

Educational Centres Association

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 11th October 2008

The Resource Centre, Holloway Road, London

Present: John Burgess, Rosalie Byrne, Walt Crowson, Hazel Dunn, Graham Eldridge, Bernard Godding, Naomi Godding, Brian Groombridge, Colin Harding, Barbara Isherwood, Chris Minter, Paul Olver, Judith Robinson, Christianne Wakeham; In attendance Karen Read (Minutes), Susie White

A08/1.0 Welcome and introduction

BG welcomed all to the Annual General Meeting.

Respects were paid to the following colleagues who passed away over the last year; Mary Babris, Rob Eschle, Andrew Murray and Chris Springham.

A08/ 2.0 Apologies

Apologies were received from Howard Gilbert, Dorinda Harwood, Faith Hicks, Bunty Hodges, Jonathon Hughes, Jane Inman, Mike Webster

A08/3.0 Minutes of the last annual general meeting (London, 15.09.07)

The following amendments were noted:

2.2 Replace the spelling of 'Eschele' with 'Eschle'.

8.2 Replace the spelling of 'Delvin' with 'Devlin'

The minutes of the last meeting, with the emendations above, were accepted as a true record and duly signed.

A08/4.0 Report of the National Executive Committee

BG introduced the Annual Report explaining that this is a shortened annual report necessitated by the pressures of writing a National Lottery Bid for the proposed Green Family Learning Project.

A08/ 5.0 Progress Report

BG gave a verbal report of current ECA activities as follows:

A08/ 5.1 Every Action Counts

Susie White and Karen Read have supported this project and the Association has surpassed its target recruitment of community groups to the initiative by 175%.

A08/ 5.2 Eastern Empowerment Partnership

BG is the Vice Chair of this regional group. The Empowerment Partnerships are under the auspices of Communities and Local Government (CLG) funded through the Community Development Foundation.

A08/ 5.3 CLG Roadshows

The ECA are, with partners, delivering an event in Leicester with the aim of bringing East Midlands Third Sector organisations together around the issues of advocacy and campaigning.

A08/ 5.4 Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

This project is located in Leicester and associated with the City Council's Community Journalism course and a similar course run by the Council for Voluntary Services . Jude Walsh has been appointed by the ECA to broker the relationships between diversity groups, the City Council and community/ voluntary sector leaders.

A08/ 5.5 Capacity Global

This is Every Action Counts legacy work and seeks to look at issues of diversity in sustainability programmes.

A08/ 5.6 Green Family Learning Project

This is a proposed £500,000 project working with 3 local authorities in Leicester, Norfolk and Herefordshire. The project aims to bring families together learning about sustainable and healthy living. A bid is being prepared for submission to the Big Lottery Family Learning Fund.

A08/ 5.7 European Qualification Project

This project is led by German partners, with a planned initial meeting in December in Bonn.

The ECA has signed up as partners to a second German international project which is pending a funding decision.

A08/ 5.8 Community Sector Coalition

The ECA continues to play an active part in this Coalition, having been one of the founding organisations.

A08/ 5.9 Take Part

BG has been asked to prepare a paper concerning citizenship education for the East of England as part of the legacy of ALAC.

A08/ 5.10 Regional Groups

BG expressed thanks to Christianne Wakeham and Paul Olver for their work with the constituted West Midland regional group, which is going very well. It is hoped that this experience can be built on with similar groups constituted elsewhere.

A08/ 6.0 Financial report to year ending March 2008

NG presented the financial report noting the following:

1. Membership subscriptions are continuing to fall, with losses particularly in the local authority AE sector.

2. There has been a significant year on year increase in the DIUS grant. The brief for this year's funding has been wider with an emphasis on infrastructure support and projects.
 3. The accounts include an initial payment for the National Conference held in May 2008.
 4. There has been increased expenditure relating to the relaunch of the ECA web site.
 5. The outstanding payment from the TEACH project has now been received.
- Thanks were given to NG and the accounts formally approved.

A08/ 7.0 Matters Arising

A08/ 7.1 OFCOM Consultation

B Gr outlined OFCOM's consultation on broadcasting and citizenship¹ and recommended that the Association should consider its response. BGr advised that he is involved with Voice of the Listener & Viewer².

A08/ 7.2 Local Centres

BGr warned against losing sight of the importance of local centres, suggesting that all members have a responsibility to approach non-member centres to advise them that the ECA is a politically important body.

In response BG proposed that the NEC should establish a set of committees with the remit to bring this agenda forward.

A08/ 8.0 Election of National Officers

BG announced that nominations had been received as follows:

Vice Chair-Chris Minter; proposed by Bernard Godding, seconded by Walt Crowson

Hon. Treasurer - Naomi Godding; proposed by Graham Eldridge, seconded by Christanne Wakeham

Both positions were uncontested and candidates were duly elected.

Thanks were expressed to both for their willingness to serve.

A08/ 9.0 Appointment of Examiner of Accounts

The Chair proposed an amendment to the original motion as follows:

"The Association gives thanks to Sexty & Co. for examining the accounts but in view of the financial turmoil, the NEC is given authorisation to carry out a review of other agencies who have experience of the voluntary and community sector and given the power to select and appoint an Examiner"

¹ Ofcom's consultation "Citizens, Communications & Convergence may be found at <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/citizens/> The consultation period ended 8 October 2008.

² <http://www.vlv.org.uk> Voice of the Listener & Viewer represents the citizen and consumer interests in broadcasting.

In supporting this amendment, NG referred to the proposed budget for the Green Family Project, the size of which would require a much higher level of accountancy help and support.

The revised motion was proposed by Judith Robinson, Seconded by Christianne Wakeham and the AGM agreed unanimously.

