

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of
ECHO for Extra Choices in Herefordshire
Held Online
On Thursday 3rd December 2020**

Attendance

Approximately 100 Members and Guests were present including Nat Hone, Her Majesty's Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of Herefordshire and Patron of ECHO and Councillor Clive Thomas Mayor of Leominster. Apologies were received from 12 people – see attached list.

Zoom Introduction

Nick Baker opened the meeting giving a few rules on how to use Zoom.

Welcome

Caroline Arthur, Chair of Trustees formally opened the meeting.

Minutes of last year's meeting

Votes had been counted before the meeting and agreed that the minutes of the 19th September 2019 were a true record.

ECHO Annual Review

Bev Davies, Trustee pointed out her favourite bits of the Annual Review 2019-2020. She said it was “a little bubble of sunshine”.

Treasurer's report and Appointment of Auditor

Mike Cook, Chief Officer presented ECHO's finances for the year April 2019 to March 2020.

We carried over £341,671 from the year before. Our charitable activities brought in £643,871 and a further £114,732 of generated funds made a total of £1,100,274. We spent £811,036 on running projects, marketing and fundraising, support for the organisation and advocacy. Therefore, we have a balance of £289,238. This will help us through difficult times such as the current situation.

You voted that the auditors Godfrey Wilson be accepted as the examiners for ECHO next year.

Questions – Nat Hone asked where we received our funding from. We have received a National Lottery grant of £83,000 and a Lloyds grant of £30,000. The council have also been supportive in paying us during Lockdown. Nat said well done for getting the lottery grant. Chris Blum asked about the dates of the financial year. Our financial year runs from April to March.

Rep Group Presentation

The Rep Group gave a presentation about the work they do – Speaking Up at ECHO. Caroline Arthur, Chair thanked the Rep Group for all their hard work.

Election of trustees

Bev Davies, Trustee explained the process for the election of trustees. Each year one third of the board must stand down. This year they are:

Mary Horner, Rebecca Stratton and Paul Scott.

There was 1 nomination – Chris Blum.

Chris has been properly nominated and you voted that he be accepted as a trustee.

Chief Officer 2020 Report

Mike Cook, Chief Officer thanked everyone for attending a very different AGM. We've learned how important ECHO is to the local community. Without our participants at our projects the heart of ECHO was missing. The staff team maintained contact with participants during the lockdown by telephone, zoom and sending out activity packs. Once projects reopened everyone adapted to new cleaning protocols, PPE and keeping socially distanced. Participants have been very good keeping to the rules.

We have an Activities Extra Online programme to give participants a chance to join activities that we can't provide face to face at the moment.

We have been working on ECHO's branding and have a new logo – **Better Choices, Better Lives**. This year we applied for the Trustee Charity Mark, a scheme that looks at every aspect of how a charity works to see if they meet high standards. We are very proud to announce that ECHO achieved the TCM Level 2. This is the highest level of the award. It is really important that we work at maintaining this high quality.

We find ourselves in an uncertain world but what is certain is that ECHO is still here for you and together we will get through this difficult time together.

Vote of thanks

Caroline Arthur, Chair thanked staff for their brilliant work.

Signed song finale

There then followed a video of signed song 'Tightrope' for everyone to join in.

The meeting concluded with a presentation of video clips of some of the projects working together.

Apologies to AGM 3rd December 2020

Edward Harley, OBE, HM Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire

Tricia Thomas, High Sherriff of Herefordshire

Councillor Jenny Bartlett

Fiona Ritchie

Tessa Minton

Lama Choesang

Ellie Chowns

Denise Kerwood

Wendy Holton

David Holton

Kevin Stuchbery

Jean Wood