

OXFAM GB

CHAIR'S REPORT ON COUNCIL MEETING 2 DECEMBER 2016 HELD AT OXFAM HOUSE, OXFORD

The following people were present at the meeting:

Trustees

Karen Brown (Chair)
Ken Caldwell
Kul Gautam
Lois Jacobs
Wakkas Khan
David Pitt-Watson
Ruth Ruderham
Katy Steward
Gavin Stewart
Steve Walton

Corporate Management and Staff

Mark Goldring (Chief Executive)
Penny Lawrence (Deputy Chief Executive)
Tim Hunter (Fundraising Director)
Andrew Horton (Trading Director)
Jack Lundie (Communications Director)
Cherian Mathews (International Programmes Director)
Alison Hopkinson (Finance & Information Services Director)
Matthew Spencer (Campaigns, Policy & Influencing Director)
Joss Saunders (Company Secretary)
Anne Gornall (Governance Officer)

Apologies were received from Lidy Nacpil and Nkoyo Toyo. No additional conflicts of interest were declared.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting on 7 October 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

REFLECTIONS ON FLAGSHIPS PROGRAMMES SEMINAR 1 DECEMBER 2016

Appreciation was expressed to the trustees and staff who had participated in this important seminar, and to Duncan Green who had shared some of the themes and insights in his recently published book: 'How Change Happens'.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The CEO's report was reviewed. Trustees also considered a paper on Yemen and whether Oxfam should join a legal action to clarify the UK government's application of the Arms Trade Treaty in permitting arms sales to Saudi Arabia. They gave careful consideration to the Charity Commission guidance on litigation, and having satisfied themselves on the advice of the General Counsel that the necessary standards were met, authorised Oxfam to be an intervener in the action.

There were also updates on the ongoing investigation by the Information Commissioner's office which to date had affected two well known charities. It appeared that further action could be taken against other charities in the future.

Other updates included Oxfam's work in Syria, relationships with the British government in the post Brexit environment, work on programme standards, and activity with other Oxfam affiliates including the November meeting of the Oxfam International Board of Supervisors.

PROGRAMME UPDATE: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

Trustees welcomed Pamela Orgeldinger, Country Programme Manager in the DRC. Pamela summarised the issues and challenges faced by Oxfam GB in the DRC, given the high levels of extreme poverty, political instability and chronic conflict in the east. Over 50% of Oxfam's work was on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) but there was some significant progress in other areas e.g. governance programmes. Trustees expressed appreciation for Pamela's update and reflected on the DRC, both in the historical context and how Oxfam could make best impact there.

Status: Public

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PLANS GOING FORWARD

Led by the Vice-Chair (Gavin Stewart) and the Finance and Information Services Director (Alison Hopkinson), trustees reviewed strategic and financial plans at the half year point, the annual objectives, and work in hand on refreshing the financial framework.

PEOPLE

The meeting had one of the scheduled regular updates on Oxfam people. This took on issues arising from the latest staff survey where workload had emerged as one of the key issues, and also the complex change process involved through working more closely with other Oxfam affiliates. Human Resources staff in support were able to provide updates on work to support staff through the changes and how best to harness the talent and potential of the existing and changing workforce.

GOVERNANCE

Council agreed the appointment of Ken Caldwell as a trustee and Gavin Stewart as Vice-Chair. Trustees also noted that Steve Walton will take over as Honorary Treasurer from October 2017. Committee appointments were also agreed.

Trustees considered reports and minutes from the Programme Committee, the Trustee Audit and Finance Group, the Fundraising Committee and the Recruitment and Development Group. They noted that trustee and committee recruitment would re-commence in early 2017.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Trustees expressed appreciation for the recently issued Oxfam Accountability Report which demonstrated the organisation's ongoing commitment to transparency.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 9 and Friday 10 March 2017.

Chair