such as the government's announcement and this was an issue both nationally and locally. David Melling has spent a lot of time working with a lot of different people to improve access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People and the gap has got bigger since COVID-19 and it needs to be pulled back in again.

4.2 Nearly 5 years ago a 5-year business plan was created with input from the trustees and feedback from member of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community with the following points:

- CfD to be a single point of access for all
- Improve emotional wellbeing and mental health access and services
- Improve employment and work for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People
- Campaigning and more awareness in the local community
- Modernise the equipment service
- Develop awareness training and further development of projects
- Networking, influencing and partnerships with other organisations
- Improve fundraising

CfD have worked with a lot of organisations both private and other charities to raise awareness of Deaf and Hard of Hearing People in the Bristol area and to create new projects.

4.3 As we approach 2021 CfD are aware of the challenges that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities are facing and particularly the communication gap. Our aim is to make Bristol City Centre the leader in access and providing communication for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People. Both locally and nationally there is a lack of access and improvements need to be made. I would love to hear your ideas on how we can improve communication on both a local and national scale and over the next few months we will be hosting a series of workshops where we can gather your ideas. Invites to these workshops will be sent out in the new year.

4.4 2020 has been difficult for CfD as an organisation and for us all personally. I am proud of the team and trustees at CfD who have kept the equipment service running and have secured funding for at least 3 new projects.

4.5 Lorna: I understand the aims but when I talk about access, I'm talking about Deaf people whose first language is BSL. A lot of people don't have access to Zoom and it's important that they know how to access this information, how to access the AGM and who is responsible for getting them involved. I know it's hard because of COVID-19 but there has been too much silence and not enough information for the Deaf community. How is the Deaf friendly city going to be achieved? Deaf people don't have a place, we talk about being mainstream, but we are a long way from achieving it. I know more people are aware and that is thanks to people getting the awareness out there. I didn't know about the Coffee Morning on Zoom so there will be other people who do not know this either. The Deaf centre has been closed for 7 years which is a long time. It's not easy to integrate Deaf and Hard of Hearing People. Most people are talking on here today and it's disheartening as I don't feel there is a connection for the Deaf community, and I don't feel we are in the mainstream or integrated. It's a big challenge but I think David Melling needs to get in with the Deaf community.

Gill Behenna: I agree and it's important to raise the issue, I think the question is how we can disseminate the information. The Deaf community have their own ability to disseminate the information and often they know the information before it has got out officially. What I saw through COVID-19 with the government not having interpreters was that Deaf people were getting the information and disseminating it themselves but somehow, we need to get Deaf people to pass the information onto Deaf people who are isolated. A lot of people can't use Zoom and we have shown that we can communicate through the window.

Adrian: Lorna what you have said is important and needs to be raised. It's not just the Deaf community who need reminding it's all of us. Deaf people have different choices based on their primary language. If there is this gap the community have become quiet and hearing people think the Deaf community are fine, we need to roll up our sleeves and bridge the gap. Lynn in South Gloucestershire run the campaign "Where is the Interpreter?" with a lot of success. We are talking about different language communities, it's not only about access, it's about culture, language, history, heritage etc. It will be interesting to see what happens in the next 5 years.

David Melling: Spoken English is my first language and I'm more confident in speaking than signing. I have been attending a lot of meetings during the lockdown with Bristol City Council and every meeting I have had 2 BSL interpreters there, not just to help me but as a visual clue as to how important it is for the Deaf community. I have spoken about the lack of protection of Deaf culture in the Bristol area and the importance of keeping it and nurturing

it. I have spoken to Marvin Rees and Councillor Asha and off the back of me pushing for more access Bristol City Council are currently creating an accessible communication policy which will improve communication access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People, when it will be released, I don't know but there are things happening. In relation to information that only way to get information out there currently is digitally and we hope that people will share this with people who do not have access to social media.

4.6 Lee Elliott: How do CfD see the one city plan working?

David Melling advised that CfD are aware of the one city plan but due to lockdown the one city plan has been adjusted and is currently on hold. CfD will be part of the one city plan and will spread awareness of accessibility.

4.7 Glenis Hampshire: I know information is getting out there and I am involved in the 50 Plus group and I still have strong connections with the Deaf community and people are saying they are okay. We are texting each other and it is up to them to say what they want, and it is up to them to disseminate the information. I think what is important is that we keep the connections out there with the Deaf community. I know it's difficult as CfD are in the wrong place and the Deaf club has gone. David Melling did a speech at the 50 Plus group and asked people to be members, but people are still saying that they don't have a connection. I do think that we know about some equipment but it's not enough. Some of the equipment is breaking down but some is quite useful. I see a lot of information coming out but a lot of it is for Hard of Hearing People and doesn't suit Deaf people. Deaf equipment would be useful such as Minicoms and telephone. My husband can't use a phone so we use a Minicom and Relay UK and we waited a long period of time for that to be set up, but it is really helpful. I understand that there is a gap between different communities, but we do have to be patient and I do agree that we must connect with different communities.

Gill Behenna: We will look at your points.

## **5. Treasurers Report – Alasdair Grant**

5.1 Alasdair Grant explained that the account was for year ending 2019. Due to the work staff and trustees did at CfD there was an increased value to the charity, diverse income, and more efficient running. CfD used a freelance fundraiser to help increase funding to the charity from a wide range of sources which has helped to run projects such as the Coffee Morning. A lot of work went into creating a robust financial system and ensuring that it was transparent.

5.2 Majority of income came from Bristol City Council and most of the expenses were for staff costs who provide the equipment service and different projects.

5.3 Current Financial Situation: Increase in surplus of £20,000 and increased reserves. Last year CfD received a large legacy and an increase in donation income. CfD are currently in the process of recruiting a Project Coordinator to deliver projects for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Equipment Service has been the focus of expenditure to increase the quality of the service provided. The equipment service came up for tender with Bristol City Council which CfD won against other competitors. This success has given us the opportunity to open an online shop in partnership with Sarabec which brings in more income for the charity. CfD were successful in winning National Lottery funding, which is being used for an Employment Project, the benefit of the employment project is that it creates an opportunity for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community to develop skills in a difficult marketplace.

5.4 CfD are in a healthy financial position for the future. Fundraising still needs to be done for the long-term success of the charity.

5.5 I would like to thank the trustees and staff at CfD for the turnaround in the charity accounts and the work that they have put in.

5.6 All slides will be emailed out to all attendees of the AGM.

## **6 Appointment of Auditors**

6.1 CfD felt that it was necessary to change the accountants and auditors used due to dissatisfaction with the old accountants. The new accountants proposed are GW Jones who are based in Shirehampton and CfD are satisfied with the quote and the work that they will undertake for us. CfD would like your agreement that we will use them instead of our old accountants.

6.2 All members agreed for CfD to change accountants to GW Jones.

## **7 Election of Members of Board of Trustees (if any)**

7.1 If you have any questions please email them to David Melling who will pass them onto the trustees. I really hope that our next AGM will be in person. Thank you all for coming.

7.2 Adrian: What the cut off for the 2019-2020 AGM? I don't want the next AGM to be extended.

Gill Behenna: We will discuss this and let you know. We are becoming on track again and have our draft accounts ready. In line with our constitution our AGM must be within 15 months of our accounts which is why this AGM was so late, but the Charity Commission have been very flexible due to COVID-19.

**Meeting closed.**