**Merton CIL Annual General Meeting 2019**

**6th November 2019**

**Morden Assembly Hall**

**Minutes approved by Merton CIL Board on 13.02.2020**

1. **Welcome from Tom Lichy, Incoming CEO**

Tom introduced himself and welcomed the richly diverse group of people in the room. He thanked members for their six-month process creating the strategy and recognised the importance of being led by our members. It is his role to respect the aims given by our members and deliver them.

It was agreed that the attendance of 24 members represents a quorum in order for the meeting to proceed.

1. **Apologies**

Roy Benjamin – Chair. His role to be covered by Gina Vitesse.

1. **Chair’s Report – Gina Vitesse**

Welcomed Tom who’s been thrown in at the deep end and coping well.

Increased demand over the year whilst maintaining high quality AQS accredited service and implemented new SMT. This years’ Impact Report shows the difference our unique service from MCIL members, volunteers, supporters and staff makes to the lives of local deaf and disabled people. 100% of annual survey respondents said that MCIL addresses the issues that are important to them.

We’ve worked on consultations, reports and campaigns speaking up for Deaf and disabled people and make Merton a better place. We are grateful for funders and generous donations to keep important work going.

We were sad to say goodbye to outgoing CEO Lyla, who helped MCIL to reach new heights over the years. We’ve picked a great new CEO to carry on the work Lyla started.

In the last year we have contributed £819,045 to local economy through our work, provided 1,392 sessions of support and spent almost 1,000 hours on policy and strategy issues, all on behalf of local and disabled people. There is more in our Impact Report. We also launched Craftivism & Chat which has been a huge success – 100% of attendees rated the group good or great - that we’ll develop further over the next year.

Thank you to volunteers and staff for their hard work and dedication that is reason MCIL goes from strength to strength. I’d also like to thanks fellow Trustees who have supported and guided us through the last year. So let’s continue the fight for the rights of Deaf & disabled people in Merton and beyond.

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Agreed - minutes of the previous meeting were passed.

1. **Treasurer’s Report – Sally Yarwood**

Presented accounts for 2018/19, which have been reviewed by the Auditor who was happy with all the figures.

The income and expenditure account sets out all income received from different sources and all expenditure incurred from delivering our charitable services and running the charity. Total income for the year was £402,000, an increase of 21% from last year. From a wide range of government grants (LB Merton), funders (Big Lottery, Henry Smith Charity, MOPAC and London Communities Foundation and Trust for London), smaller donations from our local supporters and fundraising and income activities, including Merton Voluntary Service Council. Additional funds received for Craftivism and Chat, from Clarion Housing, Wimbledon Foundation, London Communities Foundation and Kingston Burrows. Also £5,000 donation from a supporter. Thank you to all our supporters and we look forward to continued partnerships.

Expenditure for the year was £391,000, an increase of 12% on last year. Spent on a wide range of projects: Advice & Advocacy, Disability Hate Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement, policy and Strategy, Building Capabilities and Young People.

Overall surplus for the year of £12,000, which compares favourably with the £17,000 deficit the previous year.

Looking at the Balance Sheet, our assets include cash and income owed of £157,000. Liabilities, that owe others, are £43,000. The difference is assets/reserves of £114,000 (unrestricted £70,000, restricted £44,000 related to specific projects which will be carried forward to next year).

MCIL is in a great financial position and the Board looks forward to working with partners next year to deliver much needed services to our service users in Merton.

The accounts were voted on and accepted by Merton CIL members present at the AGM.

1. **Approval of Merton CIL Auditors**

The Auditors, Leslie Cornell and Partners, were also accepted for next year’s accounts by the members of the AGM.

1. **Election of Merton CIL Trustees**

Several Trustees stood down from the Board, including Fitzroy Dawson and Sally Yarwood, who are leaving the Board. Gina Vitesse and Claire Benjamin also stood down, and desired to stand again. Members proposed and seconded each of them, and then the vote went to the floor.

Gina and Claire were both re-elected to Merton CIL Board of Trustees.

1. **Independent Living in the Future - John Kelly**

With the upcoming election, we need to take the opportunity to change the language to reflect what we really want as disabled people and making sure they represent us at parliament so our rights are respected. So that we can be valued, respected and feel we belong.

We are a diverse group of people and the term ‘disabled’ includes everyone – young disabled people, children, people with learning difficulties, experience mental health issues, older people, young people, black people, white people, gay and lesbian, transgender people, deaf people. We are a diverse and rich group of people; a collective who experience discrimination.

Technology in terms of independent living often means stuff that’s been imposed on us to save money. That technology doesn’t work because it hasn’t come from a place of involving disabled people in the design and development. But technology can help us to lead independent lives, if we follow 4 key principles:

1. creating a more accessible environment and technology,
2. where we have decided we want to use it,
3. where it is bespoke,
4. and where it is co-designed.

