

# Minutes of the VRA 2019 AGM

## Held on 19 November 2019 by webinar

Chair: Deborah Edwards

The chair confirmed that the AGM was quorate, opened the meeting at 1pm and welcomed members.

The minutes of the 2018 were considered, proposed by Joy Reymond, seconded by Alex Pugh and approved by members.

### *Constitutional matters*

Trustees had recently found out that the updated constitution from 2006 had been approved by the members but not registered with the Charity Commission. Guidance has been sought from the Charity Commission who advised that this would need to be adopted again at an AGM or EGM and then registered with them. The reasons for the change was explained to members, which was mainly to update the constitution to a more modern formal format.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Association resolved, by unanimous vote, to adopt the Constitution of the Vocational Rehabilitation Association, as attached and dated November 19th 2019.

### *Election of Trustees*

The following trustees were elected:

- Julie Denning
- Deborah Edwards
- Kerry Foster
- Andrew Frank
- Sue Godby
- Beth Husted
- Linda Ingram
- Gary Johnston
- Christine Parker
- Alex Pugh
- Joy Reymond
- Helen Valls-Russell

### *Chair's Report*

The Chair summarised the key recent activities of the association.

This year the government review into work and health, "Health is Everyone's Business" into was a much-welcomed initiative. The VRA organised a robust response, sharing and encouraging input from our Corporates Members, Friends of VRA and most importantly our individual members. Many thanks to the trustees and members who contributed to this.

In addition, as the membership has been updated on regularly since 2017 discussions with SOM have continued. Increasingly the VRA and SOM have engaged in joint initiatives, in July it was decided that a merger review committee would be set up jointly with SOM and VRA to meet and discuss the pros and cons of a more structured relationship as well as to understand all the legal ramifications and requirements. This group have been diligent in this process and would be updating later in the meeting. Thanks were given to the VRA committee as well as the SOM committee for their efforts.

On behalf of the organisation the Chair thanked the trustees for all their efforts on behalf of the association as well as others who support its work.

The advancement of the relationship with BABICM and CMSUK continues with the establishment of the Institute of Registered Case Managers (IRCM) and the expansion of the working party striving to ensure that case management services, including vocational activities, proceed under the highest quality standards possible. The work of this working party is currently focused on reviewing the individual standards of each group to deliver a single standards for the case management industry. The working party is planning an official launch of the IRCM In March 2020.

During 2019 the VRA main educational event was held in collaboration with RCOT in May. At this the VRA Awards were presented again this year. The awards are a great opportunity for those in VR to showcase the excellent work that they have done throughout the year and remain popular. In addition, the VRA and SOM collaborated to deliver a seminar entitled “A Transgender Perspective on Workplace Health”, which was extremely well received and attended. The VRA also holds regular CPD webinars, distributes newsletters and is active on social media.

The membership committee have worked on the membership process and this year reviewed the corporate member benefits. The chair highlighted a number of these and encouraged members who were not corporate members to consider these. She extended her thanks to all the members for their support.

#### *Membership Fees*

The Chair highlighted that the membership fees had not been increased for three years and members were asked to approve modest increases from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020. Members who wished to renew early before the increase comes into effect could do so. The proposed increase was unanimously approved.

| Category           | Description                                                                        | Current Fee | Proposed Fee | Change    |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| Student            | Not in employment; study must be relevant                                          | Free        | Free         | No change |
| Affiliate          | Non practising but interest in VR                                                  | £45         | £50          | £5        |
| Associate          | Less experienced Practitioner                                                      | £55         | £60          | £5        |
| Professional       | Experienced practitioner                                                           | £75         | £85          | £10       |
| Micro organisation | Sole-trader - includes 1 free member<br>– additional members 25% discount          | £95         | £105         | £10       |
| Small organisation | Less than £1M turnover - includes 2 free members – additional members 25% discount | £250        | £275         | £25       |
| Large organisation | Over £1M turnover - includes 3 free members – additional members 25% discount      | £500        | £550         | £50       |

The three-year membership option had been removed as the take up had been very low.

### *VRA and SOM Partnership*

Christine Parker provided an update on the proposed relationship with SOM, which has been in discussion for the past 18 months. The proposal would merge the two organisations, with the VRA as an organisation being dissolved and its members joining SOM which would introduce a VR Special Interest Group within the SOM to focus on matters of significant interest to current VRA members. A working group of 3 trustees from each organisation was brought together to look at the implications of this proposal in detail. It has proved to be a time-consuming process: looking at the constitutions of the organisations, reviewing the requirements of the Charity Commission, and gathering the thoughts and suggestions from stakeholders including the Friends of the VRA.

Members were invited to have a one-to-one discussion with the trustees working on this and were asked to express an interest via the VRA email address by the end of the week, Information regarding the proposal would be sent in advance. All feedback was confirmed to be anonymous and it was confirmed that due to the potentially sensitive nature of the subject, the material regarding the proposal, and any discussions were for VRA members only.

The conclusions from the research to date are being collated and the VRA-SOM working group will meet to discuss their findings, explore ways of working together and agree upon the proposed next course of action. Should a formal proposal to merge be made by the trustees then members would of course have the opportunity to vote on this in line with the constitution

### *Treasurers Report*

Joy Reymond summarised the written report. In 2018, the charity's main sources of funds were membership fees with a minor contribution from delegate fees. The VRA holds sufficient funds (now at £ 21,019.52) to meet its planned expenditure for in excess of one year.

2018 was a difficult year for the VRA, as two planned conferences did not go ahead. As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, our working funds had declined by £ 7,776.68, to give us a financial position at year end of £26,419.77. During the year we withdrew £4,000 from our reserves to cover these losses.

On a very positive note, individual and corporate memberships more than doubled for the second year in a row, and last year they were almost sufficient to cover the Association's operating costs. Receipts from the annual conference were lower than usual, at just £ 2,264.85, as the planned 3rd 'Together' conference was deferred, and the planned conference with SOM did not take place.

Our collaborative initiative with CMSUK and BABICM to develop common case management standards, continued in 2018. This is a shared expense, and our contribution in 2018 was significantly higher in 2018, at nearly £5,000. Our major expenditure in 2018 was administrative support at £17,202.67. Other expenses were minimal such as trustee travel and meeting expenses

Lower costs were anticipated in 2019 with a more cost-efficient administrative arrangement. The organisation has also vigorously sought additional corporate and individual memberships. Further invoices for the case management standards initiative are not expected in 2019. We anticipate that our expenditures will approximately match our income in 2019. The outlook is cautiously positive and we expect better results in 2020.

*AOB*

A number of members made comments. Thanks were expressed to the VRA trustees and the team for their efforts. In terms of any potential merger the importance of VRA members retaining a voice and standards was highlighted but working together for greater influence was felt to be beneficial. A question was raised about the value of working with SOM versus other organisations such as BABICM and CMSUK.

On behalf of the members Joy Reymond thanked the Chair for her efforts

The meeting closed at 13:52pm