



The Care Forum Annual General Meeting  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2020

Virtual Attendance via Zoom Video Conference

**1. Peter Clasby, BNSSG Portfolio Manager at The Care Forum (TCF) welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained how the meeting and voting would work.**

**Apologies**  
(none)

**2. David Cottam, Chair of the trustees for The Care Forum asked for the approval of the minutes of the AGM held 18th September, 2019 and matters arising**

The acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Steve Barnes and accepted by voting members.

There were no matters arising.

**3. Chair of Trustees Report from David Cottam**

Just for clarity my report, verbal report, this afternoon is slightly different from my chair's letter which is included in the annual report, which you will have a copy in due course, but wanted to take the opportunity to make it fuller and more interesting rather than a straight forward letter, so may be a slight difference in emphasis to the formal letter.

Since last year's AGM much has change. For me it has meant taking on and getting to grips with the role of being Chair of the Trustees. It has been an enjoyable and rewarding experience and one that has hopefully provided continuity for the organisation during continued change. The one thing that has been apparent that in our sector is that if something is not changing then it feels unusual.

The Care Forum has successfully adapted to all changes to date and continued to operate in this environment of uncertainty. Whether this is partly due to Darwin's theory of Natural Selection, a Del Boy aptitude for spotting opportunities and doing the appropriate ducking and diving, or a combination of the two I will leave for you to decide. Adaptability is the name of the game and from my experience as a trustee

The Care Forum has always shown itself to be an organisation well equipped to adapt in order to remain relevant.

To say that 2020 has been an unusual year for The Care Forum would be something of an understatement. This time last year words like... firebreak, moonshot, circuit breaker, the R number would have meant very different things, if anything at all, with lockdown topping the list in our new vocabulary.

As I have already said in my letter, this past year has been about losses and achievements. Achievements include planning for and delivering a successful restructuring, very effective financial management and control, successful bidding for grants, continuing with our positive influencing across the sector and perhaps most importantly maintaining effective working and delivery of services whilst working from home. It is also testament to the commitment and dedication of managers to maintain close contact and support with colleagues and to hopefully minimise the impact of lone working.

The Care Forum has always felt like a family, with strong social, as well as cultural norms that make it a great place to work in and a great organisation to work for. I am sure that even our small but perfectly formed group of colleagues in Swindon also miss the social interaction of the workplace. I certainly miss the buzz and vibe of coming into the office ....and certainly miss the array of cakes and goodies that seemed to be in good supply.

We were sad to see Morgan leave after 7 years of loyal service to TCF and were grateful for his sound leadership in the role of CEO. Fortunately, we had an excellent sub waiting on the bench and the Board were delighted to appoint Kevin the post of interim CEO, and in such a short period of time has proven to be the right person for the role.

As highlighted in my letter The Care Forum also experienced some losses, not all staff wished to or were able to secure posts in the new structure and those personalities and their contribution are missed.

Likewise, four of our trustees did not feel able to continue to commit time and energy to the role of trustee, and sadly, shortly after resigning Therese Gillespie passed away. She was a great contributor and larger than life character who gave so much and helped The Care Forum achieve many things. So, a lean and keen team of 5 trustees continue to oversee the work of the charity and I am grateful for their input and support.

So, with a successful restructuring in place and things just starting to bed down Covid arrived and like the rest of the country TCF has had to adjust and get used to a new way of working.

Following restructure, we re-established discussions with Voscur about a possible merger and particularly over the past two months have put in a great deal of work to explore the technicalities around what this would mean for both organisations. The Board is due to consider various reports and is scheduled to make a decision by the end of this year. This Board decision would then be put to our members for formal approval early in the new year.

It is possible that this could be the last AGM for The Care Forum but should both Boards decide that a merger is in best interests of both organisations then rest assured the culture, commitment, influence and desire to be the best and achieve the best for the citizens and communities that we seek to serve and hopefully represent, will continue. TCF is a well-respected and well thought of organisation and what we offer and bring to the table is valued and appreciated by Voscur.

