



National Survivor  
User Network

# Annual General Meeting and Members' Event 2021

Business minutes - 10.30-11.08am, 29th  
November

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User Network  
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Registered Charity  
No. 1135980  
Company number:  
07166851  
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User Network  
(NSUN) 2021



The meeting was held online via Zoom. **Amy Rushton**, trustee, chaired the business, with **Akiko Hart**, NSUN CEO, and **Jen Beardsley**, NSUN Finance Manager, talking through some items.

**Present** (trustees): Alisdair Cameron, Eleni Chambers, Emily Reynolds, Amy Rushton, Rachel Rowan Olive

(proposed trustees): Amy Palmer, Tasha Suratwala

**Apologies:** Angela Newton (Chair), Zoe Bennett (trustee), Rachel Barker (associate)

**Not present:** Jonathan Rackham (trustee), Shuranjeet Takhar (proposed trustee)

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**Akiko** (she/her) welcomed everyone, invited questions to be asked at the end of the business and then handed over to Trustee Amy Rushton to chair the meeting.

**Amy** (they/them) welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. They explained that due to the Chair, Angela Newton, being unable to attend the meeting due to illness, they would be acting as Chair and if there were any objections to make them known (none). They ran through the apologies (listed above).

Amy communicated that this year NSUN had continued with the online voting system it had implemented last year (through Choice Voting).

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## Item 1

### Approval of Minutes of AGM 24th November 2020

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The results were as follows:

Online vote: Yes - 87, No - 1, Abstain - 21.

1 postal vote was received voting yes.

The business minutes of the 2020 AGM were approved.

## Item 2

### Election of Honorary Officers

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Amy explained that NSUN recruits trustees as and when the trustee numbers start to fall and that a recruitment drive usually happens annually - a full quota being 12 trustees but that there being usually around 9 to 11 trustees at any one time. They said that anyone was welcome to apply to become a trustee and that NSUN particularly welcomed applications from people from marginalised and minority groups.

**Trustees that had left NSUN in the last year:** Nic Murray and Dawn Willis. Amy thanked them very much for their valued service and communicated that we were very sad to see them go.

Akiko then chaired this item, the officers up for election being:

- i. Chair: Angela Newton (for re-election)
- ii. Vice-Chair: Amy Rushton

**i) Results for the position of Chair:**

The results of the online vote for Angela Newton to be re-elected as NSUN chair were:

Online vote: Yes - 85, No - 0, Abstain - 4

1 postal vote was received voting yes.

**Angela Newton was re-elected as Chair**

**ii) Results for the position of Vice-Chair:**

The results of the online vote for Amy Rushton to be elected as NSUN Vice-Chair were:

Online vote: Yes - 74, No - 6, Abstain - 6

1 postal vote was received voting yes.

**Amy Rushton was elected as Vice-Chair.**

Amy said that it was a real honour to be elected as Vice Chair and that they looked forward to supporting Angela and the Board.

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## Item 3

### Election of Trustees

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Amy explained that NSUN's Articles of Association state that all trustees must retire at the end of their third-year term but then can be re-elected, and that there were no trustees this year who were up for re-election in this way but that there were three new trustees who were proposed as members of the Board:

#### New trustee nominations:

- i. Amy Palmer
- ii. Tasha Suratwala
- iii. Shuranjeet Takhar

The voting results for these trustees was as follows:

#### i) Amy Palmer:

Online vote: Yes – 76, No – 5, Abstain - 5

1 postal vote was received voting yes.

**Amy Palmer was elected as a Trustee for a three-year term.**

#### ii) Tasha Suratwala:

Online vote: Yes – 76, No – 3, Abstain - 6

1 postal vote was received voting yes.

**Tasha Suratwala was elected as a Trustee for a three-year term.**

#### iii) Shuranjeet Takhar:

Online vote: Yes – 78, No - 4, Abstain- 4

1 postal vote was received voting yes.

**Shuranjeet Takhar was elected as a Trustee for a three-year term.**

Amy congratulated and welcomed the new trustees on board.

## Item 4

### Reappointment of External Examiners

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Amy explained that in February 2021, after assessing a number of applications, the board appointed Beever & Struthers to independently examine NSUN's accounts, and that in these elections, it was proposed that Beever & Struthers were reappointed as NSUN's Independent Examiners to the accounts.

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Online vote: Yes - 66, No - 0, Abstain - 12

1 postal vote was received voting yes.

Beever & Struthers were reappointed as the Independent Examiners to the NSUN accounts.

## Item 5

### Special resolutions regarding proposal that NSUN be converted into a CIO

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Amy stated that further to the statement of liability of NSUN members in the case of insolvency issued last year, the board reviewed NSUN's legal status, in consultation with legal advice, and proposed that NSUN move to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) status. Amy added that that the new proposed constitution had been sent out to all members along with accompanying notes and our current articles of association for reference. <https://www.nsun.org.uk/news/statement-on-liability-of-nsun-members-in-case-of-insolvency-news/>

Further to this, the following two special resolutions were proposed:

The first special resolution was:

i. "THAT National Survivor User Network (company number 07166851) (registered charity number 113598) (NSUN) be converted from a company limited by guarantee to a charitable incorporated organisation."

Online vote: Yes - 63, No - 2 Abstain - 12

1 postal vote was received voting yes.