The current debate is about a care service in crisis. We are a problem. We cost too much. We can only just about have the basics. Our national care service should be about equality. So no matter where we live, we should have support to participate in and contribute in our communities and live the life we choose, but as a disability movement we want more than just to be ‘cared for’. The care model was not built by disabled people. It doesn’t recognise our independence, autonomy or freedom to live and be included in our local communities as we prescribe and as we wish as individuals. The national care service is in all the discussions ahead of election but a lot of the conversation is on older people. Disabled people are not included in this free national care service. So we need to make sure we challenge MPs to take the model further for young disabled people and working disabled people.

Also the service is still based on the medical model of disability rather than the social model. It’s still about being ‘looked after’, getting dressed and fed, what we’re capable of doing on our own and not able of doing on our own. What we want is choice and control and autonomy, self-determination and freedom, as part of our human rights. That is independent living.

Independent living in future is about social change. We all have the power. MCIL is proof of that because 15 years ago we didn’t exist and people struggled to gets rights acknowledged and we had to fight hard to get this organisation going. Together we can make the difference. It is not impossible. We can all experience it. We just need our allies to support us to make it a reality. It’s about social change, understanding the social model, valuing access for all and recognising equality for all. That is what IL is fundamentally about. Choice, freedom, control, based on our lived experience. Its about listening to what you want, what you feel will make you independent, what will make you feel like you have choice freedom and control, not what someone assumes you’ll have – an imposed system we have to fit in to. It’s about our rights. Independence is not about doing everything on our own. It’s about having control around what’s important to us.

So we have an alternative to the national care service and its come from us. This is our manifesto. This is disabled people nationally coming together to say we want a national independent living support system. Its come from us. It’s based on the old Independent Living Fund system but goes a lot further and builds on it and across the spectrum of disability. So we are fully included in and participate to society.

So the vision has to be about the National Independent Living Strategy. It’s based on rights, as signed up to by the government in Article 19. It’s co-created with disabled people. It’s anti-discriminatory as it recognises our differences – our age and diversity, that we all live different lives and all need bespoke support. Its still about being free because if its fully costed its funded through local general taxation and shouldn’t cost us at a local level. We shouldn’t be paying for local services. If we have IL we contribute. We pay the taxes too fund the services we use. So we are equal to our peers, lovers, friends and family. Managed by central government as local authorities struggling to implement what IL really means. It has to be lead by disabled people, we have the mechanisms in place – the Office of Disability Information and national disabled-led organisations. But critically it’s delivered locally so there would be a bigger role for places like MCIL to deliver.

It’s all evidence based. We know how important evidence is to making change happen. We all struggle with independent living in this room. We have the evidence and we can make the change together. Today the general election starts. We don’t want care, we want independent living. Make it count. Don’t let local councillors and MPs forget that we want rights and independent living as disabled people.

1. **Hate Crime – Marcia Heritage**

Police Sargent from Wimbledon Town Centre, Safer Neighbourhoods Team. We are a more long-term problem-solving group of officers. It works on a Ward basis. Merton has 20 wards and each ward has 2 PCs and 1 CSO dedicated to that ward. Go to police website [www.met.police.uk](http://www.met.police.uk) and put in your postcode, it will tell you your ward and who your officers are.

Hate Crime is an incident where the victim or anyone else believes it is based on prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender, and other groups. If you are a victim please have the confidence to report to the police via the non-emergency number 101, or 999 for an emergency or via our website.

In 2017/18 there were 94,098 hate crime offences recorded in England, up 17% from the previous year. Merton disability hate crime shows that there are few reported cases locally – 0-2. We think this means people are not reporting it. If you feel something happens that is motivated or aggravated by your disability, report it to us. It needs to be recognised. We have help we can offer but we need it to be reported to us.

In Merton, August 2018 – 19 there were 10 disability hate crime incidents reported. So it is quite low. Don’t want to panic people. But we do want people to report it if it does happen.

Met Police produced a great booklet that covers Disability Hate Crime, including Braille version.

Why don’t people report?

Fear or reprisal e.g. if it is a neighbour causing problem, people are reluctant to report it in case it makes the situation worse. But we can get Ward Officers to support you and provide reassurance. Mistrust of the police is another reason for non-reporting. People think we won’t do anything about it, but we are working hard to overcome this issue.

Given the impact and the hidden nature of this crime, we do now have a specialist central unit for hate crime and a specialist Hate Crime Co-ordinator on our borough - Merton, Wandsworth Twickenham and Kingston boroughs have merged and have a central Hate Crime Coordinator supporting the four boroughs.

We work with Safer Merton Council and attend Hate Crime Strategy Meetings. There is a Hate Crime Awareness week every year in October and this is advertised, to raise awareness and encourage reporting.

1. **End of AGM**Gina closed event. Thanked everyone for coming along to the event. Urged everyone to get involved in the annual survey before they leave. They can complete a short paper questionnaire or speak to Merton CIL staff and complete on tablet.

**END OF MINUTES**