

West of Scotland Racial Equality Council

Minutes of Annual General Meeting – 27 June 2002

Chair : Bailie Dr Malcolm Green

Present :

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Atif Naim | Anita Shelton | Sam Chan |
| Maureen Clark | John Watt | M Jamil |
| Elaine Bishop | Samuel C Moran | Onyema Ibe |
| K Ahmed | Edelweisse Thornley | Helen Kidd |
| Douglas | Robert McGerty | Paula Owan |
| Derek Iggo | Masud M Khan | M A Zahid |
| B Ahari | Raymond Chan | Angela Webb |
| Scott Pattison | Dr S R Chaudhry | M Arshad |
| Lionel Khan | S Masood | H Malik |
| K Hampton | Jean McKechnie | M Bashir |
| A R Ahari | V Chudy | Andrew Shuttleworth |
| John Service | Fida Moad | Gurpal Devsi |
| M A Chaudhry | Kay Magee | B Chadha |
| A Algazi | Mrs P Malik | Malcolm Green |
| B A Maan | M Thomson | O S Jandu |
| Douglas Brown | Tasneem Karim | Peter Wilson |
| Judith Tankel | Shahin Naz | |

Staff :

| | | |
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| Mohammed Razaq | Farrah Rashid | Shahana Noor |
| Chris Kyriakides | Bushra Iqbal | Rizwan Akmal |
| Harry Dematagoda | Isabel Collins | Lynne McKenzie |
| Maggie Chetty | Caroline Marley | Bash Sadiq |

Apologies :

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|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Victoria Fleming | Monica Sharmal | Shimen Amen |
| George McSorley | Dr Sharma | Mrs Mrita Chotania |
| Cllr Patrick Morgan | Ricky Paneandee | W McKinlay |
| Allan Burnett | Maureen Kilgour | Rosie Sorrell |
| Ann Egan | Jas Kaur | Mulin McKinnon |
| John Miller | Ezar Monahan | Fadia Shinwari |
| Matin Khan | Mrs Brij Gandhi | |

Welcome and Introduction

Bailie Dr Malcolm Green opened the AGM by giving a sincere welcome on behalf of the City Council. He intimated that it was a great honour to chair the meeting for WSREC. He went on to say that there had originally been two speakers scheduled for the evening but that Mr Mohammed Sarwar, MP had a vote in the House of Commons that the Whips had required him to stay for. Instead, Maggie Chetty, WSREC Director, would speak on her own account on some of the themes Mr Sarwar would have covered. The other speaker, Dr Raj Jandoo, had not yet arrived, therefore the meeting would progress with the formal business on the agenda.

Apologies

The list of apologies is detailed above. Cllr Green also noted that Mr Matin Khan and Mrs Brij Gandhi of the Executive Committee had sent their apologies.

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the AGM held on 21 June 2001 had been distributed previously. Maggie Chetty noted that an amendment should be made under Membership Panel. Mr N R Arif of the Scottish Pakistani Association's name had been omitted.

With this one amendment, the minutes were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Cllr Hanzala Malik commented that there had been some discussion on the Association for Indian Organisations to overcome the difficulties that they were voicing. One of his first acts as Chair had been to write to them but he had not had a reply. He is still willing to make contact with them.

Presentation of the Annual Report

The Annual Report was distributed to everyone at Registration. Cllr Green noted that the Annual Report should be studied after the meeting because it contains a lot of useful statistical information. It is a very good overview of what WSREC does.

Maggie Chetty commented that our casework numbers of actual live on-going cases have gone down this year. We have provided a lot more detailed information on some of the positive outcomes this year. This week we have had a settlement of a health case against a Health Trust for £8,000 plus a letter of apology and also a promise for anti-racist training to be carried out by WSREC, for which the Trust will be charged a fee.

Sometimes groups of people come to us for help but they may not be recorded as formal CRE cases. Such people are given a lot of support by us although these "cases" do not go through as individual cases. Therefore, it looks as though we have fewer cases. The

more our officers go out of the office the more casework we hear about. It is essential that we are out on the streets, out meeting people and making contacts to allow people to come to us.

Cllr Green commented that this was a valuable point to make. The statistics conceal a great deal of the complexity of the work carried out.

