



OPEN

Board Meeting Summary Report Multiple Sclerosis Society Board of Trustees

Meeting date: Thursday 1 April 2021, 10.30am
Held by videoconference

Present

Nick Winser	Chair of the MS Society
Sarah Schol	Vice Chair of the MS Society
Stuart Secker	Treasurer
Shewly Choudhury	Trustee
Susan Crane	Trustee
Ady Dike	Trustee
Marion King	Trustee
Emily Reves	Trustee
Anne Shinkwin	Trustee (until item 9)
Ceri Smith	Trustee
Anthony Upshall	Trustee
Polly Williams	Trustee
David Allen	Chair of England Council (Interim)
Catherine Doran	Chair of Northern Ireland Council
Mary Douglas	Chair of Scotland Council (from item 8)
Ann Jones	Vice Chair of Cymru Council (from item 10)

Attending

Nick Moberly	Chief Executive
Vicky Annis	Executive Director of Corporate Services
Clare Horwood	Executive Director of Engagement and Income Generation (item 9)
Morna Simpkins	Director of Scotland (item 13)
Penny Coombes	Head of Governance and Executive Office
Liz Grant	Head of Digital and Content (item 9)
Robin Hurd	Head of Finance, Procurement and Facilities (item 6 & 7)
Mital Patel	Head of Strategy and Business Intelligence (items 5 & 8)
Tom Shelston	Senior Marketing Consultant (item 9)
Danielle Walker	Governance Manager (minutes)

Observing

Emma Cornish	EA Team Lead
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Apologies

Kath Foot	Chair of the Cymru Council
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1. Chief Executive's Report

- 1.1. Nick Moberly (Chief Executive) introduced the 2020 Quarter 4 Progress and Performance Report and invited questions from the Board. The report included an executive summary of our performance in quarter 4, a summary of progress against the 2020 business plan with RAG ratings against objectives that had been revised to reflect the impact of COVID-19 and KPIs against delivery of core activities.
- 1.2. The Board expressed their appreciation to colleagues and volunteers for their innovative response to the pandemic and on the strong results that had been achieved in difficult circumstances. They recognised that we'd been able successfully to navigate the massive impact that the pandemic had on our financial position and plans for the year, and that we had ended the year with a financial position close to what we had predicted.

2. 2020 Annual Report and Accounts

- 2.1. The Board was asked to approve the MS Society 2020 Annual Report and Accounts, which had been produced by the Finance Team and scrutinised by our Audit, Risk and Finance Committee and our auditors, Haysmacintyre. The Board received assurance that the MS Society remains a going concern and gave approval.
- 2.2. The Board discussed the purpose of the Annual Report and Accounts, and whether this public document should be used to promote our achievements to a wider audience. It was agreed that the Executive would consider how to communicate our achievements during the pandemic, and would consider preparing an impact report alongside the Annual Report and Accounts.
- 2.3. The Board also noted that the MSS (Trading) Ltd 2020 Annual Report and Accounts had been approved by the Directors at a meeting earlier that day. The Directors of MSS (Trading) Ltd are Stuart Secker (Treasurer), Sarah Schol (Vice Chair), Nick Moberly (Chief Executive) and Vicky Annis (Executive Director of Corporate Services). MSS (Trading) Ltd accounts relate to trading activities that don't come through the Charity.

3. Strategic Progress and Impact Framework

- 3.1. The Board reviewed the Strategic Progress and Impact Framework being developed to provide a consolidated view of the desired outcomes and key deliverables of our functional strategies – Digital, Data and Technology; Employee Engagement; Income Generation; Influencing; Marketing and Engagement; Services and Support; and Volunteering. These functional strategies have been developed to provide more detail on how we intend to deliver our overall organisational strategy (Every MS Story) and were approved by the Board in 2020.

4. New Engagement Offer Update

- 4.1. The Board received a presentation on our new engagement offer "For You". We're at an exciting point in developing the offer that will help us to reach and engage with even more people affected by MS. The Board was fully supportive of the plans for the new online platform, as well as plans to strengthen offline engagement.

5. National Councils Update

- 5.1. The Board heard from Council Chairs and representatives about matters of concern to the MS community in each of the nations and approved the co-option of Catherine Gabela to the England Council, and the co-option of Chris Barry and Scott Burgess to the Scotland Council, all for one-year terms.
- 5.2. The discussion moved on to consider the developing role of our National Councils. The Board recognised the short-term challenges of keeping councils and local groups going during the pandemic, when they were unable to meet face-to-face, and when the volunteers running them were often people affected by MS who were shielding themselves. The ongoing challenge of recruiting to councils was also noted.

- 5.3. The Board was advised that early discussions had taken place with Council Chairs about how to agree a clearer remit for National Councils and increase their impact in the long term. Subsequent to these discussions, Penny Coombes (Head of Governance and Executive Office) and Morna Simpkins (Director of Scotland and National Councils Lead) had undertaken a review of the existing National Councils Authority to Act and their current areas of responsibility.
- 5.4. The Board reflected on the role of National Councils in creating opportunities for the MS community to be heard, to understand the impact of our strategy on the lives of people affected by MS throughout the UK. The opportunities afforded by digital engagement were illustrated by Council Chairs, who shared examples of how online services in the nations were reaching out to new people and introducing them to the different ways they could engage with the MS Society.
- 5.5. The Board discussed the need to engage with as many people as possible, to increase the reach of the support we offer, and increase support for the organisation. It was noted that changes to support for local groups and the ongoing programme of Volunteer Voice events had enabled the Executive to hear directly from volunteers. The role of National Councils in leading broader grassroots engagement was considered; playing a role in reaching new members and connecting with people from under-supported and underrepresented parts of the MS community. Discussions would be progressed, including involving current council members, and the Board would be kept updated.

6. Committee Updates

- 6.1. Stuart Secker (Treasurer, Chair of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee) gave an overview of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee meeting on 18 March 2021. The Reserves Policy was recommended to the Board and the committee also recommended reappointment of Haysmacintyre as auditors and sought approval to reappoint David Ramroop to a second term as an independent member of the committee. All committee recommendations were approved.
- 6.2. Nick Winser (Chair of the MS Society, ex officio Chair of the Nominations Committee) gave an overview of the first meeting of the new Nominations Committee on 23 February 2021. It was noted that one recruitment round would take place in 2021 to address all Board and Council vacancies. Candidates for each vacancy would be considered by a Recruitment Panel drawn from the Board and Councils who would shortlist, interview and make recommendations to the Board.
- 6.3. Polly Williams (Trustee, Chair of the People Committee) gave an overview of the People Committee meeting on 18 March 2021. The committee had received the consolidated People Report, which included updates on employee engagement; volunteering; internal communications; and equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI). It was noted that Polly Williams (Trustee), Sarah Schol (Vice Chair) and Ady Dike (Trustee) had offered to chair focus groups being run to support the development of the new EDI Strategy, which would come to the Board for approval in July.

7. Risk and compliance matters

- 7.1. The Board reviewed the Corporate Risk Register and approved the updated Risk Management Policy. The Annual Compliance Report was considered, which provides a summary of performance in key compliance areas including health and safety, safeguarding and data protection.

8. Governance matters

- 8.1. The Board authorised the CEO and Treasurer to sign contracts for IT support and the new London office fit out, and approved the change of our registered office address to 10 Queen Street Place, London EC4R 1AG (c/o Haysmacintyre). The Board also undertook their annual review of their Register of Interests.