

Minutes of the VSSN Annual General Meeting 2018

22nd November 2018, The Bond Company, Birmingham

VSSN members present: Nick Acheson, Mike Aiken, Nadia Bashir, Jon Dean, Angela Ellis Paine, Carol Hebden, Mike Hemmings, Rob Macmillan, Lindsey Metcalf, Linda Milbourne, Ursula Murray, Amy Sanders, Vita Terry, Katie Turner, Mike Woolvin

Non-members present: Asif Afridi, Kim Aumann, Liz Bailey, Mohammed Dhalech, Jan Etienne, Lucy Mayblin, James McEvoy, Alice Mpofu-Coles, Palmela Witter, Phil Ware, Abi Woodward

In attendance: Beth Longstaff (VSSN Executive Officer)

Apologies: Alison Body, Carolyn Cordery, Jane Cullingworth, Chris Dayson, Sado Jirde, Lucy Mort, Bhanu Ramaswamy

Minutes of the 2017 AGM: These were accepted as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Chairs remarks: Angela Ellis Paine, Co-Chair (with Jane Cullingworth) of VSSN, reported on the year to the end of July 2018. She noted that it has been a busy year for the organisation, with an increase in the number of events VSSN has hosted or co-hosted. The annual research conference, in partnership with NCVO, took place in London in September 2017, and the two day conferences were at the OU and York St John University. She thanked Vita Terry, James Rees and Mike Hemmings for their hard work in helping to organise and host the day conferences.

This year there were additions to the usual VSSN events calendar:

- a writing retreat in November 2017, particularly aimed at new writers with a focus on writing for Voluntary Sector Review; Angela thanked Vita Terry for the time and energy she put into this, and thanked VSR for their support
- A conference on youth social action in March 2018, held in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University
- A workshop on volunteering research and practice in June 2018 in partnership with the Association of Volunteer Managers and the National Network of Volunteer Involving Agencies.

Angela noted that there had been a small decline in membership numbers this year, which may reflect the current funding climate in research and practice. VSSN has introduced an email newsletter to improve communication with members, developed some new promotional postcards and made some improvements to the website.

Angela expressed her thanks to Jane Leathley, part of the Executive Officer team, for her work on updated VSSN's policies and practices to ensure we are complying with good practice in data management and the requirements of the GDPR. Beth Longstaff was also thanked for her excellent work supporting the Network as VSSN's Executive Officer.

Rob Macmillan, one of three Editors of Voluntary Sector Review, spoke about the journal's year, and encouraged submissions or pre-submission conversations. Rob also expressed heartfelt thanks to Nick Acheson, who is shortly stepping down as VSR Editor, and who has made a long and valuable contribution to the development of the journal and to the field as a whole.

Trustees Annual Report and Accounts: Angela Ellis Paine presented the VSSN Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31st July 2018.

Angela thanked Carolyn Cordery for the fantastic job she does as VSSN Treasurer. Carolyn was not able to attend the AGM but Angela confirmed that VSSN is in a strong financial position, despite the slight drop in membership fees, and that this had enabled the decision to invest in the writing retreat this year to support early career researchers and new writers.

The Annual Report and Accounts were unanimously accepted by the meeting.

Election of VSSN Steering Group: This year there were three vacant places on the Steering Group. As three people had put themselves forward an election was not required and the following are taking up the places: Chris Damm, Chris Dayson and John Dean.

Election to the VSR Editorial Management Board: There were three vacancies this year, and three people put themselves forward. An election was not therefore needed, and the following are welcomed onto the Board: John Dean, Rita Mano and Mike Hemmings.

Changes to the VSSN constitution: Linda Milbourne, in her role as Secretary of VSSN, outlined the changes to the VSSN constitution being proposed by the Steering Group and communicated to the membership in advance of the AGM. See Annex to these minutes for detail of the changes agreed.

All the changes were accepted by the meeting unanimously.

Any other business: Mike Woolvin, one of the VSSN Steering Group members who leads on the Annual Research Conference, spoke about the unique opportunities the conference provides. He explained that in 2019, VSSN will be taking the lead role in organising the conference, working closely with NCVO and the host university to do so. The event will be on 10-11 September 2019 at Aston University. Organisers are discussing slight changes to the format of the event, and ideas and suggestions for future developments are welcomed.

