

**JERSEY CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU LIMITED  
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD ON THE 26<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2020 AT ST PAUL'S CENTRE**

**Present**

Nicola Adamson, Chair  
David Wood, Vice Chair  
Lucy Le Brocq, Treasurer  
Nicola Bennett  
Kate Jeggo  
Tino Perestrelo  
Julie Garbutt  
Philip Perchard  
Malcolm Ferey, Chief Executive

The AGM began at 6.00pm.

**1. Welcome (by Chair with an introduction from the CEO)**

The CEO confirmed with David Wood that audio was working for those attending virtually via Teams and reminded those attending via Teams to turn off their cameras and microphones.

The CEO advised that the focus of this year's AGM would be to celebrate our achievements in 2019 as well as looking ahead to the future.

The CEO welcomed Nicola Adamson as the new Chair, having taken up the position on 4<sup>th</sup> June this year. The previous Chair, Kate Jeggo, remains on the board.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending, whether in person or virtually. The Chair said she was honoured to be leading the board and thanked Kate Jeggo who has given so much as Chair.

The Chair acknowledged that it has been a dramatic and fast-moving time. The CEO co-ordinated the Volunteer Hub within the Community Taskforce; staff working from home meant that advice remained available to our clients. Although the office had been closed during lockdown, clients were still able to make contact by phone, email, and social media.

The Chair gave particular thanks to Kate Jeggo, David Wood, and Lucy Le Brocq for co-ordinating the direction of Citizens Advice Jersey on the Organising Committee.

The Chair thanked Angela Pigliacelli who lead CAJ during the peak of Covid-19, for her commitment to the organisation and for leading the staff.

The Chair welcomed the new directors to CAJ: Anne King, Julie Garbutt, Philip Perchard.

The Chair advised the board are reviewing the website, in particular on how accessible the information is.

The CEO returned to the office (from running the Task Force) in June on a part time basis initially, and then full time.

The Chair also thanked volunteers and staff.

The Chair finally thanked our funders and donors who make our advice service possible.

### **1. Voting Arrangements IT Provisions**

David Wood advised attendees of the remote arrangements, i.e. how to ask a question. As nobody attending virtually was a member there was no need to vote. Members attending in person could use their voting cards when invited.

### **2. Apologies for Absence.**

Nicola Bennett read out the list of apologies from supporters, funders, and friends.

### **3. Minutes of the last AGM held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and Matters Arising**

Nicola Bennett presented the minutes of the 2019 AGM which were approved by Kate Jeggo and seconded by Julie Garbutt. Nicola reminded us that these were available online. No questions were raised.

### **4. 2019 Annual Report**

The CEO presented the 2019 Annual Report. He referred to the campaign that the JEP ran, 'Jersey Together' and that we were one of the organisations chosen to distribute telephones to those in the community who needed one. The CEO how Jersey pulled together as a community. He also acknowledged that the campaign started after a tragedy: a man with nowhere to turn took his own life. The CEO reminded us that being able to reach out to someone on the end of a phone is so important and that there are solutions available. The CEO advised that there might be an opportunity to repeat this campaign in the future.

The CEO acknowledged the importance of being able to get out into the community. This can and has been done on digital platforms with success, but we must recognise that face-to-face is also important, especially as it is some people's only viable option for contact. With this in mind, 'Closer to Home' has started up again with the first session being held at Salvation Army with great success.

The EU Settlement Status is ongoing with only half of those needing to apply having done so. It is estimated that another 7000 to 8000 people still need to register. The registration process is online, and this is something we can help with, whether in person using our hardware, or over the phone.

In 2019 we celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Citizens Advice nationally. Citizens Advice began in the UK just before World War II broke out. It offered accessible advice and highlighted the importance of this service continuing. Today, we have lots of the same problems, i.e. jobs and housing. Without those pioneers of Citizens Advice, we would not be here today.

The CEO advised us that this was his last year (of nine) on the Employment Forum. One recent issue that has been looked at is minimum wage which has evolved positively.

