

*Registered Charity Number 1158632*

Independent Living Centre, c/o Barnet & Southgate College, 7 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, London NW9 4BR

T: 020 3475 1314 E:info@inclusionbarnet.org.uk

**Inclusion Barnet AGM**

**Tuesday 15th December 2020**  
**3:00pm – 4:30pm**

**Held via online Zoom meeting.**

Due to Coronavirus and the current restrictions the Charity Commission have granted permission for the AGM to be held online.

In attendance:

**Inclusion Barnet Staff**

Caroline Collier

Rebecca Sare

Ellen Cheshire

Leila Latif

Kate Toon

Eve Byers

**Inclusion Barnet Trustees**

Paul

Elsie Lyons

Jennifer Pearl

Phillip Rackham

**Inclusion Barnet Members**

The meeting was quorate and 16 members were present and voting.

**Trustee Elsie Lyons opened the AGM** by thanking Caroline Collier and all at Inclusion Barnet staff for their hard work over the year.

**Overview update from the CEO, Caroline Collier**

**Healthwatch Barnet**

In April 2020, IB were awarded the Healthwatch contract for Barnet. CC believes that IB are the first DDPO to run a Healthwatch contract, highlighting the value of this service being user led. Currently researching people’s views on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Barnet, have also reported this year on Care Homes during lockdown and will soon be looking at mental health services.

**VCS support**

As we support the VCO sector through our contract with Barnet Council, since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic/lockdown, we have worked to support the VC sector, with our two other ‘Barnet Together’ partners, Young Barnet Foundation and Volunteering Barnet. Three partnership bids were developed, with two being successful, bringing £122,525 into Barnet over 6 months. This meant that in July we were able to recruit for several short-term targeted appointments.  
Highlights of our activity included:

* 2,964 meals were provided by food banks with £32k of DEFRA funding secured by IB
* £2,129 was raised through the 2.6 challenge for the Barnet Community Response Fund
* 171 applications were assessed for the Barnet Community Response Fund
* Ran Adults Services Liaison Group to share information about service delivery during Covid.
* 86 Covid project meetings were attended and over 3000 emails processed.
* Development and launch of the Barnet Voluntary Sector Manifesto.

**Inclusion Unlimited**

Rebecca has delivered our first piece of consultancy work, advising on some co-production in Hertfordshire.

**Inclusion Barnet Management Handbook**

The Inclusion Barnet Management Handbook was launched, it is a free resource to support leaders of Deaf and Disabled People’s Organisation (DDPOs), it also offers managerial insight to any team leader. It was written by Aman Ahluwalia with Caroline Collier and Richard Banks.

**Two Libraries**

Library services were thriving until lockdown but are currently making a loss due to extended closure and now limited click & collect offering. New Barnet library currently open whilst East Barnet closed.

**New User Voice Project**

One of goals last year was to start a user voice group. We were successful this year and have secured funding from City Bridge for a five-year project being led by Eve Byers. (see below)

**Finances**

We are hopeful that we could make a small surplus in the current financial year. We have £427,000 secured towards next year and are currently waiting to hear whether our Enablement project will receive an extension. Our priority is to secure funding for our Touchpoint project, which is working well under KT’s management (see below). The current National Lottery funding ends in June 2021. Note: The Benefits Advisory Service element is funded under a separate grant from Trust for London which continues beyond June 2021.

**Update on Touchpoint by Kate Toon, Touchpoint Services Manager**

Started working for IB in March 2020, worked for two weeks in the office before everyone’s migration to home working. Working from home is working well.

There are three services:

1) Peer Led Support Service. Currently two Peer Workers (Melisssa and Leila, Leila recently joined to replace Eve who has moved to another project), and recruitment underway for a third Peer Worker to join in the New Year. The Peer Workers support customers through goal orientated unmet support needs. During Covid there has been an increase in demand. Most of their customers come via referrals.

2) Volunteer Peer Mentors and Touchpoint Together Group

3) Benefits Advice Service

In recent months have:

* Revamped all copy on the website to make clearer to funders, customers and service provides what the Touchpoint offering is.
* Developing our database resources
* Undergoing an external evaluation to look at the service, ensuring that it meets the ned of the people, and where we might like to develop and grow. This will be a valuable resource when seeking funding to keep Touchpoint going
* Made a short film, which will be released in the New Year.

**Touchpoint Case Study by Leila Latif, Touchpoint Peer Worker**

Leila gave an overview of a recent case, which demonstrates the breadth of the support the Touchpoint team provide, and highlights that the initial referral topic may just be the tip of the iceberg, and that there may be several underlying and/or interconnected issues that can be/need to be addressed.