**The proposal for NSUN to change its legal status to that of a CIO was approved.**

The second special resolution was:

ii. "THAT the annexed draft constitution be adopted as the constitution of NSUN in substitution for the existing articles of association with effect from the conversion under resolution [ ]."

Online vote: Yes - 60, No - 2, Abstain - 15

1 postal vote was received voting yes.

**The proposal for NSUN's new CIO constitution to be adopted was approved.**

Amy said that they wanted to acknowledge all of the hard work put into this large piece of work, especially by NSUN Chair Angela Newton.

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## Item 6

### Trustees' Annual Report

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Amy:

Amy stated that it had been another difficult year, socially and politically – but one where NSUN has thrived and grown in positive way. They shared some of the NSUN team's successes, including in securing funding, and the NSUN Covid-19 Fund. They highlighted that NSUN had been actively strengthening the diversity of the network so that it worked in the interests of everybody, and especially those that are the most marginalised. The Board takes inspiration from the fantastic Team and the valued membership, and continues to support diversity and representation within and across NSUN.

Akiko introduced the team, and shared a few highlights of the past financial year, including:

The NSUN Covid-19 Fund where NSUN distributed £125,000 in small grants to 88 organisations. The Fund changed the way NSUN thought about its work and how it engaged with the membership.

The report “What Do User-Led Groups Need?” by Emma Ormerod and Mark Brown:  
<https://www.nsun.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/whatdouser-ledgroupsneed.pdf>

NSUN's work in peer support, including a series of resources produced by Alison Faulkner, NSUN Associate, as part of the wider partnership work with Mind (e.g. <https://www.nsun.org.uk/resource/remote-and-online-peer-support-resource/>), and some shared online learning spaces with some of our members, on the challenges of online peer support.

The “What do User-Led Groups Need?” report has led to deeper reflection on how NSUN can best support its members. As a result of this, NSUN launched a regular online reflective practice space in partnership with youth mental health projects, Voice Collective and Hearts and Minds; supported the Survivor Researcher Network (SRN) in their journey to becoming constituted; and worked in partnership with a user-led group on a zine for queer mental health. NSUN also continued to amplify members' voices and campaigns, and published 64 members' blogs.

The policy work led by Mary has included consortium work around welfare, including through the Disability Benefits Consortium, and work around the Peer Support Worker Competence Framework earlier in the year. Future work will look more deeply at the social determinants of mental ill health and distress.

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## Item 7

### Annual Accounts

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Jen Beardsley (she/her), NSUN's Finance Manager, ran through the highlights of the NSUN accounts for the financial year 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021 which can be found here, particularly referring to pages 20 and 21: <https://www.nsun.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NSUN-accounts-2020-21.pdf>

Jen: The highlights were:

- Total net income for the year was £100,794, essentially meaning we received funds in the 2020/21 year for use in 2021/22.
- This surplus was nearly £95,000 better than the previous year where a small net income had been seen.
- Income totalled nearly £562,000, an increase of nearly £326,000 on the previous year. This increase was the result of grants from funders specifically responding to the Coronavirus pandemic as well as grants totalling £165,000 received towards the NSUN Covid small grants fund.
- Costs also rose by £231,000 to just over £440,000 as a result of the expansion of the team and the work during the year. The largest area of increase was the NSUN Covid Fund which saw £125,280 of grants being issued directly to groups and organisations.
- Other key changes included:
  - An increase in staff costs of £27,000 - where the staff team grew from an average of 2 to 3.4 over the course of the year.
  - An increase in other support costs were seen of £32,000 where we were particularly grateful to have received £28,000 of services on a pro-bono basis from solicitors Faegre Drinker Biddle and Reath LLP in respect of the review of NSUN's Articles of Association - this amount for which is reflected in these accounts.

Fundraising costs totalled £21,000 and represented time spent by the staff team in applying for grants and funding. The investment saw an increase in income from these sources of £290,000 in the 2020/21 financial year as well as investment in this year and the previous year having resulted successful securing of a 3-year lottery grant of £279,000 for use between April 2021 and March 2024.

Overall, for the 2020/21 financial year, grant income remains the main source of funding at 85% of total income. We are incredibly grateful to all our donors and grant funders. Full details of grant funders are on page 25 - our four largest funders by £ in the year were The DHSC Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund - issued by Mind; Esmee Fairbairn; London Community Response Fund - issued by City Bridge Trust; and The National Lottery Community Fund.

The total funds (or money held) at the end of March 2021 (shown on page 21) was £134,548. This was made up of restricted funds of £61,000 and unrestricted funds – which can be spent (or saved) more flexibly which totalled nearly £73,000. Of the £73,000 which can be spent more flexibly, £47,000 represented grants to be used in the coming year and £26,000 represented reserves (or savings) held to provide financial resilience. The level of savings held is currently 60% of the target levels set by the Trustees and the aim is that this level will be increased gradually over the coming years.

## Item 8

### Any Other Business/Special Business/Questions

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Amy said that there was no other or special business at the meeting, but that there was time reserved for answering any questions about the trustees' report, the finances or the change in NSUN's status to that of a CIO.

Akiko and Mary answered two questions about Mental Health Act reform, giving an update on NSUN's work in this area. The team also answered a question about what had been their favourite piece of work at NSUN over the past year.

There were no more questions from attendees.

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### Close of business

Amy declared the statutory business complete and thanked everyone for their attendance and invited them to enjoy the events throughout the two forthcoming AGM days.

Meeting ended at 11.08am.