Annex: Sent to VSSN membership by email, 1st October 2018

Changes to the Voluntary Sector Studies Network Constitution

Proposed by the VSSN Steering Group, for consideration/vote at the AGM, 22nd November 2018

The following 5 changes are proposed by the VSSN Steering Group to the membership in order to update the VSSN constitution and remove existing anomalies.

(Copy of the constitution as it stands is attached and for reference the main paragraphs that would be changed are included in grey below).

In summary, proposals 1, 2 and 5 aim to resolve anomalies in the current constitution and to take account of much greater use of electronic means of communication than when the constitution was first agreed. Proposals 3 and 4 update language, also taking account of job-sharing in officer posts.

1. Amend section F (page 2) 'Steering Group' (part 3 shown in grey below) as follows:

- Amend **3 a)** to insert 'normally' between 'shall' and 'be elected'...
- Revise **3 b)** to read:

'In the event of there being more than 3 vacancies on the Steering Group because of the resignation of a member or members before the 3 year term of office is complete (or for any other reason), such additional places may be elected as well as the three places indicated in 3(a). In this case, the election shall normally be for the time period of the remaining term of office of the member leaving the Steering Group, *and* the provisions in 4) shall apply if the election takes place in parallel to the election of candidates for different time periods. The provisions in 5) concerning standing for election for additional time periods and maximum period allowed shall also apply.'

(3) (a) Except as provided below, not more than three Steering Group members shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting, and the they shall be elected for a period of three years.

(b) In the event of an elected Steering Group member ceasing to hold office after less than the full three year term, the place thus vacated shall be open for election at the next Annual General Meeting but the person so elected shall serve only for the remaining term of the place vacated.

2. Add new 3 (c)

'When a place or places are vacant outside the normal time period of the AGM, the Steering Group may, with 21 days' notice to the full membership, call an election at another time. This may be resolved through a Special General Meeting or by a ballot of the membership. In the latter case the election must be administered by a person who is not a member of the Steering Group. The provisions as indicated in Q 4) concerning time periods for notification, receipt of nominations and voting shall be observed, and the elected candidate will commence their Steering Group membership from the close of the Special General Meeting, or in the case of a ballot, after the outcome of the election is notified to the membership.'

3. Amend section G 'Officers' (page 4) as follows:

- insert 'or Co-Chairs' between 'Chair' and 'Secretary'

- Amend section K (page 4) **'Meetings and proceedings of the Steering Group'** (see original in grey below) as follows:
 - section (1) insert 'or a Co-Chair' between 'Chair' and 'or by any two'
 - section (2) insert 'or a Co-Chair' between 'Chair' and 'shall act as'
 - section (2) insert 'or Co-Chairs are' between 'Chair is' and 'absent from any meeting'
 - section (4) change 'chairman' to 'chair' (line 3, page 5).

(1) The Steering Group shall hold at least two ordinary meetings each year. Meetings may be called by the Chair or by any two members of the Steering Group upon not less than 21 days' notice being given to the other members of the Steering Group of the matters to be discussed.

(2) The Chair shall act as chair at meetings of the Steering Group. If the Chair is absent from any meeting, the members of the Steering Group present shall choose one of their number to be chair of the meeting before any other business is transacted.

(3) There shall be a quorum at an ordinary meeting ...

(4) Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members of the Steering Group present and voting on the question but in the case of equality of votes the chairman of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

4. Amend section U (page 8) 'Alterations to the Constitution'

At present the constitution can only be changed by a two-thirds majority of members voting at a **general meeting**, with notification of the changes proposed and the intention to call the meeting circulated 21 days in advance. Any changes to the constitution agreed should then be sent to the Charity Commission.

- Amend paragraph U (1) (page 8) - to add the sentences highlighted below:

'Subject to the following provisions of this clause, the Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the individual members and elected representatives voting at a general meeting. In the event that a general meeting is not practicable, a resolution may be put to the membership by electronic ballot and will be passed by not less than two thirds of those voting provided that at least one quarter of the membership casts votes. In either case, 21 days' notice of the general meeting or notification of the ballot shall also include a clear statement of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.'