

The Companies Act 2006
Company Limited by Guarantee and Not Having a Share Capital



Annual General Meeting – 14 November 2024 at 2.30pm

AGENDA

1	Introduction and Welcome – Marc Scott
2	Clair Stewart – NISRA – overview of the 2024 volunteering data
3	Notice Convening Meeting
4	Apologies
5	Chair’s Welcome & Opening Remarks – Marc Scott <i>(Agreement of Minutes from AGM 21 September 2023)</i>
6	Launch of Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027
7	Presentation of Annual Report 2023/24
8	Presentation of Financial Accounts 2023/24
9	Retirement and Appointment of Trustees <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Samantha Gillespie (re-appointment)➤ Nick Acheson (retirement)➤ Julie Meredith (resignation)➤ Olga McGettigan (appointment)
10	Election of Trustees
11	Appointment of Auditors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Harbinson Mulholland
12	Any Other Business

Dear Member,

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Volunteer Now (the "Company") will be held in person on 14 November at 2.30pm at Custom House, Belfast to transact the following business:

ORDINARY BUSINESS

1. To receive the audited accounts of the Company for the previous financial year;
2. To receive the Trustees Report on the Company's activities since the previous AGM;
3. To accept the retirement of those members of the Board of Trustees who are retiring;
4. To hold an election of persons to be Elected Trustees;
5. To appoint auditors for the Company and to fix their remuneration.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

COMPANY SECRETARY

Dated this 18th day of October 2024

Registered Office: Volunteer Now, 239, Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 1AF



**MINUTES OF VOLUNTEER NOW'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2023, 3:00PM
SKAINOS CENTRE**

Marc Scott, Chairperson Volunteer Now called Denise Hayward, Company Secretary, to convene the meeting.

PRESENT: Marc Scott (Chairperson)
Philip McDonagh (Volunteer Now Board)
Nick Acheson (Volunteer Now Board)
Helen Connolly (Volunteer Now Board)
Jenny Ferguson (Volunteer Now Board)
Jenny Marshall (Volunteer Now Board)
Elaine Black (Volunteer Now Board)
Jeannie McCann (Volunteer Now Board)
Samantha Gillespie (Volunteer Now Board)

IN ATTENDANCE: Denise Hayward (Chief Executive)
Jane Fyffe (Auditor Harbinson Mulholland)
Kelli Cleland (Volunteer Now)
Lindsay Armstrong (Volunteer Now)
Victoria Price (Volunteer Now) (minutes)
Ruth Mulholland (Volunteer Now)
Wenda Gray (Volunteer Now)
Alice O'Boyle (Volunteer Now)
Kyle Duncan (Inspire Wellbeing)
Tammi Lowe (National Trust)
Karina Scott (BH SCT)
Craig Fyle (NCC)
Carrie Neal (Arts Care)
Mar Decena (Arts Care)
Paula Marshall (Northern Health and Social Care Trust)
Mary Hegarty (Bryson Care)

APOLOGIES: Nathan Campbell (Volunteer Now Board)
Martin McCarthy (Volunteer Now Board)
Julie Meredith (Cats Protection)

2. Apologies and Minutes of Last Meeting

Chairperson recorded apologies received. Minutes of Volunteer Now's 12th AGM held on 15 September 2022 were agreed as a true record.

3. Chairperson's Welcome and Opening Remarks

Marc Scott welcomed everyone to the 13th AGM of Volunteer Now and shared opening remarks.

Marc thanked Denise and the staff and commended them for what they have delivered this year during a time where the voluntary sector is facing difficulties and instability, where the way people are volunteering has changed in recent years. There has been formal recognition at government level of the importance of volunteering, but Marc highlighted that this needs to be seen through funding to ensure this work is able to continue.

Marc shared that Volunteer Now is in the process of recruiting for a Business Development Manager. Members are encouraged to share this with their contacts.

The development of a long-term strategy to create sustainability and give direction to the organisation will result in Volunteer Now entering a strategic period of consultation during 2024. Members are invited to engage with and share how Volunteer Now can be a service to the sector.