Judith Tankel asked whether the number of racial harassment cases that WSREC has taken up has risen because of the number of asylum seekers, has the number risen drastically and has the nature of the cases changed?

Maggie Chetty confirmed that we are getting more asylum seeker cases. Some of the cases do not go through the statistics because of the extremely confidential nature of what is going on and also because some people do not have an address for very long. We are getting more clients from a range of backgrounds including Kurdish, Iranian, Iraqi, Turkish and Middle Eastern. It is important for us to be out there mixing with communities. We have very close links with Day Centres. We work very closely with the Refugee Council and with Health Visitors. The impression that we are getting is that asylum seekers are facing a lot of violence. Many black and ethnic minority families are extremely stressed but for asylum seekers it is worse because they do not know their way around Glasgow, they do not know the system and perhaps they are already more traumatised by their experiences. We are working with West Dunbartonshire Council on this subject.

Cllr Green asked whether it would be possible to highlight asylum seekers in the statistics or if there might be merit in focusing on particular problems they face rather than people who have been here for a longer time.

Mrs Chetty commented that Strathclyde Police keep a record of racial incidents which affect asylum seekers and that WSREC will look at this very carefully.

Mr Sam Chau asked if it would be possible for the Executive members to have a breakdown of cases carried out, without breaching confidentiality.

Mrs Chetty replied that when statistics are sent to the CRE we also give this information to our Executive. She would endeavour to inform the Executive of cases which do not go through the formal system.

The Annual Report, pages 1 – 43 was approved.

Presentation of Treasurer's Report

Mr N Chaudhry said that the accounts were self-explanatory. As there were no questions, the accounts were approved.

Appointment of Auditors 2002-2003

It was put forth by Mr Chaudhry that the auditor, BDO Stoy Hayward, be used again next year. This was approved.

Mr Chaudhry thanked all the staff and colleagues, particularly the Unitary Authorities.

Dr Green expressed thanks to Mr Chaudhry for his continuing work as Treasurer.

Nominations for the Membership Panel

Two nominations are required from the AGM. Mr Arif confirmed that he is willing to continue. There remains one vacancy which will be passed to the Executive Committee to fill.

Speaker

Dr Raj Jandoo now joined the meeting. Dr Green introduced Dr Jandoo and commented that we are very privileged to have him address the meeting. He is a member of the Faculty of Advocates, the first Asian member, and played a prominent role in the Chhokar case.

At the conclusion of Dr Jandoo's speech, Dr Green thanked him for a very comprehensive and thought provoking talk covering some very broad areas. Cllr Chadha commented that he echoed what was said.

Dr Jandoo went on to say that he is impressed with the work that the Crown Office has done to bring the recommendations made in the report forward. Scott Pattison of the Crown Office responded that Dr Jandoo's report and recommendations are not gathering dust. Action was taken quickly. They agreed to set up guidelines to be issued to Chief Constables. There is an action plan which is in the public domain which details the progress that has been made. Mr Pattison offered to take anyone through the plan, if requested. They are aiming to have an independent inspectorate and public accountability by the end of next year. They are taking this extremely seriously, not just because it is a political "hot potato".

Judith Tankel asked Dr Jandoo whether he thought the Race Amendment Act 2000 would be more effective than the RRAA 1976 which was full of anomalies. Dr Jandoo replied that the 2000 Act's concept is brilliant. Our public bodies and authorities need to look at the way they are operating in a general way. The 1976 Act is a negative Act. The 2000 Act is quite different in its perspective. It puts a positive duty on what you must do and not what you must not do. The 2000 Act will be a vehicle for change. He was disappointed that there was a need for an Amendment Act. He had hoped that the government would take the view that this was an opportunity to rewrite the Race Relations Act. We were in a position to create a new Act which would have worked. As it is now, we are stuck with bizarre concepts about racial and ethnic origins.

Dr Green thanked Dr Jandoo for his speech and his response to questions.

Dr Green invited Maggie Chetty to speak on any other issues. She declined the offer saying that all the points had already been covered by the debate.

Vote of Thanks

Judith Tankel thanked Dr Green for chairing the meeting. She commented that we are very grateful for his time and commitment. She went on to thank Dr Jandoo for taking the time to share his insights and thoughts with us. She also thanked Mr Pattison from the Procurator Fiscal's Office for his comments.