### **5. 2019 Accounts**

The Treasurer presented the 2019 accounts. The Treasurer advised that our income is healthy and generally in line with the previous year though there has been a decrease in donations. However, our funding from Health and Community Services is still strong as is our funding from the Alice Rayner Fund. We have also received donations for the Parishes

and private donors. We are grateful to all. The Treasurer reminded us that these are not guaranteed. Staff are receiving a pay rise. Our cash balance is healthy and allows us to plan for the future. No questions were raised.

## **6. Re-election of Board Members**

David Wood and Lucy Le Brocq were proposed by Philip Perchard and seconded by Kate Jeggo.

## **7. Election of Auditors**

Alex Picot were approved to continue as our auditors.

## **8. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **9. Speakers**

The CEO spoke, illustrating his story and the office's story during Covid-19.

While at home, the Government contacted the CEO, asking him to visit the Broad Street office – immediately. The first case of Covid in Jersey had been displayed and the sense of urgency was apparent. The time ahead would be very different. The CEO was met by a group of civil servants who already had advanced plans on how Jersey would cope. The CEO was asked to step away from his role at CAJ and to instead be a part of the Volunteer Hub in the Community Task Force. The CEO discussed with Kate Jeggo (Chair) and Angela Pigliacelli (Advice Services Manager) how CAJ would work during this time and asked for their support in the coming months. It was a frantic first month but then it appeared that Jersey's situation might not be as bad as we first thought.

Jersey has done a great job in suppressing the virus and pulling together. The four local food banks came together under the roof of the Salvation Army. The planning that was put in place for Brexit fitted into what was happening with Covid. There were constant messages put out not to panic-buy as we had seen elsewhere.

With some funding, we put into place a voucher scheme using JT's system to stop people losing internet connectivity.

Perhaps the biggest challenge we faced was how to keep the office going. All the staff were set up to work from home. David Wood put in a new phone system. If needed, the staff will be able to work from home again without delay. More volunteers are being recruited and advising from home might be a possibility for volunteers too. Lots of things have been made possible through the course of the pandemic.

We are now in the 'New Normal' and our outlook is positive. Our borders are controlled, and Jersey is identifying cases at the ports. The CEO drew a comparison with Guernsey: although their Citizens Advice has remained largely unaffected, there is some uncertainty about their economy.

The Task Force was small but achieved great things. Civil servants, charities and the parishes all came together.

The medical emergency is over, but we are yet to see the real impact. The Government schemes will have to end at some stage. The CEO hoped for protection for tenants against rent rises to continue until the end of the year, especially as evictions will once again be

possible from 1 October this year. There are still challenges to come. The Government has taken pro-active steps. The economic situation might not be so bad if preparations are put in place. The CEO praised Paul McGinney's work heading up the Financial Impact Action Group.

Our clients have been happy to contact us by phone and email but as soon as we re-opened our doors, our clients trickled back in person. This emphasises that there are people who need this face-to-face contact. CAJ was one of the earliest organisations to open and there was a concern that we would become the front door to everywhere else.

The CEO summarised by reiterating how well the Jersey community had handled the pandemic; that our priorities should now lie with rent and finances; that we are planning for the worst but hoping for the best.

### **Questions**

*Senator Sam Mèzac noted that the CEO was looking to the future and asked whether he (the CEO) had been made more aware of the changes that were needed for the Island to move into a better place than we were in before; in short, how we can use what we have learned, and in particular what the Government can do.* The CEO asked that the Government continue with their support and that it is tapered out rather than stopped abruptly. Other jurisdictions should be looked at and a more pro-active approach should be taken. Universal Basic Income should be explored, and Jersey could look at how this has worked elsewhere, eg in Alaska, Finland and Germany. The £100 voucher scheme is a good example to see how it will stimulate the economy. Will people spend it where they normally would not, or will it be spent on groceries, or donated to charities? The CEO stated that the mechanisms should remain in place for as long as possible and that the Government should consider new ways of doing things and querying whether current procedures are fit for purpose.

There were no other questions.

The Chair thanked everyone again for attending and acknowledged that the AGM was a good opportunity to meet members and supporters.

The AGM closed at 6.40pm.