

**MINUTES OF ADVICE NI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2023 AT  
RIDDELL HALL BELFAST**

Attendees:

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Ann Conlon         | Springfield Charitable Association                   |
| Bernie Maguire     | Community Advice Fermanagh                           |
| Boyd McClurg       | Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council |
| Brian Pelan        | VIEW Digital   |
| Conor McDonald     | Queens Students' Union                               |
| Conrad McConnell   | DFC  |
| Courtney Mills     | Finegan Gibson                                       |
| Derek McGregor     | Community Advice Ards and North Down                 |
| Donnchadh Murphy   | NIACRO   |
| Eddie Smith        | Clanmill   |
| Esther Ogunleye    | Swift Hearers Ministries                             |
| Gerard O'Neill     | Springfield Charitable Association                   |
| Jacqueline Monahan | Roma Support Hub                                     |
| James Myles        | CAP  |
| Janine Maher       | Money & Pensions Service                             |
| Joanne Farrell     | BURC   |
| Keira Lindsay      | DFC  |
| Kellie Armstrong   | Alliance Party                                       |
| Kelly O'Neill      | WAVE Trauma  |
| Mabel Stevenson    | Utility Regulator                                    |
| Mark Ewing         | Veterans' Advice Line for Statutory Professionals    |
| Mathilda Taulbutt  | Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid                    |
| Michael Crow       | Radius Housing                                       |
| Michael Diver      | Ability Net  |
| Nathan Hughes      | WAVE Trauma  |
| Nuala McKenna      | VCD - Department for Communities                     |
| Oleg Danuta        | Migrant Centre NI                                    |
| Paddy Rooney       | DFC  |
| Pat Colton         | Advice Space   |
| Patricia Smith     | Sinn Féin  |
| Paul Kelly         | Libraries NI   |
| Peter McMahan      | Advice Space   |
| Rachel Strong      | Utility Regulator                                    |
| Sandra McCoubrey   | Habinteg Housing officer                             |
| Scott Kennerley    | The Consumer Council                                 |
| Shannon Keegan     | Community Development and Health Network             |
| Stephen Gray       | Mindwise   |
| Terrie Orr         | WAVE Trauma  |
| Zakia Mekki        | BCDA   |

In attendance: Advice NI Staff

Apologies: A list of apologies was made available

Opening & Welcome by Chair

Mathilda Taulbutt, Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, she noted apologies and updated that a list available. Mathilda spoke briefly about the work of the sector over the last year and commended the dedication of all under the current ongoing cost of living crisis. She thanked all fellow board members for their support during the year, the Advice NI staff team and all funders.

Minutes of previous meeting – November 2022 – circulated- proposed Gerard O’Neill, seconded Derek McGregor

Matters arising – there were no matters arising

Election of Trustees – the following were elected on block

- Mathilda Taulbutt – Causeway Women’s Aid - *Chairperson*
- Joanne Farrell – Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
- Barry McMullan – NIACRO
- Gerard O’Neill – SCA Ltd
- Brenda Kearns – Age NI
- Michele Loughran – Mindwise
- Asling Cunningham – Housing Rights
- Derek McGregor – Community Advice Ards & North Down
- Gerard Morgan – East Belfast Independent Advice Centre

Proposed: Mathilda Taulbutt, Gerard O’Neill

Treasurer’s Report – presented by Courtney Mills from Finegan Gibson who gave an overview of income and expense sources. Overall deficit for the year is £178,356 with unrestricted funds of £878k which is within recommended best practice amount. Deficit has reduced substantially from the previous year despite a reduction in funding of 4%.

Full set of statutory accounts available from Advice NI.

Appointment of Auditors – Finegan Gibson Chartered Accounts were re-appointed as auditors for the following year. – proposed Mathilda Taulbutt, seconded Gerard O’Neill

Special Resolution to Amend Articles Association – following detailed consultation with members and board over the year, the amended Articles of Association were approved by a majority vote (full list available). Copy of final revised Articles available from Advice NI.

Presentation of Annual Report – Bob Stronge CEO, welcomed all to the meeting and then talked through the highlights from the annual report – a copy of the infographic was available at the meeting. He spoke also about the cost of living crisis, the living wage, universal income and the general ongoing work/support that Advice NI members and team provide to the sector. He thanked the members for their hard work over the year, the board for their continual support and the Advice NI team.

Follow a comfort break, Linda McAuley, MBE compered the remaining of the meeting, firstly introducing the speakers:

Paddy Rooney, Deputy Secretary of Work and Health at DfC – who spoke about the move to UC Phase including details of Key Delivery Partners & External Stakeholders as well as next steps.

Jason Lear, Lear Training Associates – gave a presentation on ‘Conversing with the Future’ – the Case for Upskilling in the Era of ChatGPT.

Samantha Gallagher – Assistant Manager & Welfare Specialist, Community Advice Fermanagh – spoke about Digital Transformation in the Advice World, giving real examples, highlighting concerns as well as touching on scam alerts.

Esther Ogunleye, Volunteer Digital Champion – gave a short talk on being a volunteer with Advice NI – measuring, understanding and better articulating impact.

Panel Discussion – the meeting concluded with a panel discussion made up of the speakers, Advice NI Chair and CEO.

Closing Remarks – Mathilda again thanked all for attending, giving a special mention to the speakers as well as Power NI for sponsoring the event.

Lunch followed.