

**MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE HIGHLAND SENIOR CITIZENS NETWORK HELD AT INSHES CHURCH,
INVERNESS AND VIA ZOOM ON MONDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2023
AT 10:00**

Present: Ian McNamara, Chair
Isla Cuthbert
David Hannah
Robert Kay
Bet McAllister
Lesley McDade
Ann McKay
Joan Philip
Irene Robertson

In

Attendance: Jo Cowan, Coordinator (Zoom)
Anne McDonald, Coordinator
Councillor Bill Boyd (Zoom)
Councillor Isabelle MacKenzie
Eileen Wilson (Zoom)

Apologies – Brian Devlin, Brenda Nicolson and Rob Polson

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were as noted above.

2 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were none declared.

3 NEW MEMBERS

The Chair reported that one new membership application had been received at the Annual Conference on 13 September 2023.

4 NEW TRUSTEES/RESIGNATIONS

The Chair was pleased to welcome Eileen Wilson who had expressed an interest in becoming a Trustee.

The Board noted the resignations of Donalda Mackenzie and Chris Grant.

5 MINUTE OF 28 AUGUST 2023

The Minute of 28 August 2023 was approved.

Proposer: Isla Cuthbert
Seconder: Joan Philip

6 MATTERS ARISING

(a) Policies Review

The Chair reported that the working group reviewing the policies would be meeting again on 5 October 2023 with a view to finalising the documents.

With regard to the Safeguarding Policy, it was noted that a new safeguarding course was now available online which Jo undertook to look into on behalf of the Board.

(b) Employee/Trustee Expenses Form

HSCN's Employee/Trustee expenses claim form detailing current rates of reimbursement had been circulated for discussion. On the point raised regarding accommodation, it was acknowledged that costs could vary considerably depending on the location and type of accommodation available. It was felt therefore that it would be appropriate to assess accommodation expenses on a case-by-case basis rather than setting a guide price. It was agreed that each claim would be submitted to the Chair and the Treasurer for approval. With regard to daily subsistence, receipts would require to be provided for expenses incurred and claims would be assessed on an individual basis. Isla would amend the expenses form as necessary.

(c) Members' Survey of HSCN Priorities 2023 - 2025

The Board discussed potential additional questions for inclusion in the survey. It was proposed to seek members' views on the issues they would like to be covered, and to invite them to ask their friends and neighbours for suggestions as to other topics that were important to them.

(d) Trustees' Next of Kin

The issue of Trustees' safety while working alone in premises or travelling on their own to events on behalf of HSCN, was raised during the review of the Lone Working Policy. After discussion it was agreed that Trustees would be responsible for informing their next of kin or "buddy" of their whereabouts and when they expected to arrive at/leave a venue. It was noted that the Coordinators already followed this procedure. The Trustees currently in post were asked to provide the Chair with the relevant information, and the application form for new Trustees would be amended to include next of kin/emergency contact details.

(e) Annual Conference Debrief

The evaluation forms completed by the attendees indicated that on the whole they had found the conference an enjoyable and useful event. They had also made helpful comments regarding the arrangements in relation to, for example, room layout, sound, and catering. A range of factors needed to be taken into account when organising such events including location, venue, car parking, ease of access, facilities, and cost. Attendance at this year's conference had been low, and there was some feeling that a more informal type of gathering focusing on the issues that mattered to our members might attract a larger audience. It was agreed to canvass the membership, by way of the Members Survey, to get their views on whether they would find it worthwhile to hold a conference in 2024. Jo reminded the Board that HSCN would reach its 30th anniversary in 2025 and suggested that an event could perhaps be organised to mark that milestone, particularly as Covid had prevented the planned 25th anniversary celebration taking place in 2020. The responses from the Members Survey would inform the decision whether to go ahead with a conference next year or plan for a 30th anniversary celebration the following year. Cost would also be a significant consideration, bearing in mind that our statutory funding would stop in March 2025 and there was no guarantee of securing continuing funding.

7 REGULAR REVIEWS

(a) Risk Register

Robert gave a brief update on the development of the Register.

(b) Highlights and Success Stories

Feedback on the annual conference having generally been positive, the Board agreed that the event could be recorded as a success.

8 NEWS-SHEET

Dates for the production and issue of the next two editions were agreed.

9 FUNDING UPDATE

The Chair updated the Board on a potential funding application, ideally for a three year period, however it was likely that HSCN would need to identify a match funder. The Chair would keep the Board informed of progress.

10 OLDER PEOPLE'S CHAMPIONS – ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

There were no specific issues raised. It was noted that a Veterans Champion had been appointed; it was proposed that she be invited to attend HSCN Board meetings. The Veterans Charity, Erskine, was developing a community hub in Forres which would serve the Highland area.

11 COORDINATORS' REPORTS

The Board noted the Coordinators' circulated reports detailing a range of activities, get-togethers and talks during September. Reference was made to a research project to be carried out by UHI looking at the past, present and future of the NHS and on which they would like to work with HSCN.

12 MEETINGS ATTENDED

Reports were received from Trustees on meetings attended as follows:

- Age Scotland – Expert Friends 6 September 2023 (Chair)

13 COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

The Board noted the circulated minute of the Communications Group meeting held on 18 September 2023.

14 SCAMS AWARENESS PEER SPEAKING PILOT

Joan updated on forthcoming scams awareness presentations. The Board supported a proposal to expand the initiative to cover other topics such as falls prevention, doorstep crime and vulnerable adults.

15 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Board received and noted the circulated financial statement for August 2023. Consideration would need to be given to projected expenditure and how to maximise existing funding.

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Community Partnership Conference 8 November 2023

The Chair, Jo and Robert would be attending this event and would report back to the Board in due course.

(b) Annual SOPA Conference 9 October 2023

HSCN would be represented at this meeting in Glasgow by Brenda and our Coordinators. As part of the programme SOPA were having a cross-party panel of MSPs and were gathering questions from delegates for the Q& A session. In view of the increasing amount of work the Third Sector was being asked to take on, the Board agreed that the opportunity should be taken to ask what action the Scottish Government could take to provide stable core funding for small charitable groups, specifically in relation to those areas in Scotland like Highland which had less infrastructure and other challenges to overcome, instead of having to make applications for funding. Jo agreed to submit this question on behalf of HSCN.

(c) Promoting HSCN - Branding

It was agreed to put this issue on hold for the time being.

(d) Facebook

Lesley raised a potential issue with HSCN's Facebook page in relation to blocking software which Anne undertook to follow up.

(e) Trustee Resignation

Bet informed the Board of her intention to resign due to pressure of other commitments. On behalf of HSCN the Chair thanked Bet for her valuable input to the work of the organisation and wished her well for the future.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Board meeting will be held at Inshes Church, Inverness on Monday 30 October 2023. The Zoom facility will be available for members who cannot attend in person.