

DRAFT OCTOBER 2008

Minutes of the Families Needs Fathers AGM - Saturday 27th September 2008

Venue: Manchester Conference Centre, Weston Building, Sackville Street, Manchester, M1 3BB.

Present:

Head Table: Elena Fowler – Chief Executive National Youth Advocacy Service
Colin Derby – Service Manager Cafcass North-West
Sue Maitland – Manager Wilbraham & Rusholme SureStart Children's Centre
FNF Chair – Charles Kenyon (CK)
FNF CEO – Jon Davies (JD)
Members were present.

Item 1 JD opened the AGM at 3.15pm

Apologies were received from Neil Grice, Fairless Masterman, Jeremy Thomas, Ruth Glover, Andrew Crumpton.

Item 2 The Minutes of the last AGM held on September 30th 2007 were proposed for approval and unanimously accepted.

Item 3 Officer's report:

CK spoke on the progress made in first year of the new FNF office, highlighted the new staff members tackling FNF's challenges and previewed our forthcoming work in conjunction with the Equal & Human Rights Commission and also under the Both Parents Matter name, which he described as an "evolutionary approach to branding which will reach out to those areas of society which have not yet found the gate to reach us".

His highest praise was naturally reserved for the many volunteers, particularly the branch committees, who form the "lifeblood of Families Need Fathers" and without whom our work would simply cease. He took a brief look at FNF in numbers over 12 months - 3000 members attending 32 branches, 10,000 helpline calls (with a demand for 5,000 more), 180,000 website hits, a press reach of nine million, meeting with over 50 MPs, membership of 20 Family Justice Council, volunteer services worth over £1 million and spoke of a desire to reach out to more parents in need of our help.

He ended by recalling his introduction and the help he received over 20 years ago, and described the "pleasure and honour" of serving Families Need Fathers.

JD (CEO) spoke on the FNF Three Year Plan, saying how much he appreciated members' input.

DRAFT OCTOBER 2008

Membership continues to increase, at rates not seen for five years, and the Helpline has improved under the guidance of Alex Borchardt. Member expertise in family law continues to be essential, trustees are developing their roles and FNF is building on its existing strengths as part of coalition of many organizations, with the Kids in the Middle campaigns as the prime example.

He described the 'balancing act' of working on government money whilst remaining independent and praised the 'first class' media strategy, highlighting the opportunities available for regional spokespeople. FNF is now a professional research centre (JD highlighted recent research with the Grandparents' Association) and our new database will do much to improve membership services. The main ambition for the forthcoming year was to continue progress.

JD thanked everyone for attending, and for their continued work without which FNF would simply cease to function. He also invited the meeting to the 2009 AGM on Saturday 26th September in Coventry.

The group then paid extremely sincere thanks to John Baker for his many years of services to Families Need Fathers,

John Baker thanked the meeting, and spoke of his pleasure at the development of Families Need Fathers to a positive policy organization, with a real focus on children, and highlighted several individuals who had helped in be part of it, including Jim Parton, Steve Stephenson, Jon Ruben and Charles Kenyon.

Ian Julian noted the amendments to Memorandum & Articles to follow.

Item 4 Treasurer's Report and Appointment of Auditors:

In the absence of Jeremy Thomas, JD presented the accounts 2007-08, which had been available on the FNF website for sufficient time in line with the Memorandum & Articles. JD spoke to the accounts and noted that FNF remained in a good financial position.

JD recommended the reappointment of Begbies, Chettle, and Agar as Auditors. This is approved unanimously.

Emlyn Jones asked if the auditors look at branch accounts. JD replied that they did in line with good practice guidelines but not intensively.

JD and CK added that FNF were intending to instigate revisions to local branch 'constitutions' over the next year, which would affect the way they accounted for themselves, particularly with regard to local fundraising.

DRAFT OCTOBER 2008

Item 5 The proposed amendments to the M&A were presented by Ian Julian (Company Secretary). These were approved, and are attached as Appendix 1.

IJ noted that the main changes, endorsed by the trustees, were to remain in line with new charity legislation, to streamline the charity and remain efficient. They had not taken advantage of the opportunity for Trustees to remain in post in perpetuity, and instead would still stand down every three years.

Item 6 Election of Trustees:

Four trustees are due to retire by rotation. Three (Charles Kenyon, Jenny Cuttriss and Andrew Crumpton) are standing again and one is standing down (Fairless Masterman).

One trustee (Neil Grice) has been co-opted during the year, one has stood down during the year (Martin Crapper) and there has been one outstanding vacancy.

There were no nominations for trustees to be elected at the AGM received by the closing date.

FNF is allowed twelve trustees and therefore there are five positions available, with four candidates wishing to standing. They are therefore assumed to be elected unopposed. These candidates are:

- Charles Kenyon: Chair & Trustee (retiring by rotation and standing again)
- Jenny Cuttriss: Trustee (retiring by rotation and standing again)
- Andrew Crumpton: Trustee (retiring by rotation and standing again)
- Neil Grice: Trustee (co-opted during 2008)

The meeting acknowledged the standing-down of Martin Crapper and Fairless Master, with sincere thanks for their many years of invaluable contributions to Families Need Fathers.

It was noted that a candidate for co-option had been identified, as recommended by Anthony Esler (Newmarket) and Ian Tyes (Cambridge), and that this would be addressed at the next meeting of the Trustees.

Item 7 – Other Business

DRAFT OCTOBER 2008

i) Emlyn Jones and Colin Cheeseman raised the issue, wishing for the trustees to clarify the difference between a 'group' and a 'branch', and to have the power to promote a 'group' to a 'branch' and relegate in the other directions, with particular concern for the inactivity of some branches.

Steve Stephenson explained that branches must have a constitution, which must match that as laid down by the National Council. Branches are required to have committees, keep minutes, hold AGMs and supply accounts. He also cited a need, in his view, for an increased circulation and scrutiny of branch accounts.

SStep noted that meeting reports were available online, which showed the activity of meetings. He noted that administration was difficult, as it had the potential to drive away otherwise valuable volunteers, and that enforcing regulations was a delicate task.

Emlyn noted that their concern was for branches to be opening up near branches which in themselves were struggling, and that it might be more appropriate to hold 'groups' in such areas.

CK noted that the point was valid and made sense, and felt that regions could make such arrangements so as to maintain activity amongst them as appropriate, and that it was an ongoing concern for the trustees.

ii) Alain Williams requested an update on the compliance sub-committee's report on recent legal action against Families Need Fathers. IJ noted that the report had been made available that day.

The AGM was formally closed at 4.20pm by CK with thanks to all involved.

Charles Kenyon, Chair

Date

Charity No. 276899

Company No. 1396139