

Unlock Democracy Council Meeting
2pm - 4.15pm, Saturday 21 July 2018
9 King Street, London, EC2V 8EA
MINUTES

Present: Danny Zinkus Sutton (chairing), Victor Anderson, Andrew Blick, Stephen Carter (remotely), Debbie Chay, Ian Driver, John Ferguson, Sepi Golzari-Munro, Peter Hirst, Malcolm MacIntyre-Read, Jack Maizels, Jessica Metheringham (remotely)

Staff in Attendance: Alexandra Runswick (Director), Sam Coates, Sarah Clarke, Tim Rouse

1. Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising

Apologies

Rachel Collinson, Andrew Manning, Vicky Seddon, Phil Starr

I) Council Minutes for Approval

Council approved minutes from the previous meeting.

II) Management Board minutes

Council noted Management Board minutes.

III) Matters arising

Sam Coates updated Council on progress made on responding to the local democracy AGM motion.

Danny Zinkus Sutton drew Council members attention to the attendance rules.

Malcolm MacIntyre-Read requested that page numbers be added to Council papers.

2. Budget

Alexandra Runswick gave Council an overview of how Unlock Democracy's finances work, including the relationship with Rodell Properties. Alexandra drew Council's attention to the fact that this year Unlock Democracy has unusually high level of grant income when

compared with previous years. She told Council that the organisation is in a reasonably healthy financial position. The current financial focus is on sustainability based on growing membership income and Rodell Properties income, rather than relying on grant income.

Ian Driver asked Alexandra Runswick to advise on Unlock Democracy's position regarding reserves. Alexandra said that when Council last reviewed this a meeting or two ago, UD had over 6 months reserves but this does fluctuate and she would circulate the current figure to Council via email.

Malcolm MacIntyre Reed asked for clarification on what activities are entailed in the events income line. Alexandra Runswick said that there were no plans at this stage, but this could include, for example, a donations bucket at AGM or if Unlock Democracy ran a ticketed conference.

Danny Zinkus Sutton clarified the relationship with Rodell Properties and the implications for Unlock Democracy's current rent payments.

Jessica Metheringham commented that she found the detailed breakdown of grant income in the budget helpful.

The budget was approved unanimously.

Alexandra Runswick drew Council's attention to the legacy income. She explained that this was a residual legacy from the estate of Jean Mavis Dent. The initial legacy has been received in 2014 but that the estate was only just being wound up and this meant an additional legacy was forthcoming. The distribution of the legacy had been contentious in 2014 but after a period of negotiation a formula had been agreed. In order to receive the additional legacy a Director of Unlock Democracy, ie a member of Council, will need to sign a deed of variation. The proposal is to divide the remaining monies on the same terms as in 2014. She asked Council to approve the signing of the deed of variation and mandate Jack Maizels to sign it on their behalf.

Council approved the signing of the deed of variation and authorised Jack Maizels to sign it on behalf of Unlock Democracy.

Action:

Arti Vyas to update the budget line for the Repeal Bill Alliance and an accurate version of the budget to be recirculated to Council.

Alexandra Runswick to circulate reserve figures to Council.

3. Director's report and questions

Alexandra Runswick provided a verbal overview of the Director's report. A big focus is the written constitution campaign, which is on track to launch in November. She highlighted the challenges of evaluating work on the EU Withdrawal Act against other sorts of campaigns because of the unique political environment being operated in, where normal political practices and conventions have fallen aside.

Danny Zinkus Sutton drew attention to the current busy period the staff is going through and highlighted the limited existing capacity to deliver any additional projects not already outlined in the gantt chart presented.

Sepi Golzari Munro asked for future thinking to be done around what was and wasn't outside of the organisations control (in regards to the Withdrawal Bill campaign) so that lessons can be learnt about where to subject influence in future campaigns.

Victor Anderson asked for clarification about what the staging posts in the written constitution campaign would look like. Alexandra Runswick responded that one staging post being thought about was codifying something (human rights, environmental protections etc), having taken inspiration from the New Zealand constitution. Also being considered is a Private Members Bill.

Malcolm MacIntyre-Read asked where Unlock Democracy was positioned in regards to Brexit. Alexandra explained Unlock Democracy's current thinking on Brexit, and the organisation's 'Brexit neutral' position.

Peter Hirst proposed that the staging posts in the written constitution campaign are signed off by Council. He also proposed a future discussion on Unlock Democracy's most recent Council elections.

Andrew Blick highlighted the upcoming importance of data and digital rights, and the potential for Unlock Democracy to incorporate this issue into Unlock Democracy's work. Alexandra explained that Unlock Democracy is currently working with Fair Vote and doing work on Vote Leave, which relates to these concerns.

Ian Driver suggested that Unlock Democracy should be prepared for a second referendum, and this is an issue that we shouldn't shy away from. Andrew Blick pointed out that in such an instance where a second referendum is called, Unlock Democracy's position could be one where we advocate that it should be a written constitution being the place to outline what a good referendum looks like - rather than Unlock Democracy taking a position on whether there should be a referendum, or what the outcome of that referendum should be.

Action:

Alexandra Runswick to include a discussion item on Unlock Democracy's Council elections in the next Council meeting.

4. Website discussion

Sam Coates led a brainstorm for Council on the website redesign. Council fed back on areas where they thought the website could be updated or improved.

5. Internal structures decision

Alexandra Runswick chaired this item. She explained the procedure for agreeing internal structures.

Term length for Officer group

Council decided that the Officer group would have the same term length as Council, that is, they would be elected for a two year period.

Vice Chairs

Vice Chair for Rodell Properties

Vice Chair for Policy

There was a discussion about the role of the Vice Chair for Policy. One proposal was to keep the two Vice Chair roles, with a view that the Vice Chair for Policy role needs to be defined and whoever occupies that role demonstrate the value. Alternatively, Council could appoint this Vice Chair once the role was defined.

Stephen Carter outlined some areas where the role could have gone further. This could include creating Unlock Democracy's position on referendums, as well as Unlock Democracy's position on models of constitutions.

Council decided to appoint a Vice Chair for Rodell Properties.

Council decided to make a decision about the Vice Chair for Policy at the next Council meeting.

Council agreed to take a decision at the next meeting as to whether any further Vice Chairs are needed and / or appointed.

Sepi Golzari Munro questioned whether there were any opportunities to reduce the number of meetings so as to reduce the pressure on staff and the opportunity cost of the sizeable amount of work done producing papers.

Election of Officers

Alexandra Runswick proposed that elections take place by self nomination and an election by email (STV count via a Survey Monkey).

Council approved self nomination after the meeting and an election by email.

Management Board

Council decided that Management Board should exist.

Council decided that the Chair of Council should also be the Chair of Management Board.

Number of Members of Management Board

Council decided that Management Board would have 8 members.

Electing Management Board

Council decided that this will take place electronically via STV.

Action:

Alexandra Runswick to circulate details about Chair and Management Board elections via email.

Alexandra Runswick to review Management Board and Council meetings, and to email around suggestions for reducing the number of meetings.

6. Dates of future meetings

Council agreed to take this decision by email.

Action:

Alexandra Runswick to circulate the proposed dates to Council electronically.

7. A.O.B and Close

Council thanked Danny Zinkus Sutton and Jack Maizels for their work Co-Chairing the 2016-2018 Council.