Volunteers' Week celebrates its 40th anniversary next June. This is an opportunity for members to get involved and engage with the campaign to celebrate and raise the profile of volunteering.

4. Presentation of Annual Report 2022/23

Denise Hayward, the Chief Executive of Volunteer Now, was invited to present the Annual Review for 2022/2023.

It gives me great pleasure to report on the work of the organisation across another successful year. 2022/23 has seen the continued rebuilding of work and volunteering post covid. Demand for our services is high.

The purpose of Volunteer Now is to advance citizenship and community development by promoting and supporting volunteering. I am going to set out a few of the highlights of our achievement and performance in delivering this purpose and the benefit to our beneficiaries, the organisations and individuals involved in volunteering during 2022/23. The full detailed report is available in the trustees Annual Report at the front of the set of accounts in front of you.

This year we have focused on further embedding our values of Excellence and Creativity, Collaboration and Teamwork, Respect and Inclusion and Beneficiaries and Safeguarding into our work. We have done this through reshaping our staff one to ones and including reflection on the values in these sessions.

We continue to rely on the volunteer matching platform Be Collective as our main online tool for matching volunteers with opportunities. The total opportunities available at the end of March were 2,161 with 620 organisations overall registered on Be Collective. These organisations all receive regular information and access to direct local support. 2,950 new volunteers registered on Be Collective during the year and the team directly supported 556 volunteers to find a suitable opportunity. The level of registrations was up over 40% on the year before which is an encouraging sign of growth.

The team spoke directly to 5,651 people at workshops, information stands and volunteer talks and 5,601 opportunity sheets were downloaded this year.

This year Volunteer Now has put in place a support contract for communications with LK Communications which has led to good coverage for volunteering in particular during Volunteers' Week which was launched on the 1st of June with our 'Give Volunteering a Go' video highlighting the range of opportunities across our areas and a selection of organisations. Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey MLA helped to launch the Week. During the year Volunteer Now advocated for volunteering, safeguarding and good governance as part of a wide range of groups and networks such as the Department for Communities Infrastructure Reference Group, community planning partnerships and we jointly chaired the government and voluntary and community sector Joint Forum.

This year we have worked closely with statutory, community and voluntary groups in Ards and North Down, Belfast, Mid and East Antrim and Newry Mourne and Down with regards to the involvement of refugees and asylum seekers as volunteers.

A panel survey charting the impact of the cost of living on volunteering has been conducted during this year and regular blogs outlining the findings have been produced and showing how groups are struggling with rising costs and reducing funding.

Volunteer Now has supported NISRA to re-shape the volunteering questions on the Continuous Household Survey this year and new data is anticipated in 2024.

Volunteer Now hosted a Pathway to Change event in Stormont with over 50 people in attendance to explore the impact of the pandemic on volunteering and the potential steps which were needed to support recovery.

A research report on youth volunteering looking at the policy on youth volunteering in N Ireland as well as the views of organisations and young people was launched in April 2023.

Volunteer Now is working with Ulster University and the Northern Health & Social Care Trust to deliver a pilot study called the MATILDA project. This project aims to match older adults with learning disabilities to local community groups. In these groups, there will be volunteer 'mentors' who will act as the point of contact for the research team, ensuring that the participant is engaging with the group regularly and enjoying their experience.

The Volunteer Impact Awards continue to grow, 588 young people registered this year to receive Impact Awards; 581 certificates were presented/delivered; over 55,100 hours recognised from Challenge to 600 Hour Awards.

EOTAS is educational provision for children with social, behavioural, emotional wellbeing issues who, without its provision, cannot sustain access to suitable education. During this year we have worked with 5 EOTAS centres to provide social action programmes for young people. This programme has been funded through Children in Need. Volunteer Now also supports the #iwill movement in N Ireland building awareness and involvement in youth social action.

During this year 29 recognition events were supported by the team at a local level across Northern Ireland.

We are also privileged to deliver a range of brilliant services involving volunteers.