A08/ 10.0 Motions as circulated

A08/ 10.1 Membership Fees 2009

BG introduced the following motion:

In the light of the present financial situation nationally this meeting:-

1. Accepts the recommendation of the Hon. Treasurer that membership fees should continue at their present level for 2009
2. Affirms the authority given to the NEC at the last AGM to take whatever steps are necessary to maintain the ECA as a Membership Body, including the reduction or waiving of fees for individuals or organisations which make a significant contribution to the Association and to maintain a register of such alternative contributions.
3. Recognises the value of such individual contributions of time to the work of the Association and calls on all members to increase their commitment in lieu of paying additional fees.

BG advised that no comments have been received from the membership. CW, whilst in favour of the motion, called for a review over the next year of the membership fee policy, noting the potential for losing some engaged members. BG called for the approval of this motion with a view to reviewing what membership consists of.

The motion was proposed by Bernard Godding, seconded by Chris Minter and the AGM agreed unanimously.

A08/ 10.2 Contributions to National Policy Debate

PO introduced the following motion:

This meeting endorses the work of the National Executive in promoting the core values of the Association and sustainable policy and practice in Lifelong Learning, through its response to the DIUS Consultation on Informal Adult Learning and the Commission on Lifelong Learning. It further congratulates the Committee on the success of the National Conference in Westminster; which received Ministerial attendance and endorsement from two Government Departments.

PO noted the importance of the Association having the ear of Government and congratulated the NEC for having made such a contribution to national policy.

The motion was proposed by Paul Olver, seconded by Graham Eldridge and the AGM agreed unanimously.

BG thanked PO for his remarks and paid credit to PO for his own contribution.

A08/ 10.2 Recognition of European Success Stories

This Meeting congratulates the National Executive Members and Staff of the Association in achieving international recognition for the ECA's successful contributions to EU funded Grundtvig Projects. In particular, it appreciates the recognition of the Association's role in:

- A. The Teddy Bear intergenerational learning project by:
 - a. The UK National Agency ECOTEC, as an example of good practice in the delivery of such projects;
 - b. The Community Sector Coalition, as a case study showing increased empowerment or vulnerable older people and their improved engagement with children and young people.
- B. The TEACH, European Active Citizenship project, featured in the 2008 'Success Stories' of the European Commission's Directorate general for Education and Culture.

In proposing this motion, BGr cited this as an extraordinary achievement, with the Committee and the leading members of the Association having achieved so much at the international level, represented by the TEACH project and the Teddy Bear Project. BGr reflected that this is not the end of the story; Sastamala College in Vammalla have expressed their continued commitment to work with the ECA on such issues of sustainability, creativity and intergenerational learning.

The motion was proposed by Brian Groombridge, seconded by Graham Eldridge and the AGM agreed unanimously.

A08/ 11.0 Adjournment for Special General Meeting

The Meeting was adjourned at this point for the Special General Meeting to be held; it was later reconvened.

A08/ 12.0 Urgent business

As there had been no notice of any urgent business the Meeting was formally closed.

Educational Centres Association

Special General Meeting

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S08/1.0 Changes to the Constitution

S08/1.1 Proposals A & B

BG introduced the proposal from the NEC to change the constitution as follows:

- A. Part 1: As the **Object** – after ‘Adult Education’ add ‘and Lifelong Learning’
- B. Part 2: **Powers-**
 - a. where relevant change all consistent with the above
 - b. add, ‘undertake educational projects, including those concerned with parenting, family and intergenerational learning’

The proposal derives partly from the Teddy Bear project, with a focus on intergenerational and lifelong learning, and the proposed Green Family Project. There had been a query whether work involving children as learners is properly within the Constitution as it stands at the moment.

The Charity Commission have given formal assent to these changes.

The Motion was carried unanimously.

S08/1.2 Proposals C & D

BG introduced the following proposals which would:

- i) charge the National Executive with making some decisions about posts within the Executive; to give the authority to seek individuals to carry out particular roles within the Executive, particularly in light of the Lottery Bid, thereby broadening the competence within the Executive. The proposed changes are that:-

C. Parts 4 & 5: National Executive Committee

The National Officer posts of:-

- a) Honorary Secretary & any new Deputy Secretaries should be filled by open recruitment by the NEC and not restricted to current ECA members.
 - b) Vice Chair should be elected by the NEC from amongst its members. Where a co-opted member becomes the Vice Chair that co-opted place may be re-filled by the NEC
 - c) Honorary Treasurer should be elected as presently but for a period of 2 years to make this post consistent with the other elected national officers.
- ii) ensure continuity of national business and to amend the text of both PARTS accordingly:-
- D. Part 6(e(i)):
- Insert after 'The quorum at a General Meeting of the Association shall be ten individuals', 'or such other number as the National Executive Committee shall from time to time determine'
- BG proposed an amendment to this as follows: adding after '.. from time to time determine', 'being at or above a minimum threshold of 6'.

The SGM agreed unanimously to accept C and D as amended.

S08/2.0 Proposal to change status of the Organisation to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

BG introduced this item, advising that the Executive have looked at the issue of trustee indemnity. Given the breadth of commitment regarding the Green Family Learning Project it is acknowledged that the responsibilities of the Trustees are becoming considerably more onerous. Charity Law, changed in 2006, now permits the adoption of a status of Charitable Incorporated Organisation. CW has researched the issue and circulated a summary of what the different types of status mean. BG presented the motion:

In the light of the growth of the Association's project based activity, the NEC is empowered to enter into consultations and to incur expenditure, with a view to establishing a 'legal personality' for the Association through incorporation which limits liability for trustees'

The SGM agreed unanimously.

The Meeting was closed with thanks.