

# Unlock Democracy Council Meeting

**23 January 2021 at 2pm**

**Held on Zoom**

**Present:** Jessica Metheringham (Chair), Catherine Bearder, Marcus Cain, Stephen Carter, Helen Close, Stephen Gosling, Stuart Hill, Peter Hirst, Tom Pratt, Vicky Seddon, Sean Shore, Jacob Webb, Luke Williams

**Staff:** Tom Brake, Simon Howard (part of the meeting), Shaun Roberts (part of the meeting)

**Apologies:** Rachel Collinson, Paul Daley, Ian Driver, Mike Young

## **Rodell AGM**

The Rodell AGM was held at the start of this meeting.

## **Minutes, matters arising, dates**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12 September were approved.

Council noted the minutes of the Management Board meetings.

Council noted the draft minutes of the last AGM, which are to be approved by the next AGM. Vicky Seddon highlighted that the minutes currently stated that the motion brought by John Franglan had been “referred back” to Council, and asked that this be altered to “remitted”. Jessica Metheringham agreed that “back” misleadingly implied that the motion had been to Council already. A brief discussion on the difference between “remitted” and “referred” concluded with Jessica Metheringham recognising that remitted was the term used at the time. No other queries were raised there, and any other suggestions for minor changes to the draft minutes could be made to Tom Brake or Jessica Metheringham before the next AGM.

Under matters arising, Jessica Metheringham noted the recent difficulties regarding times of meetings, and reminded all Council members to be clear and considerate of people’s preferences.

Vicky Seddon asked for Council to be kept up to date of staff changes. Jessica Metheringham asked for this to be noted in the minutes.

The dates of the next Council meetings have already been set as 15 May 2021 and 4 September 2021.

## **Finance**

Tom Brake presented the Profit and Loss summary for the year to November. The most recent Profit and Loss summary will be provided at future Council meetings. The accounts from last year (as approved at the AGM) were also available as a link.

Comments were made by the following Council members. Vicky Seddon remarked that a 5% difference was not a problem. Catherine Bearder asked for clarification on office costs, and Tom Brake explained that many of these had stayed the same as we are still leasing 33 Corsham Street. Stephen Carter asked about the changes in bank charges, and Tom Brake explained that the charges are correct. The original budget under-estimated their cost. Peter Hirst asked for clarification on regular giving figures. These figures are very close to the original budgeted figure.

Council voted to accept the profit and loss summary with thirteen votes in favour and one vote abstaining. A draft three year budget will come to Council at the next meeting.

## **Update from Director**

Tom Brake and Shaun Roberts presented.

Shaun Roberts provided Council with a detailed report on two recent UD surveys. Council discussed, with the following questions and comments. Catherine Bearder asked about Facebook advertising, highlighted the low number of Conservative UD members, and connected the result on cronyism to the news of the time. Peter Hirst commented on how UD should decide what to campaign on and what to leave to other organisations. Helen Close raised concerns around potentially taking money from political parties and associated reputational risk. Stuart Hill suggested a detailed questionnaire to ask members to volunteer to campaign with UD. John Franglen raised issues of GDPR. Tom Brake clarified that it recently cost around 36p on Facebook to encourage supporters to sign up. Tom Brake explained that UD was properly aware of political affiliation as a protected category under GDPR, meaning data from surveys had to be treated carefully.

Tom Brake updated the Council on new members who have joined UD (74 have been added since December), current campaigns (the Electoral Commission campaign is live). He confirmed that UD would submit a bid to the JRRT for their proposed democracy hub project. He was also pleased to announce that Grace Barnett would be joining the team at the start of February. The Council thanked staff for their work.

## **Skills audit**

Catherine Bearder updated the Council on the skills audit of Council members and shared documents.

## **Draft Strategy**

Luke Williams presented the draft strategy. Two meetings have recently been held for Council members to discuss the draft strategy, on 14 January and 20 January.

Tom Brake asked Council to adopt the document as a living document which he could start to put into practice. Stephen Carter commented on Scottish independence, Vicky Seddon on the difference between decentralisation and devolution. Catherine Bearder highlighted that this document was internal. Helen Close emphasized reaching out to groups which feel unheard and the need to turn the Appendix into an operational plan. Tom Brake confirmed the draft strategy would be amended to highlight the importance of consulting these groups and more detailed plans relating to the Appendix will be drawn up. Peter Hirst spoke about the process for reaching a written constitution. Stuart Hill highlighted that the document was a guide.

Council voted unanimously to adopt the draft strategy as a living document, asking for it to be reviewed in 6 months.

## **Policy motions**

Jessica Metherringham noted that a motion proposed by Vicky Seddon had been adopted by the AGM, and asked any Council members interested in that work to contact Vicky Seddon or Tom Brake.

Jessica Metherringham noted that a motion proposed by John Franglen had not been adopted by the AGM. That motion had instead been remitted to this Council meeting for any decision. Prior to this meeting, in order to inform decisions on that motion, an informal discussion had been held on 9 January. John Franglen told Council that he considered that his motion had fallen by running out of time at the AGM. John Franglen confirmed that he did not wish his motion to be further discussed by Council, and that he did not wish Council to vote on the motion. As chair Jessica Metherringham accepted John's confirmation, and as there is therefore no more that Council can do on this motion, the issue will be considered resolved.

Vicky Seddon proposed a motion, as here: [Vicky Seddon motion - Making Resource Decisions](#)

No Council members spoke in direct opposition to the motion, with several Council members seeking clarification on the purpose of the motion, and some commenting that multiple actions could be taken at once. A vote was taken, with thirteen members voting for the motion, and one abstaining.

Stuart Hill proposed a motion, as here: [Stuart Hill Motion - Progressing PR](#)

Council and Stuart Hill were content to move straight to a vote without debate, due to time being short and the issue having been discussed previously at the 9 January meeting and via email. A vote was taken, with thirteen members voting for the motion, and one opposing.

## **AOB**

Catherine Bearder suggested that Council set up a working party or small group to consider our constitution. John Franglen highlighted a common trap of not changing things due to a bigger review coming, and asked us not to make that mistake. Helen Close and Peter Hirst spoke in favour of a sub committee or review of some nature. Jessica Metheringham concluded that this was an issue which should be considered further, and that Council can self-organise to some degree on Loomio, coming back to a future Council meeting with suggestions.

Stuart Hill highlighted potential copyright and media licensing issues of which he had recently been made aware. Tom Brake will ensure that UD stays within the regulations.