Our befriending work with older people in Belfast has been back fully to face to face during the year with 40 older people receiving 2,523 hours of befriending support from volunteers.

Our driving service for older adults in Belfast supported journeys for health appointments and other wellbeing activities. The shopping support role developed during the pandemic has been maintained due to the needs of service users.

In total 101 clients were supported with driving (65) or shopping support (36); 2,461 volunteer hours were given and 1,687 client journeys were completed. Volunteer Now staff provided over 1,337 support contacts to volunteers.

Our driving scheme for looked after children for South Eastern Trust continues to provide regular school runs as well as travel to summer schemes and contact visits. 49 young people were supported through volunteers driving 2,229 journeys covering 73,928 miles giving 3,320 hours.

Our work to support older people's groups through the Shankill and West Belfast Forums and the G6 continued with highlights this year including a partnership project with an older people's group from Wicklow. 32 meetings of the Forums and the G6 took place during this year and 840 hours of support were delivered to older people's groups.

11 outings and social gatherings were organised involving 392 older people and 80 older people took part in regular line dancing classes. Four older peoples volunteering challenges involving 53 people were organised. This year 9 training sessions were delivered with 162 participants and £31,500 was secured for older people's groups.

Volunteer Now, in partnership with Ulster GAA and the British Red Cross supported the delivery of the Ukrainian Welcome Centres across N Ireland. 2,276 volunteer hours were contributed across 6 sites (Belfast, Ballymena, Craigavon, Dungannon, Derry/L'Derry, Newry).

We have actively worked to build good practice in volunteering across Northern Ireland. We delivered 11 Volunteer Organisers Linking Together (VOLT) sessions during the period between April 2022 and March 2023, with a total of 208 attendees. There were a range of topics relevant to such as involving older volunteers or volunteering and the fundraising code.

Training has been curtailed this year due to a long term sickness absence however despite this challenge Volunteer Now Enterprises delivered 69 programme courses with 703 participants.

Volunteer Now continues to manage the Investing in Volunteers Standard assessment process in England and took on the same role for Wales in April. 16 organisations in total achieved the IIV standard in N Ireland and Republic of Ireland this year. 86 volunteer management health checks were completed with organisations. A licence agreement to offer Volunteer Friendly, a volunteer management standard for smaller organisations has been put in place and a range of promotional events for the new standard were held and groups are beginning to work through the standard.

This year we have upgraded the DIY Committee Guide in line with the new Code of Governance and regular governance training sessions have been provided.

Volunteer Now co-ordinated the Befriending Week Campaign in November on behalf of the NI Befriending Network, highlighting the vital role volunteers play in delivering this service through a social media campaign.

Promotion of online courses for both Keeping Children and Adults safe continued with over 1,700 people attending our training. The majority of participants said that the training would have a high impact on their work/work of their organisation.

The team dealt with 649 safeguarding queries and ran two safeguarding forums. There were 2,942 downloads of safeguarding publications during this period.

Volunteer Now's umbrella body service continues to process Access NI checks. 818 Access NI checks were completed during the year.

I know that the year ahead will be particularly challenging in relation to our safeguarding work as we see the end of our Department of Health funding after 27 years. We plan to reshape our service to continue to be able to offer a range of excellent support to groups across our sector.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the volunteers, funders, partners and members for their support for our work. I would like to thank the staff without whom none of the delivery I have spoken about would happen, I would like particularly to thank all of the members of the Leadership Team, for their support during a very busy year. I would also like to thank the Trustees of Volunteer Now and the Board of Volunteer Now Enterprises for their contribution and commitment throughout the year.

Thank you all for joining us today for this celebration of our work.

5. Presentation of Financial Accounts 2022/2023

Jane Fyffe presented the accounts and took the attendees through the main aspects of the consolidated balance sheet and the Statement of Financial Activities. The Trustees Annual Report was in line with the financial information presented. The income for the year is down slightly on the previous year to £1.4m due mostly to several contracts not being repeated, for example vaccination centres. The pension deficit remains an ongoing challenge to the organisation. Overall, the accounts are positive for the year, and Jane thanked Kelli and her team for her help with the audit.

