



## Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Thursday 23 November 2023 at 10 am

Via Zoom

WCVA members in attendance	
Befriending Networks	Keep Wales Tidy
Centre of Sign, Sight, Sound	Mentrau Iaith Cymru
Community Foundation in Wales	Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund
Cytun	Popham Kidney Support
Disability Wales	Scouts Cymru
Discovery Student Volunteering Swansea	Stori Wales
Early Years Wales	The Wallich
Glyncoch Community Regeneration Ltd	Welsh Refugee Council
IAG Ltd	WEN Wales

### 1. Introductions and Welcome

The Chair, Dr Neil Wooding CBE welcomed members, guest speakers, Johnathan Dight from Bevan Buckland and Vice President Tom Jones to the meeting.

The Chair introduced Ruth Marks, Chief Executive and Colin Arnold, Treasurer.

### 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from 6 members:

- Community Transport Association
- Conwy District CAB

- Co-ops and Mutuels Wales
- GAVO
- GBV Uganda Projects
- Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association

Apologies also received from:

- WCVA's President Michael Sheen
- WCVA's Vice President Peter Davies
- WCVA's Trustees Simon Harris, Menai Owen-Jones and Edward Watts.
- Alison Vickers, Bevan Buckland (WCVA's auditors)

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held via zoom Thursday 17 November 2022**

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record by the membership.

### **4. Presentation of WCVA's Annual Report for 2022/23**

The Chief Executive introduced the Annual Report for 2022/2023 to members which also included a short animated video showcasing some of the key highlights from the Annual Report.

Key messages from the Chief Executive:

- 2022/2023 was a year of significant change for WCVA.
  - Delivery of the new five year strategy commenced
  - Continued support for members and partners with the increasing cost of living crisis and also the impact of the end of direct EU funds to charities.
  - WCVA needed to restructure in order to deliver our plans and be sustainable as a charity. We said good bye to almost one third of the staff team.
- WCVA's strategic goals focused on increased diversity and resilience, our determination to be equal partners in achieving wellbeing as well as ensuring organisational sustainability.
- The annual report includes several sections where staff and trustees have taken over the narrative and they tell a number of great stories about different projects and programmes.
  - From making the most of the learning and development WCVA offers to improve Welsh Language skills and securing a different job within the new structure

- To working with members and partners to support people from Ukraine to be welcomed and settled in Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary
  - From working with the Care and Health systems across Wales and ensuring that the value of volunteers and charities contribution is recognised and supported
  - To the rigour of trustee oversight on our change programme making sure we kept to our principles of equity, fairness and inclusion.
- WCVA rarely works alone and we would like to recognise our key partnership with the CVCs County Voluntary Councils across Wales. Together as TSSW – Third Sector Support Wales we collaborate to support our members and the wider sector.
  - In September 2023 we said goodbye to a longstanding supporter of WCVA and the CVC family when Margaret Thorne, CBE, DL passed away. Margaret had been WCVA's Vice President since 2010. Margaret's numerous links and connections within the sector were made via Neath Port Talbot CVS, the Wales wide network of CVCs that used to be abbreviated as WACVC and also the Board of WCVA. Margaret created a legacy in relation to support for charities and volunteers and she will be remembered with love and gratitude.
  - Discrimination is rife and changing attitudes and systems remains at the top of WCVA's agenda.
  - There is an increasing challenge to recruit and retain staff, volunteers and trustees to charities and community groups.
  - Salah Rasool of the Welsh Refugee Council is the winner of this years Walter Dickie Bursary. The bursary will fund a study visit to Canada for Salah to share his learning with local, national and international partners.
  - WCVA has retained the liP accreditation which provides a solid platform to progress our support for staff development and wellbeing.

## **Retirement announcement**

The Chief Executive announced her retirement at the end of April 2024 after almost 9 years in post. The recruitment search will open next week.

### **Thank you to:**

- all our funders, advisers and partners
- our President Michael Sheen and our Vice Presidents Tom Jones OBE and Peter Davies CBE

- a special thanks to all our Board and Committee members for your support and scrutiny of our work, we really appreciate the time that you all give so generously.
- the amazing WCVA staff team, not only have they worked incredibly and consistently hard but they have also shown real commitment to the essence and purpose of our charitable objectives and reason for being.

Members received the Annual Report 2022/23.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for her incredible hard work over the past 9 years and her passion and drive will not be forgotten. The Chair also thanked the Trustee Board and staff team for their work and support over the past 12 months.

#### **5. Guest speaker: Siôn Brynach, Chief Executive, Cytûn : Churches Together in Wales – Building Bridges of Hope**

Members welcomed guest speaker, Siôn Brynach. Siôn is a member of the Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC) and kindly contributed to one of WCVA's sessions at this year's National Eisteddfod.

