

Guillain-Barré Syndrome Support Group

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18th April 2009 at the Hilton Hotel, Leicester.

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman, Andy Leitch, welcomed all members to the AGM and also expressed apologies to non-members. He pointed out that next year it was proposed to move the AGM to the first item in the afternoon so that only those who wished to attend could, and others could enjoy a longer lunch.

The Chairman continued that although it was the members' opportunity to make an input into the direction of the Charity, constitutionally, only business which was on the agenda could be addressed. There had been no requests from the membership for any items of other business. Questions could be addressed re the Annual Report and Accounts for 2008 even though they had been pre-distributed and would be taken as read. He also explained that constitutionally voting had to be done by show of hands and this year, the use would be made of voting cards: green for 'Yes' and red for 'No' when a vote was called.

The Chairman expressed immense thanks to the Management Team (Trustee Jamie Babington Smith and staff Caroline Morrice and Angela Tarren) for the enormous amount of hard work they had done over the year.

He then went on to introduce the other Trustees:

- The Secretary, Helen Howell. Helen had indicated her wish to retire as Secretary but remain as a Trustee. Therefore, she would remain in the post until a new Secretary could be co-opted on to the NEC. The Chairman asked if any members or non-members would be interested to please make themselves known to him.
- The Treasurer, David Wada. David had joined the NEC last year.
- The Vice Chairman, Laurance Wilson.
- William Harmer, a local contact from Gloucestershire who joined the NEC last year
- Maureen Foster who was thanked for helping in the organization of the Conference. Maureen had to retire by rotation at this meeting and she was seeking re-election.

- Imogen Bertin, from County Cork. Imogen had been co-opted on to the NEC this year and was seeking re-election.

The Chairman explained he also had to retire by rotation at this meeting but had been nominated for re-election.

Others who did vital jobs within the Charity were also introduced:

- The President, Glennys Sanders, who had founded the Charity 24 years ago.
- Maureen Brown, Assistant Treasurer.
- Deb Anderson who edited the newsletters and journal.

Unfortunately he had to advise the meeting that the Chairman of the MAB Professor Richard Hughes was unable to attend.

2. Apologies for Absence:

The Secretary read out the following apologies:

- Mr and Mrs Bennett
- Janet Wild
- Mr and Mrs Cruise
- Mr and Mrs Price
- Mr and Mrs Allerton
- Dr and Mrs Owen
- Mary Hewitt
- Mrs I Eton
- Andrew Edsor
- Mr and Mrs Hudson
- Mr and Mrs Sturmeay
- Sandra Maggs
- Milli Stein
- Maureen Sayers
- Elizabeth Rooney
- Gordon Peebles
- Mr and Mrs Williams
- Professor Hughes.

3. The Receipt and Adoption of the Examined Accounts for 2008

The Treasurer outlined the Annual Accounts as presented to attendees in the combined Annual Report and Accounts Booklet. He asked for any questions. None were raised. He passed on a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

It was proposed by Janet Cuff and seconded by Howard Sanders that the Examined Accounts for 2008 be adopted.

The proposal was carried unanimously.

4. The Receipt and Adoption of the Trustees Annual Report for 2008

The Chairman intimated that as all had had the opportunity to read the report in advance and because an outline of the Charity's activities had already been given he did not intend to paraphrase it. He asked for any questions. No questions were raised.

It was proposed by Michael Tighe and seconded by Colleen Comber that the Annual Report for 2008 be adopted

The proposal was carried unanimously.

5. Election of Chairman

Laurance Wilson, Vice-chairman, took the chair

The Vice-chairman advised that the only nominee was Andy Leitch, who only intended to stand for another year. He asked for the proposal that the AGM elects Andy Leitch as Chairman.

It was proposed by Gerry Hunt and seconded by Sue-Ide Smith that Andy Leitch be elected as Chairman.

The proposal was carried unanimously.

The Vice-chairman then thanked Andy for his immense dedication and contribution to the NEC.

The Chairman took back the chair and passed on his thanks to Laurance

6. Determination of the number of Elected Members to be elected to the National Executive Committee (NEC), consideration of any recommendations from the NEC as to eligibility for election, and election of Elected Members

The Chairman explained that two members of the NEC had to retire by rotation this year ie himself and Maureen Foster. Additionally, Imogen Bertin had been co-opted onto the NEC this year and had to retire at this AGM. Since Maureen and Imogen were standing as Elected Members, if both were elected, this would bring the number of elected members up to five. As the actual number of elected members was to be between three and six – this was a number which the AGM must decide – he advised the membership that he would accept a single proposal that the total number of elected members be five, thus creating two vacancies, and that the AGM elect Maureen Foster and Imogen Bertin as Elected Members.

It was proposed by Howard Sanders and Seconded by Jill Wilson that the number of Elected Members be five and that both Maureen Foster and Imogen Bertin be elected as Elected Members

The Chairman asked if there were any counter proposals. There were no counter proposals. The proposal was carried unanimously.

The Chairman congratulated Maureen Foster and Imogen Bertin.

7. Appointment of the Independent Examiner

The Chairman stated that the proposal was that Clayton Brewill be appointed as the Independent Examiner.

It was proposed by Janet Cuff and seconded by Michael Tighe that Clayton Brewill be appointed as Independent Examiner

The proposal was carried unanimously.

8. Confirmation of a decision by the NEC to change subscription rates.

The Chairman outlined the changes:

- “FRIENDS” were those who received support FROM the Charity;
- “MEMBERS” were those who wish to give their support TO the Charity.
- The single concessionary rate was being raised to £10.
- The single non-concessionary rate would be double the concessionary rate.

- Joint membership will be an additional 50% on single memberships.

Therefore, the annual new subscription rates for members commencing 1 January 2010 would vary between £10 and £30.

These subscription rates were for legal (voting) members of the Charity. Those entitled to our charitable services could choose to remain as Friends and would not need to pay a subscription but could not vote. Being a friend meant that anyone entitled could be supported by Charity without charge.

Voluntary donations had always been welcomed and the Chairman thanked everyone who had helped raise significant additional funds by their generosity. He then asked if there were any questions on this matter. There were none.

It was proposed by David Clemas and seconded by Chris Wren that the AGM confirms the decision of the NEC to (a) raise the concessionary single annual subscription to £10 (b) set the non-concessionary rates as double the concessionary rates; and (c) set the joint rates at 150% of the single rates; the changes to take effect from 1st January 2010.

The proposal was carried unanimously.

This concluded the AGM and the Chairman closed by stating these were exciting times in the development of the Charity and appealed for those who would like to get involved in the group activity to make themselves known. Anyone wishing to become a volunteer for charitable activity or fundraising should see a member of the management team. Those who might be interested in governance and might be interested in becoming a trustee were invited to inform a member of the NEC.

The Chairman formally closed the meeting at 11.15 am, thanked everyone for attending and wished all a good day.

Helen Howell

Secretary GBSSG