The accounts were proposed by Helen Connolly and seconded by Jenny Marshall and agreed by the members present.

Philip McDonagh thanked the Auditors and the Volunteer Now staff for their work on the audit. He shared that the audit shows the organisation in a healthy position. Although there are challenges being heavily dependent on funding from the public sector and the deficit of the pension scheme, the organisation is exploring ways to become more sustainable and self-sufficient, and the Board are feeling positive about the year ahead.

6. Retirement and Election of Trustees

To Note the Resignation of Trustees

- Ian Baxter-Crawford (retired 21st September 2023)

Marc thanked Ian for all that he has contributed during his time as trustee.

To Note the Re-appointment of Elected Trustees

- Helen Connolly (elected to Board in 2019)
- Martin McCarthy (elected to Board in 2019)

Helen and Martin have served their first four-year term on the Board, and are up for re-election for the period 2023-2027.

The nomination was agreed by the members (proposed Nick Acheson, seconded by Philip McDonagh)

To Note the Election of Trustees

- Julie Meredith

The nomination was agreed by the members (proposed Helen Connolly, seconded by Jenny Ferguson)

7. Appointment of Auditors

Harbinson Mulholland were reappointed as auditors for the following financial year 2023-24 at the remuneration of £6200k + VAT per annum.

The appointment of auditors was agreed by the members present (proposed Marc Scott, seconded Philip McDonagh)

8. Any Other Business

None, the meeting was duly closed.

Signed: Marc Scott, Chairperson Volunteer Now _____

Notes to the Notice of A General Meeting

Appointment of proxies

1. As an ordinary member of the Company, you are entitled to appoint a proxy to exercise all or any of your rights to attend, speak and vote at the Meeting and you should have received a proxy form with this notice of meeting. You can only appoint a proxy using the procedures set out in these notes and the notes to the proxy form. (Please note Associate Members have no voting rights at the AGM.)
2. A proxy must attend the Meeting to represent you. Details of how to appoint the Chair of the Meeting or another person as your proxy using the proxy form are set out in the notes to the proxy form. If you wish your proxy to speak on your behalf at the Meeting you will need to appoint your own choice of proxy (not the Chair) and give your instructions directly to them.
3. You may not appoint more than one proxy.
4. If you do not give your proxy an indication of how to vote on any resolution, your proxy will vote or abstain from voting at his or her discretion. Your proxy will vote (or abstain from voting) as he or she thinks fit in relation to any other matter which is put before the Meeting.

Appointment of proxy using hard copy proxy form

5. The notes to the proxy form explain how to direct your proxy to vote on each resolution or withhold their vote.

To appoint a proxy using the proxy form, the form must be:

- completed and signed;
- sent or delivered to the Company Secretary at the Company's registered office at Volunteer Now, Skainos Centre, 239, Newtownards Road Belfast, BT4 1AF; and
- received by the Company Secretary no later than 13 November 2024 at denise.hayward@volunteernow.co.uk at 3pm.

Any power of attorney or any other authority under which the proxy form is signed (or a duly certified copy of such power or authority) must be included with the proxy form.

Changing proxy instructions

6. To change your proxy instructions simply submit a new proxy appointment using the methods set out above. Note that the cut-off time for receipt of proxy appointments (see above) also applies in relation to amended instructions; any

amended proxy appointment received after the relevant cut-off time will be disregarded.

Where you have appointed a proxy using the hard-copy proxy form and would like to change the instructions using another hard-copy proxy form, please contact the Company Secretary at Volunteer Now, Skainos Centre, 239, Newtownards Road Belfast, BT4 1AF.

If you submit more than one valid proxy appointment, the appointment received last before the latest time for the receipt of proxies will take precedence.