#### **4. Review of the Year by Kevin Peltonen-Messenger, Interim CEO at The Care Forum.**

I find dealing most of my life through Zoom an odd situation. And an AGM or EGM is probably the strangest thing I have ever seen, so I won't thank-you for coming again, but good to see that you are passionate about the cause to show up today, I am sure you are Zoomed out, so promise not to keep you long throughout my preamble of this eventful year. The statement is different to this amble, but I hope it highlights important points and gives you a flavour of how we have coped and managed this year.

Firstly, much like in my letter, I thank the volunteers and staff for their commitment to The Care Forum, we couldn't do it without you. The first few months of working through lock-down, meant us facing an environment where we are working from home and being at home without sacrificing our mental health and well-being. So, each and every member of staff made that transition as easy as possible. Whilst we don't have the perfect blend, we are working through that process.

Much like David acknowledged, Morgan's service to The Care Forum was great and his insight to the sector brought so much to us, a special thank-you to the volunteers and staff who have left this year, some have gone to be creative or academic endeavours, one special thing is that it is a wonderful place to make connections so we wish everyone well.

Last year's AGM minutes, looking back, we obviously couldn't have envisaged Covid-19. Whilst we see progression with vaccines and support networks, the end looks uncertain and this is a theme and made the past year volatile for charities, and we haven't been shielded from that.

We are trying to add value, our Healthwatch decisions, partnership management, research and insight, that uncertainty hasn't stopped us being true to our cause. And

as we look at the future, our values remain at the heart, reflective, courageous, honest and influential, our communities have needed us to influence and empower. I couldn't be prouder of the work, and vision setting that everyone involved with The Care Forum has produced through those challenges.

But there are things that we haven't lost sight of amongst the developments, not the climate emergency and our pledge to make the world a better place and standing in solidarity against people who are oppressed and discriminated against, they are core. Our work has been effective and thoughtful and compassionate, through reports, that have informed funding streams and dedicated hours of training and producing safe visiting standards, or being there to support colleagues when things are tough.

We have developed, expert citizen volunteers, who are dedicated volunteers - they inform funding opportunities with City funds, and we have put ourselves in a position of vulnerability and accept change and all that comes with us. I am lucky to be part of this team, their willingness to be a positive influence has helped to shape the world around us. Looking back is helpful, but I see us building a platform for the world to come, we are more robust about homeworking and redefining how we can support the changing systems, through partnership management, connection with communities and sharing compassion through the work we deliver. I promised you I wouldn't keep you long, but there is a quote I think sums up the year for me, reminded of it in many meetings, "it is not the destination, it is the journey", so I want to thank everyone who has been with us on this journey, I hope when you receive our annual review, you will see about the impact we have had.

## **5. Treasurer's Report and Appointment of Auditors by Robin Butcher**

From April 2019 to March 2020 income was £1,133,324, a reduction of £373,818 on the previous year. This was unfortunately due to the loss of the AVoice contract. However, expenditure was also reduced to £1,072,946, down by £336,351 on 2019. A reduction on both sides of approximately 25%.

Charity policy is to keep 3-6 months operating costs in reserves to ensure a sound financial plan to sustain its charitable work and protect from insolvency. The target for reserves at The Care Forum is between £349,000 and £697,000.

Unrestricted reserves at year end were £498,054, covering 4.29 months.

- 70% of expenditure is staff costs
- 14% goes straight out to partner services
- 5% on rent, IM&T and professional fees
- 90% is direct costs
- 10% is management/ admin costs.

Auditors Bishop Flemming were proposed by Robin Butcher and accepted by 8 members.

The financial report was proposed by David Cottam and accepted by voting members.

## **6. Election of Members of the Board of Trustees**

David Cottam announced that Angela Roberts and Jenny Allen have elected to resign and would like to immediately re-stand for re-election.

Votes for election of Trustees:  
Angela Rogers: Agreed 6 votes  
Jenny Allen: Agreed 7 votes

## **7. Peter Clasby and David Cottam Closed the Meeting.**

2021 AGM provisional date is Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December