Presenting bi-lingually, Siôn reflected on a recent course he attended – Bridge Builders - which provides a new perspective and helps people see things anew. The realisation that came to Siôn because of the course, was the level of distress and anxiety that Siôn personally felt, but also, the level of anxiety that is evident and extensive in our society due to a number of reasons, for example, the climate and nature crisis, the cost of living crisis, political instability following the Brexit vote and the worry that jobs are less secure than they were in the past.

The third sector has a key role in building bridges of hope in our society.

Siôn thanked everyone for all that they do. "Thank you for being a bridge for society towards hope through what you do responding to day-to-day needs. Thank you to the WCVA for being an organisation that provides a bridge for the third sector in its entirety and supports us all so effectively."

The Chair thanked Siôn for his thought provoking speech.

#### **6. Presentation of the Statement of Accounts for 2022/2023**

The Treasurer thanked the Finance team for their hard work and achievements during the last financial year, particularly in dealing with 4 major challenges; organisation restructure, reviewing the Local Government Pension Scheme, winding down of European funding and selecting and on-boarding an investment manager.

The Treasurer also wished to thank fellow Trustees, members of the Finance committee.

#### Summary operating result

- Reduction in Operating Income from £38.8m last year to £34.5m – a £4.5m reduction
- Two main areas – Grants received reduction of £2.8m and in previous year a one-off income of £1.4m from the sale of properties
- Reduction in Operating Costs from £35.5m last year to £33.2m – a £2.3m reduction
- Main area of reduced spend was £2.5m less grants paid out – less funds received therefore less paid out.
- Net result is that Operating Income has dropped by £2.0m from the previous year
- However if the one off income from sale of properties in 2022 is excluded the reduction would only be £0.6m

#### Group income

Looking in more detail at the Total Income, this now includes Investment Income

- Restricted Income reduced from £33.8m to £31.4m – a drop of £2.4m
- Restricted Income is predominantly Grants received – responsible for the whole of the £2.4m reduction
- Welsh Government grants reduced by £5.6m
- This reduction was offset by increase of £2.7m from Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) and £0.9m from Comic Relief
- Other Restricted Income is basically Bank interest and this was in line with the previous year
- Unrestricted Income reduced from £5.2m to £3.6m – a drop of £1.6m
- Unrestricted Income in 2023 is predominantly Grants received – this dropped by £0.4m – Welsh Government related
- In 2022 we had one-off Income from the sale of properties of £1.4m which is the main reason for the year on year decrease.

#### Group expenditure

- Restricted expenditure was £32.8m in 2022 and that has reduced to £30.2m in 2023 – a drop of £2.6m

- The main element in Restricted expenditure is Grants paid out – this went from £28.6m to £26.0m – a drop of £2.6m
- The balance of Restricted expenditure is made up of Staff costs and Overhead costs. These are essentially the same as last year.
- Unrestricted expenditure was £2.8m and that has increased to £3.0m in 2023 – a £0.2m increase.
- No one single driver for the increase in costs – there are several increases and decreases across the organisation.

In summary...

- 560 grants paid out – just over £26.0m
- Restricted reserves of £6.5m represented loan schemes cash held plus any outstanding debts on funding awarded.
- The board has designated £3.1m of the Unrestricted reserves to cover a property reserve plus other designated reserves for transitioning out of the LGPS pension scheme, business development, closure of the European projects and costs to support the ongoing development of the WCVA with the significant changes that the charity has undergone recently.
- The financial strategy pursued by the trustees has been one of prudence and care to support the ongoing long-term sustainability of the WCVA and it's support for the sector.

The Treasurer thanked the auditors Bevan & Buckland and was pleased to report that WCVA had received a clean audit report.

The Chair wished to thank the Treasurer, the Finance Committee and the finance team.

Members received the statement of accounts for 2022/23.

## **7. Guest speaker, Andrea Cleaver, Chief Executive, Welsh Refugee Council - From Punishment to Hope. How would you like to be welcomed?**

Members welcomed guest speaker Andrea Cleaver from the Welsh Refugee Council (WRC), an organisation that supports asylum seekers and refugees in Wales to build their lives here in Wales.

The WRC is a member of the TSPC and scooped the prize for Organisation of the Year in this years Welsh Charity Awards.

Andrea highlighted the plight of women in Afghanistan who are excluded from education, work and every day choices that others take for granted. We need to welcome and support individuals who have

had to leave their homeland to seek solace in a different country to start to build new lives for themselves and their families.

The Chair thanked Andrea for her presentation and stated we are indebted to the WRC for the work they do and we thank them.

## **8. Close**

The Chair gave thanks to the Chief Executive, Ruth Marks for her leadership and also wished to thank the staff team and the Board of Trustees for their fantastic work over the past year.

The Chair wished to thank retiring Trustee, Lindsay Cordery-Bruce, CEO, The Wallich, who will be standing down today after 8 years on the Board. Lindsay was also WCVA's Trustee safeguarding champion and chaired two grant panels. It was noted WCVA will next hold Trustee elections during the summer of 2024.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the AGM and closed the meeting at 11.05 am.