Termination of proxy appointments

7. In order to revoke a proxy instruction, you will need to inform the Company using the following method:
 - by sending a signed hard copy notice clearly stating your intention to revoke your proxy appointment to the Company Secretary at Volunteer Now, Skainos Centre, 239, Newtownards Road Belfast, BT4 1AF. In the case of a member which is a company, the revocation notice must be executed under its common seal or signed on its behalf by an officer of the company or an attorney for the company. Any power of attorney or any other authority under which the revocation notice is signed (or a duly certified copy of such power or authority) must be included with the revocation notice.

The revocation notice must be received by the Company Secretary no later than 3pm on 13 November 2024.

If you attempt to revoke your proxy appointment but the revocation is received after the time specified then, subject to the paragraph directly below, your proxy appointment will remain valid.

Appointment of a proxy does not preclude you from attending the Meeting and voting in person. If you have appointed a proxy and attend the Meeting in person, your proxy appointment will automatically be terminated.

Communication

8. Except as provided above, members who have general queries about the Meeting should contact the Company Secretary via post by writing to Volunteer Now, Skainos Centre, 239, Newtownards Road Belfast, BT4 1AF or by email to denise.hayward@volunteernow.co.uk (no other methods of communication will be accepted).

You may not use any electronic address provided either:

- in the notice of general meeting; or

- any related documents (including the proxy form),

to communicate with the Company for any purposes other than those expressly stated.

Proxy voting form

If you are unable to attend the Annual General Meeting of Volunteer Now at Custom House Belfast on 14 November 2024 at 2.30pm and wish for somebody else to vote on your behalf, please submit this proxy form to be received by the charity by 3pm on 13 November by either of the following methods:

BY POST: For the attention of Denise Hayward, Volunteer Now, Skainos Centre 239 Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 1AF

BY EMAIL: Attaching scanned copy of the form to denise.hayward@volunteernow.co.uk

I, (your name) _____ of (organisational name if appropriate) _____ hereby appoint the Chair of the meeting, Marc Scott, or (name of proxy) _____ [Please complete as appropriate] to vote for and on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the company to be held on 13 November 2024 and at every adjournment thereof.

This form is to be used in respect of the resolutions mentioned below as follows:

ORDINARY RESOLUTIONS - To accept:	For	Against	Abstain
The Audited Accounts of the company for the previous financial year.			
The Trustees Report on the company's activities since the previous AGM.			
To accept the retirement/reappointment of those members of the Board of Trustees who are retiring or being re-appointed.			
To appoint Harbinson Mullholland as auditors for the Company and to fix their remuneration.			

Unless otherwise instructed, the proxy may vote as he or she thinks fit or abstain from voting.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Notes to the proxy form

1. As an Ordinary Member of the Charity you are entitled to appoint a proxy to exercise all or any of your rights to attend, speak and vote at a general meeting of the Charity.
2. Appointment of a proxy does not preclude you from attending the meeting and voting in person. If you have appointed a proxy and attend the meeting in person, your proxy appointment will automatically be cancelled.
3. A proxy does not need to be a Member of the Charity but must attend the meeting to represent you. To appoint as your proxy a person other than the Chair of the meeting, insert their full name on the form. If you sign and return this proxy form with no name inserted in the box, the Chairman of the meeting will be deemed to be your proxy. Where you appoint as your proxy someone other than the Chair, you are responsible for ensuring that they attend the meeting and are aware of your voting intentions. If you wish your proxy to speak on your behalf, you will need to appoint someone other than the Chair and give them the relevant instructions directly.
4. To direct your proxy how to vote on the resolutions mark the appropriate box with an 'X'. If no voting indication is given, your proxy will vote or abstain from voting at his or her discretion. Your proxy will vote (or abstain from voting) as he or she thinks fit in relation to any other matter which is put before the meeting.
5. To appoint a proxy using this form, the form must be:
 1. completed and signed
 2. BY POST: For the attention of Denise Hayward, Volunteer Now, Skainos Centre 239 Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 1AF.
 3. Or BY EMAIL: Attaching scanned copy of the form to denise.hayward@volunteernow.co.uk
 4. to be received by the charity no later than by 3pm on 13 November 2024