

Guillain-Barré Syndrome Support Group

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 26 April 2008 at the Dunkenhalgh Hotel, Clayton-le-Moor

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman, Andy Leitch, opened the meeting at 10.00 am and welcomed those present. He expressed sadness on the passing of the Chairman of the Charity's Medical Advisory Board, Professor PK Thomas, and wished a speedy recovery to his predecessor as Chairman, Mr Roland Price, who was ill in hospital. He then introduced the Trustees, the President and a number of others.

The Chairman then read a letter from Catherine Paterson informing the Group of her retirement that she hoped would be temporary.

Apologies for Absence

The Secretary, Helen Howell, read out the list of apologies for absence received and noted those proffered from the floor:

Catherine Paterson, Tricia Swift, William Harmer, Sue-Ide Smith, Sandra Maggs, Janet Chapman, Mr & Mrs C Coomer, Mrs Powers-French, Doris Stephens, Maureen & John Sayers, Ken & Pat Sawyer, Mr & Mrs S Pert, Mrs IJ Eaton, Mr Derek Austin, Alan & Pat Thorp, Sandra Stellman, Doris Fryer, Mr E Cross, Mike McCook Weir, Gordon Peebles, Janet Wild, Prof RAC Hughes.

Apologies had been received from the following members of the Medical Advisory Board:

Dr Bryan Lecky, Dr Jane Pritchard.

Receipt & Adoption of the Examined Accounts for 2007

The Treasurer, the Revd Alan Ross, outlined the Annual Accounts as presented to attendees in the combined Annual Report and Accounts booklet.

He then passed on appreciation to the Chairman and members for their help over the past four years.

It was proposed by Kath Williams and seconded by Howard Sanders that the Examined Accounts for 2007 be adopted.

The proposal was carried unanimously.

Receipt & Adoption of the Annual Report of the National Executive Committee for 2007

The Chairman outlined the Annual Report of the Trustees for 2007. Member Cliff Ware pointed out an incorrect date in a signature block (Subsequently corrected).

It was proposed by Janet Cuff and seconded by Howard Sanders that the Annual Report for 2007 be adopted.

The proposal was carried unanimously.

Election of the Officers

The Chairman handed the chair to the President, Glennys Sanders. Nominations had been received from Andy Leitch for Chairman, Helen Howell for Secretary, and David Wada for Treasurer. Since the positions were uncontested, it was proposed by Cliff Ware and seconded by Nick Swift that Andy Leitch, Helen Howell and David Wada be elected as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

There being no counterproposals, the proposal was carried unanimously.

Andy Leitch took the Chair and thanked the members.

Determination of the Number of Elected Members and the Election of Elected Members to the National Executive Committee

The Chairman explained to the membership that the Constitution allowed between three and six persons be elected as Elected Members. Five proper nominations had been received from: Maureen Foster, William Harmer, James Babington Smith, Tricia Swift and Laurance Wilson. William Harmer was absent from the meeting and was seeking election for the first time. Consequently, the Chairman outlined Mr Harmer's credentials and background to the membership.

The Chairman further explained that if the membership decided on a figure of three or four, then there would need to be a contested election. If the membership decided on a figure of five, then the candidates could be elected en bloc. If the membership decided on a figure of six, then further nominations could be taken from the floor but two or more further nominations would result in a contested election.

It was proposed by David Wada and seconded by Cliff Blair that the number of Elected Members should be five and that they should be: Maureen Foster, William Harmer, James Babington Smith, Tricia Swift and Laurance Wilson.

There being no counterproposals, the proposal was carried unanimously.

Appointment of the Independent Examiner

The retiring Treasurer suggested that the firm of Clayton & Brewill be reappointed and thanked it for its cooperation.

It was proposed by Ian Bennett and seconded by Jim Alderson that Clayton & Brewill be reappointed as the Independent Examiner.

There being no counterproposals, the proposal was carried unanimously.

Approval of Constitution Changes

Chairman stated that a letter he had mailed to the members with the Agenda outlined a need to make minor amendments to the Constitution. Furthermore, each member present had been given a document giving more details of the changes and compared the proposed Constitution alongside the existing one. (The document forms Annex 1 to these minutes.)

Two members expressed concern that they had not received notice of these changes. Mr David Wada pointed out rule 7.3(2) to the Constitution, namely:

7.3(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of rule 7.3(1) above, the failure of any member for any reason whatsoever to receive a notice of any General Meeting shall not invalidate that meeting or any resolution passed or any election or appointment made at the meeting.

At the suggestion of Mr Gerry Hunt, the Chairman asked those present if any others had not received notification. There being no further instances of nil-receipt, the Chairman proceeded with the business.

The Chairman outlined the changes which were to:

- Retire the longest-elected one third of those elected onto the NEC every year instead of all those elected. This would rotate the members yet retain a working committee with more certainty of continuity.
- Enable the cooption of non-members to the NEC. The NEC had problems recruiting members with specialist skills. Appointments would last till the following AGM.
- Enable the cooption of non-members as Officers. There existed the possibility of not obtaining an elected Officer (especially Treasurer) from the membership, either by election or appointment. Any such appointment would last until the following AGM.

The Chairman also stated that the opportunity had been taken to simplify and rearrange the clauses, immaterial changes were in black with cross-references, and material changes were coloured.

It was proposed by Gerry Hunt and seconded by Sybil Loxam that the Constitution changes be adopted in their entirety as per the distributed document (Annex 1).

The proposal was carried unanimously.

Consideration of the Election of a Patron

The Chairman explained that the Charity had received an offer of Patronage but that offer had subsequently been withdrawn after the Agenda had been distributed.

Consideration of a Recommendation by the NEC for the Award of Honorary Membership

The Chairman gave the chair to the President who paid tribute to Professor R A C Hughes and told the membership that the NEC had recommended he should be awarded Honorary Membership.

It was proposed by Glennys Sanders and seconded by Mary Leitch that Professor RAC Hughes be created an Honorary Member.

The proposal was carried unanimously with applause. Professor Hughes spoke generously about the Charity.

Close

The Chairman formally closed the meeting at 11.20 am. There were two additional items for the attention of members:

1. The Chairman thanked retiring Treasurer Alan Ross and retiring Christmas Card Salesperson Mary Hewitt for their contributions to the Charity. The President presented gifts as a token of the Charity's gratitude.
2. The date of the AGM for 2009 was 18 April and the location was the Hilton Hotel, Leicester.

Helen Howell

Secretary GBSSG