



159th Annual General Meeting of the Institute

Held online on Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 18:00

MINUTES

Chair: President, Robyn Soma

Minutes: Jenna Chynoweth

In attendance:

Full Council (Emma Barker, Katie Dobiesz, Melinda McDougall, Paula McCreary, Martin Schoenbeck, Robyn Soma and Mary Tassell) plus members of the Institute as detailed at the end of the minutes.

1. **Presidential address:** was made by the Institute's President, Robyn Soma
2. **Formal opening of the AGM:** The chair formally opened the meeting
3. **Appointment of scrutineers:** UK Engage appointed.

Proposer – Emma Dalton

Secunder – Phil Deakin

84% of attendees voted with 100% approval

4. **Apologies for absence:** Alison Morton, Ellie Devereux and Hannah Sylvester
5. **Obituaries:** These were noted as Pamela Spenceley and Louise McAleese. A period of silence was observed.

Ordinary Business

6. **Minutes of the 158th Annual General Meeting held on 10th May 2022 online.** These minutes had previously been circulated. Those present recorded them as a true record.

Proposer – Vivian Craig

Secunder – Hananja Brice-Ytsma

74% of attendees votes with 100% approval

7. **Matters arising from the minutes (previously circulated).**

None

8. **Annual Report (as circulated).**

Martin Eddy asked a question about dedicating time for herbal medicine to be recognized by health insurance companies.

Robyn Soma confirmed that this has long been something Councils have worked towards, and that there is an ongoing commitment to making herbal medicine as accessible and visible as possible. There is work ongoing from the Institute, and also in collaboration with colleagues at The Herbal Alliance.

Peter Neumann asked if there is a reason why the Annual Report is not sent out to all members like the newsletter? Robyn Soma confirmed that the Annual Report needs to be adopted by the membership at the AGM, and then once adopted will be published more widely.

The report was approved by voting under Ordinary Business 1.

9. **Adoption of Financial Accounts (previously circulated).**

Question from Peter Neumann asking about how the exceptional item of the loss from the Power of Plants Festival compared to previous in-person conferences. Robyn Soma confirmed that in the five years pre-pandemic, the conference varied between a £4k surplus and an £18k loss, so the festival was not an outlier to in-person conferences, and had first year set up costs included.

Frances Watkins asked for a breakdown of employee hours, and Melinda McDougall confirmed that James Wiltshire is full time, Jenna Chynoweth is 24 hours per week and Sam Tomas is 16 hours per week.

Sally Ann Bowers asked about the changes between the 2021 and 2022 accounts. Melinda McDougall outlined where some of these differences sat, and Robyn Soma referenced the commentary in the Annual Report, stating that given our significant profit generated during the pandemic, we consciously invested heavily in our membership offering, along with increasing our reserves, so the loss for the year was planned to reflect our investment back into the organization. Martin Schoenbeck also highlighted that we had frozen subscription rates to support members and that the wider economic climate had inevitably impacted our finances, however we remain in a very healthy position.

The Accounts were approved by voting under Ordinary Business 2.

10. **Election of Accountant 2023**

Council proposed that we appoint Sideways Ltd in Exeter as outlined in the supporting paper. This was approved by voting under Ordinary Business 3.

11. **Election of Directors to Council:** (as circulated)

President – Robyn Soma (Re-election)
Vice President – Melinda McDougall (Re-election)
Honorary General Secretary – Emma Barker (Re-election)
Honorary Treasurer – Martin Schoenbeck (Re-election)
Director – Katie Dobiesz (Re-election)
Director – Kamaldeep Sidhu
Director – Natasha Lloyd

This was approved by voting under Ordinary Business 4 and 5,

12. **Reminder to vote on Ordinary Business and Special Resolutions as presented.**

Open for ten minutes after meeting closes.

13. **Other Essential Business**

Robyn Soma highlighted the Meet Your Council video session on 6 June at 7:30pm – see the Events page for details.

Thanks were given to the head office team and the team at UK Engage for their work in making the AGM happen.

A vote of thanks and recognition to the Chief Executive, office team and all on Council was proposed by Phil Deakin.

End of Business at 18:55

Members attending:

Ann Jones
Anne Derby
Bergitte McGovern
Beverley Meredith-Bailey
Calder Bendle
Carol Thorogood
David Ryan
Delphine Sayre
Dupe Pennant
Elena Renier
Emma Dalton
Frances Hambly
Frances Watkins
Hananja Brice-Ytsma
Janja Germadnik
Jonathan Treasure
Julian Barker
Kamaldeep Sidhu
Kate Huet
Kathie Bishop
Kevin Orbell-McSean
Laura Stannard
Martin Eddy
Melissa Ronaldson
Natasha Lloyd
Natasha Thiman
Nicholas Edwards
Nicola Darrell
Peter Neumann
Philip Deakin
Rosemary Westlake
Sally Anne Bowers
Sara Hennessy
Schia Mitchell Sinclair
Victoria Wright
Vivian Isobel Craig

Students observing:

Nicola Howes
Arooj Shazad
Anna Thompson
Lisa Woof