



## **Annual General Meeting 2020**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Huntington's Disease Association held via Zoom on Wednesday 18 November 2020. The meeting was conducted virtually due to COVID-19 social distancing measures in place that prevented in-person meetings.

### **1. Welcome from the chair of the Association, Mr Andrew Bickerdike**

Andrew thanked all for attending the virtual AGM and explained the decision to hold it virtually to make it as safe as possible for everyone.

Andrew informed that this would be his last AGM before stepping down as both Chair of the board of trustees and as a trustee of the Huntington's Disease Association. Andrew informed that it had been an honour of a lifetime to be involved with the charity and during his terms of office he had witnessed many notable advancements, including the establishment of a new strategy, the launch of a care home accreditation scheme, the creation of new roles to help more people and the charity working in a coalition with other charities to help influence policy and support research into Huntington's disease. All which had been achieved, Andrew informed, during some very challenging times, including a global pandemic.

Andrew highlighted that families affected by Huntington's disease are now having to cope with COVID-19, shielding and visiting restrictions in addition to coping with the day-to-day challenges of living with Huntington's disease and he acknowledged that it has been an incredibly difficult time for many. Andrew informed that COVID-19 has also significantly affected charity fundraising across the sector with many planned fundraising events and activities stopped almost overnight. This has presented some very challenging months as fundraising is vital for the work of the charity to continue and the pandemic has meant there has been a greater need than ever for the charity and its support.

Andrew informed that thanks to decisions made in previous years to maintain reserves, the decision to furlough a percentage of the team, the hard work of the staff team and incredible support from the Huntington's community has put the charity in a stronger position.

### **2. An overview of the charity in 2019/20**

Cath Stanley, Chief Executive of the Huntington's Disease Association, provided members with an update of the work and impact of the charity over the last year.

Cath thanked the Huntington's Disease Association staff team for their hard work throughout the year. Cath informed that the support that the charity has been able to provide to families affected by Huntington's disease and the great strides made in raising awareness of this little-known disease has only been possible due to the support of the Huntington's community. On behalf of the charity, Cath expressed thanks for the Huntington's community's support and dedication.

### 3. Formal opening of the business meeting

Andrew thanked Cath for the comprehensive update of the last year and moved forward to formally open the business meeting.

### 4. Minutes

Voting members were advised that a copy of the minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting had been made available on the charity's website.

A proposal that the minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting are accepted as an accurate record of proceedings was presented in a poll for those present to vote.

**Proposed by** Andrew Bickerdike

**Seconded by** Nick Heath

The minutes were accepted.

### 5. Treasurer's report

Nick Heath presented the Accounts for year ending March 2020. It was confirmed that copies of the Summary Accounts were available on the charity website and in hard copy on request to the Huntington's Disease Association. Nick highlighted that they will shortly be uploaded on company's house and charity commission.

With regard to income, NH confirmed it was slightly lower than expected as the legacies the charity was notified about were lower than expected. With regards to expenditure, Nick confirmed that it was very close to the budget.

Nick explained the expenditure and budgeting process, informing that the charity sets a rigorous budget which is sent to budget holders for review and discussion about anticipated spending in the year ahead and then it is signed off by the board of trustees. The charity's Finance and Audit Committee monitors income and expenditure against the budget throughout the year and reports their observations and recommendations to the board of trustees. Nick expressed his thanks to all involved in the work and assessment of activities and in keeping within the budget. Nick informed that the Finance and Audit Committee has been more involved in recent years which has been a great support to him as Treasurer.

After taking into account the final investment value, Nick informed that the year-end accounts showed a surplus of £61,000. Nick highlighted that he is pleased to inform that the charity's investments are back up to pre-COVID levels which provides a good amount to fall back on if needed.

Nick highlighted that the overall balance showed improvement from 1.27 million to 1.89 million. Nick informed that £750,000, which is approximately six months of running costs and the charity's reserve target in line with Charity Commission guidance, would be kept in reserves and that some funds would be designated for future projects.

Nick explained that at 31 March 2020, the charity already had reserves in place and when the pandemic emerged it was expected that income would drop significantly and that the reserves would need to be utilised, however funds continued to come in from

community activities and COVID-19 relief grants, and it is only now that income has begun to drop. Nick informed that he anticipates break even position at year end 2021 to account for the expected drop in income over the coming months.

Nick expressed his thanks to the charity's fundraising team, for work to maintain income in the face of such adversity with the challenges that have emerged due to the pandemic and the limited resources within the team.

Nick provided voting members with the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the accounts. No questions were posed.

A resolution for the accounts for the financial year to be accepted was presented.

**Proposed by** Nick Heath

**Seconded by** Andrew Bickerdike

Due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, voting members were given the opportunity to vote on the resolution prior to the meeting, appointing the Chair as their proxy. A collation of the votes revealed a majority in favour and the resolution was carried.

## 6. Election of the Executive Council

Andrew provided an explanation of the role of a trustee of the charity's Executive Council and the trustee election process. Andrew explained that the trustees are all volunteers, serve a term of three years and are accountable to various independent boards including the Fundraising Regulator and the Charity Commission.

Andrew informed that three existing trustees Sian Barker, Matthew Ellison and Cathy Lyon were standing for re-election as their terms of office had come to an end. Andrew highlighted that there were two new proposed trustees also standing for election, Bridget Waters and Nayana Lahiri.

A resolution for all proposed trustees to be accepted onto the board of trustees was presented.

**Proposed by** Andrew Bickerdike

**Seconded by** Nicholas Heath

Due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, voting members were given the opportunity to vote on the resolution prior to the meeting, appointing the Chair as their proxy. A collation of the votes revealed a majority in favour and the resolution was carried.

## 7. Appointment of auditors

A resolution for DSG Chartered Accountants to be appointed as Auditors was presented.

**Proposed by** Andrew Bickerdike

**Seconded by** Nicholas Heath

Due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, voting members were given the opportunity to vote on the resolution prior to the meeting, appointing the Chair as their proxy. A collation of the votes revealed a majority in favour and the resolution was carried.

## 8. Conclusion

Andrew closed the meeting and informed it had been an honour of a lifetime to be trustee. He expressed his thanks to all staff at the charity who go above and beyond and to whom their work is much more than a job. Andrew thanked his fellow trustees for their support over the years and their dedication to the charity. Lastly, Andrew expressed his thanks to those that had dialled into the meeting and those that use and support the charity, highlighting that the charity exists for them and continues because of them and informed that he is hugely grateful to be part of the community.

On behalf of the trustees and members, Nick Heath expressed his thanks to Andrew and informed that Andrew's first meeting as Chair was on 5 December 2014, following formal election to the post and he took on the role from Heather Thomas, who was an extremely hard act to follow. Nick informed that Andrew's application of fundraising, admin and organisational experience has been fantastic and that the charity has developed in so many ways over the last five years thanks to his guidance. Nick highlighted that the charity has faced difficult decisions over the years that needed to be evaluated and properly discussed with the wishes of members, charity requirements and the best interests of staff and community we support taken into account which was all overseen by Andrew as Chair. Nick informed that Andrew brought calmness and clarity of thought to these decisions which members and trustees have appreciated. On behalf of the members, trustees and staff team, Nick thanked Andrew for his work, support and guidance over the years that have helped put the charity in a strong position to be able to deal with whatever happens over the next years.

**This concluded the business meeting.**