

STATUS - for decision

1. HOLDING THE AGM

It is looking more likely that we shall have to have a virtual AGM as the small flare-up of Covid-19 outbreaks create a mood to maintain existing precautions, for obvious reasons. There is a Scottish Government review date on 20 August which may reveal more or may not.

In terms of holding a virtual AGM the following considerations are being explored:

- a. We have been using Google Meet for Committee meetings however unless there is an 'add-on' there doesn't seem to be an easy way for someone to say, raise a hand, as a way of voting online. We also looking at whether we should use a different 'platform' for the AGM. In terms of voting, however there is not a major need for voting facilities if we use a postal ballot (see later in this report).
- b. We need to issue a formal 28-day notice of the AGM by 28 August, which we shall do, without specifying the exact location/type of meeting
- c. We would need to ask members to notify us in advance if they wish to join the AGM, so we can have their email address and we can send them a link to the meeting. There is no formal provision about having to notify to attend an AGM, aside from proxies where it has to be lodged 5 days before the meeting, i.e. by Thursday 7.30pm.
- d. People can also send apologies or set up a proxy. It is suggested that we have about three or four Committee members available to act as a proxy voter, on behalf of people who may not know who to give their proxy to. It is probably advisable to not have proxies given to the Chair as they have a busy role at the AGM already. Proxy votes do count towards a quorum so their use could be critical if we don't get a huge number registering to be present.
- e. The business of the AGM would be restricted to the following (which is our normal agenda)

Apologies, etc.
Minutes of the last meeting
Annual accounts
Appoint auditor
Report of the Chair (brief)
Elect Management Committee members
Close
- f. In terms of voting there is a need to vote formally to accept the re-appointment of the external auditors, Chiene+Tait. As they are the only firm being proposed then we just need a simple vote and hopefully this could be done online.
- g. If there are more candidates than spare places on the Management Committee, we will need to hold an election ballot. The deadline for submissions is three days before the meeting. Strictly speaking this would be by 7.30pm on Saturday 22 August.
- h. For a vote to take place if needed, on electing Committee members, then there is the option of online voting or a postal ballot. The former raises the issue of how to count the votes (each person attending vote have the same number of votes as vacancies). A postal ballot would be better, but it would require the following (all possible):

- (i) All candidates being known by the deadline and also to have confirmed that they are eligible to stand, as per the rules. Do this at 7.30pm Saturday.
- (ii) A voting slip prepared with the brief biographical details that candidates must complete beforehand.
- (iii) This to be issued to all those registered to attend by a deadline, say, Monday 9.00am
- (iv) The forms to be received back by, say, 5pm on Tuesday 29 September. This allows 2.5 hours for counting, etc.
- (v) The result can then be read out at the AGM by the Chair.

These processes are all possible.

i. The thoughts of the Committee are sought on the proposals above.

2. EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS IN HOLDING A VIRTUAL AGM

- a. We are required to consider any equalities impacts arising from any new service provision or change in service provision, in carrying out our public duties. Strictly speaking, holding an AGM for our members is not a public duty in relation to us providing services. However, it is important to consider the potential equalities impacts of holding a virtual AGM.
- b. A virtual AGM means that people cannot attend an actual AGM. It also means that people have to have a suitable piece of electronic equipment to attend virtually. This can be a PC, a tablet, a laptop or a smart phone. It does not have to be owned by the individual, only used by them.
- c. Potentially a virtual AGM could disadvantage those who are not digitally savvy, e.g. the elderly, however it is possible that someone elderly may know someone who has suitable equipment to enable them to attend.
- d. For obvious reasons, it would not be good to offer for people to gather at Lister to use our computer equipment.
- e. On the positive side, being able to attend virtually would allow members who had restricted mobility to attend our AGM whereas they might have not felt able to come along to our meeting room, up that flight of steps. Equally those who are away from Lister could attend.
- f. Usually about 87% of our membership do not attend our AGM. These are primarily people who could attend and choose not to. It will be interesting to find out if our AGM attendance goes up this year or not.
- g. On balance it is suggested that holding a virtual AGM will not have a major adverse impact upon the ability of members to attend the AGM.

Alistair Cant
DIRECTOR
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