



# SPIRIT Advocacy

## Strengthening People In Raising Issues Together

Incorporating HUG Action for Mental Health (HUG), People First Highland (PFH) and SPEAK (Stigma Prevention through Education, Advocacy and Knowledge)

**Minutes of SPIRIT Advocacy AGM held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020**  
**Due to Covid19, the AGM was held via zoom**

**DRAFT**

### 1 Welcome

Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting; it was great to see so many members there.

### 2 Present and Apologies

#### Present

Jon King, Margo Neilly, Alan Bithell, Stephen Wiseman, Neil Moodie, Rhona Macleod, Helen Byrne, Daniel Palombo, Peter Todd, Margaret Macdonald, Helena Macleod, John Gallon, Alistair Simmons and Ruth MacAulay

#### Apologies

Apologies were received from Chris Evans, Graham Morgan, Daniel Mackenzie-winters, Bill Cook, John Macleod, Emma Grant, Gill Paton, Mairi Hill and Marion MacLennan

#### In attendance

Sue Lyons, Marina Patience, Joanna Higgs, Christine Fletcher and Jamie Bird

### 3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous AGM held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019 were proposed as an accurate record with no amendments, by Peter Todd and seconded by Jon King.

### 4 Chairperson's Report

Alan Bithell presented his report for the year to the meeting. The report can also be viewed in full online at - [www.spiritadvocacy.org.uk/news](http://www.spiritadvocacy.org.uk/news)

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Peter commented on the positive impact on people who live further afield being able to take part and interact in virtual meetings. This was echoed by Alan who spoke about his niece, who lives in Cheshire, being able to do the minutes for a SPIRIT meeting held in Inverness.

Sue spoke about the Digital Scotland programme. We have been able to give out iPads and laptops to members who were digitally excluded. Staff were trained as Digital Champions to be able to support them. This has brought in new members.

Margo asked how we are keeping in touch with people who, for whatever reason, do not use digital technology. Sue spoke about the 'My Voice Matters' project for which we are actively looking for funding. This is proving to be a challenge, but we are applying to any fund that looks promising.

## **6 Treasurer's Report**

Helena (in Bill's absence) read out Bill's Treasurer's report and spoke to the accounts giving a very comprehensive view of the financial statements. The bottom line is that SPIRIT is now in a better financial position than it has been for some time. Helena also gave thanks to Daniel, Marina and Marion for their input for the accounts. Margo commented on the well-presented accounts.

## **7 Appointment of Accountant for 2019-2020**

Ritsons were once again appointed as our Accountants. Proposed by Jon King and seconded by Peter Todd.

## **8 Election of Board of Directors**

Bill Cook and Mairi Hill were due to stand down this year having served three years on the Board. Both have indicated their willingness to stay on, if re-elected. Mairi Hill is elected by the PFH Advisory group.

Jon King proposed that Bill Cook be re-elected; this was seconded by Peter Todd. There were no other nominations. There are currently 7 vacancies on the Board.

## **9 AOCB**

Peter spoke about HUG engagement with out-lying rural areas.

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Following the business of the AGM, Helena led the attendees in a discussion about what SPIRIT Advocacy means to them and why this organisation is important. This was not minuted. However it highlighted the importance of the work of SPIRIT in supporting people to have their voices heard. People reflected that they found a sense of purpose from being involved with SPIRIT.

Some talked about the friendships and camaraderie that they had found as a result of their time as members or volunteers. One person said that it felt good to have "someone on your side".

Several people felt that the impact of Covid -19 had led them to feel like they had no role and their engagement with SPIRIT was vital in keeping them connected. SPIRIT is working hard to create opportunities for people to be engaged in Advocacy work as we move through the restrictions and hopefully back to a more face to face engagement model later in 2021.

This was an uplifting and positive end to the meeting, it left us hopeful that we will all continue to make a difference through the next year and beyond.

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Scottish Charity no: SC042513  
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**[www.spiritadvocacy.org.uk](http://www.spiritadvocacy.org.uk)**  
**[hug@spiritadvocacy.org.uk](mailto:hug@spiritadvocacy.org.uk)**

  
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