This client was referred to Touchpoint by Outreach Barnet in July 2020, he had had been experiencing depression and anxiety regarding his health issues caused by a traffic accident in 2011 and his ongoing housing situation.

His current housing did not meet his physical needs, as it was a small studio flat with no space to make the modifications he needed. He had no freezer, and a broken fridge – unable to store food was affecting his mood as it was difficult for him to go out frequently to buy food.  
 His OT assessment deemed is unsuitable but he was having difficulty getting the report which was delaying his housing re-banding with Barnet Homes.

Outcome achieved by Touchpoint Peer Worker

* We investigated options for grants for the fridge freezer. Crisis fund said he needed to first apply for a budgeting advance – however he already has a budgeting advance he’s paying back. Provided crisis fund with evidence of benefits receiving and bank statements. Crisis fund provided new fridge freezer which doesn’t have to re-pay.
* Contacted the OT explaining the reasons he needed the report and got that emailed.
* Managed to contact Housing officer Manager re banding decision – decision made the next day
* Inappropriate housing banding decision – Band 4 – no mention of severe physical and psychological condition in the letter – which just stated that he was not a priority as he hadn’t been living in Barnet for 5 years.
* We provided him with the info for CAB in Barnet.
* Started getting support from a solicitor using Legal Aid
* Organised three-way video meeting with Solicitor re appealing banding decision and planned how we would go about this. Sent the Solicitor the OT report to use as evidence.
* Appeals process recently started and is ongoing

**Update on User Voice Project by Eve Byers**

Eve joined Inclusion Barnet a year and a half ago, initially as a Touchpoint Peer Worker, but now with funding for City Bridge, is the lead on IB’s five-year User Voice Project. It is in its initial development and research stages. In the New Year, Eve will be setting up two focus groups:

1. Pan-disability
2. Mental Health

With a 3rd Neurodivergent group to follow.

Eve is developing a Comms strategy which will link in with IB’s membership scheme. IB will be launching a monthly newsletter, and Eve will become increasingly active on IB’s social media channels.

EB for IB provided evidence in December 2020 to support Just Fair’s submission to the House of Lords COVID-19 Committee inquiry. This submission looks at the economic and social rights implications of digital technology on people’s wellbeing in the UK. Recommendations are made based on human rights measures to ensure no group of people is disproportionately affected or disadvantaged by the increasing use of digital technology in society.

**The formal aspect of the AGM**

**Via online polls and verbal votes, the following six items were passed:**

1. Do you approve of the minutes of the previous AGM (held in 2019)?

12 Yes

4 Abstain

The vote was carried.

1. Do you agree to this change to the constitution?

15 Yes

1 Abstain

The vote was carried.

1. Do you approve the 2019/2020 annual accounts and report?

12 Yes

3 Abstain

This vote was prefaced by a brief overview by Caroline Collier on IB’s financial situation for 2019/20:

£521,480 income. £509,294 expenditure. Surplus of £12,186.

However, £13,053 of expenditure was to decrease our restricted reserves. This was mainly related to Touchpoint development money.

Therefore, IB's unrestricted reserves rose by £25,238 to create unrestricted reserves of £126,561. Restricted reserves are £25,412, of which £18,251 is restricted for use on Barnet Voice projects.

The vote was carried.

1. Do you approve to the re-election of trustee, Elsie Lyons?

16 Yes

The vote was carried.

1. Do you approve the appointment of Elsie Lyons and Jennifer Pearl as our new Joint-Chairs.

15 Yes

1 Abstain

The vote was carried.

1. Do you approve to the re-appointment of Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP as our auditor for next year?

14 Yes

2 Abstain

The vote was carried.

With the formal elements of the AGM completed, the meeting was opened up for general discussion and comment.

Items to action:

* Members would like to be kept up to date on developments throughout the year (CC/RS - quarterly update newsletter and/or emails)
* Members to be more involved in the decision-making process/direction of IB activity (via the user voice project).

General comments:

There was discussion over digital exclusion now that more activity happening on-line:

* EB’s work for Just Fair’s submission addresses this, and is something that EB will be continuing to research/advocate on
* Jennifer Pearl is aware of a Computer Group in Barnet who are supporting people to get online.
* Age UK Barent are sending out physical newsletters and have a befriending scheme,
* EB reported that telephone conferencing is more cumbersome and costly than video conferencing

Caroline Collier brought the meeting to an end by:

* Thanking everyone for coming
* Thanking Paul for this support and commitment to IB over the past ten plus years, and that him standing down as Chair was the end of an era.

Elsie Lyons echoed this, and thanked Caroline for the hours and enthusiasm she has brought to her role, particularly over this past difficult year.