

KINGSTON RACE AND EQUALITIES COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 31st March 2021 at 7.00pm

Virtual: MS Teams

1. WELCOME INVITED GUESTS

Mr Javed Rafiq opened the meeting by welcoming invited guests, members and friends of KREC. He invited attendees and members to welcome each other and greet each other in their language of choice. This was done.

2. WELCOME MAYORS OF KINGSTON

Mr Javed Rafiq then welcomed the Mayor of Kingston Cllr Margaret Thompson to the AGM and asked if she would say a few words.

Cllr Thompson spoke fondly about the experience of going around the borough meeting residents and taking part in some of the activities around the borough. She also spoke about work involving KREC and how she had enjoyed attending Citizenship events with KREC supporting the events. She finished by wishing KREC all the best for the future.

3. WELCOME DEPUTY MAYORS OF KINGSTON

Mr Javed Rafiq then welcomed the Deputy Mayor Sushila Abraham to the meeting. He asked Cllr Abraham to introduce the rest of the agenda of the meeting. Cllr Abraham then asked for apologies for those not attending.

4. APOLOGIES

Marilyn Mason
Judith Jewell
Pippa Mackie
Ash Stanbrook
Ch Supt Lis Chappel
Jill Darling
Edward Davey MP
Robert Markless
Cllr Liz Green
John Hackett, Russell-Cooke Solicitors
(A full list is available at KREC offices)

5. MINUTES OF AGM held on 10th October 2018

Cllr Margaret Thompson Mayor of Kingston Chaired the meeting. The minutes were tabled and approved. Proposal of the minutes for acceptance was by Prabha Shetty and seconded by Fleyr Standing. There were no matters arising.

6. CHAIR'S REPORT

Javed Rafiq, Chair of KREC, formally welcomed everyone and apologised for the low attendance. He welcomed all guests and members who were attending the Thirtieth AGM. He then went on to pay a tribute to the members of KREC for their support for the organisation and particularly to the Executive Committee and staff for taking KREC through

these very difficult years and supporting him as Chair. It had been a time of difficult financial and management decision making.

He drew particular attention to the financial challenges faced by KREC during a period when there are cuts in funding due to the re-organisation by Government and general funding for the Voluntary and Community Sector by Charitable funders. KREC continues to face an uncertain future with the threat of running out of funds. He paid tribute to the KREC Executive's continued commitment to support plans he and the Executive launched to secure the future. A special thanks went to the Leader of RBK Cllr Liz Green, the Leadership of the Royal Borough of Kingston for their continuing support for KREC and the Kingston Police Service through BCU Commander Chief Superintendent Lis Chappel. It was evidence of the strong relationship built between the three organisations over a number of years. Javed went on to highlight the achievements of the year in his Chair's report: the continued positive relationship built with the Royal Borough which has helped to forge a positive working partnership and therefore good working relationships; the continuing partnership between Kingston Police, the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and KREC; the strategic and sometimes difficult subjects that were tackled at meetings: the challenge of working with young people and the new ideas brought in through Social Media, using Facebook and Twitter to promote Kingston Carnival and the growth of Far Right organisations and Political Parties.

He drew attention to the continuing increase in the numbers of Hate Crimes especially racial harassment and Faith Hate crimes in particular, other violent crimes and discrimination cases and the seriousness of some of the cases taking place in the borough. He was concerned about some agencies finding it difficult to work with KREC on Race Hate Crimes, racial harassment and other Hate crime cases. He invited all those who detested racism to work with KREC in fighting this crime. Javed also talked about the future: he stressed that the business plan needed to be implemented; the need to continue to evolve regionally; the strong need to work with young people; the challenge of moving from Corporate grants to Commissioning; he finished his report by making a plea to funders, particularly to Charitable funders and RBK for their support and invited anyone who wanted to see KREC's work at first hand to visit our offices in Neville House.

He concluded by thanking the Executive Committee for their support throughout the years, the staff for their hard work and for making the past year as Chair, though frustrating, an enjoyable and successful one. The Chair's report was proposed for acceptance by Fleur Standing and seconded by Prabha Shetty.

7. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer David Skelton thanked the Chair for his report. He went on to speak to his published report. Sound financial management has enabled KREC to continue functioning in very difficult circumstances. He paid tribute to RBK for their continued financial support especially at a time when there were continuing pressures and cuts in the public sector and other organisations such as Kingston Police who have offered varied support.

The main sources of funding were RBK, varied funding from projects and other Voluntary and Community Sector Charity and Project work.

Other sources of income include: small amounts generated by training other organisations' staff, Kingston Carnival and the Festival of the Faiths Calendars.

The main source of expenditure was staff salaries and rent of premises. He pointed out the benefits being derived from the investment in technology due to the rapid changes which are taking place.

He drew attention to the difficulties of having to further depend on our reserves to manage, in the short term funding shortfalls. There was a need to build reserves to sustain KREC if a crisis developed. He finished by stressing the need to continue fundraising if KREC were to continue to exist and carry on the crucial work. He implored funders to support the work through generous funding and thanked everyone who had made his work as Treasurer, especially the KREC Finance and General Purposes Committee, possible. The Treasurer took a number of questions from the attendees. He then offered the accounts for adoption. Accounts proposed by Heather Buchannan and seconded by Victor Olisa.

8. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

David Skelton recommended that an Independent Examiner is appointed to examine the KREC accounts due to the small size of the income. He recommended Robert Markless be appointed. This was seconded by Prabha Shetty and was agreed.

9. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

John Azah spoke about the overall work of KREC. He highlighted the growing responsibility placed on KREC to champion the issues of Race and Equalities in Kingston and surrounding areas. He also talked about the partnership between RBK, Kingston Police, Kingston University, Kingston College and the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Voluntary and Community Sector and how liaison between the statutory, private and voluntary sector has improved awareness of Race and Equality issues.

Work within South London in partnership with boroughs such as Richmond, Merton, Wandsworth and Sutton continues to develop much more slowly than anticipated but was now being channelled through working with the Police Service. Work with the Black Voluntary sector has also highlighted the difficulties faced by those organisations in securing contracts and funding.

John Azah highlighted the continuing developmental area of Consultancy, Training and Conferences within KREC. He identified major challenges due to cuts to the Public Sector and hoped to capitalise on the emerging demand being generated due to organisations' need to improve the service delivery of their staff. He hoped to continue to generate some income to supplement grants from funders which might mean working further afield. He reiterated the Chair's concerns about the threat of Commissioning which was going to create uncertainty and implored RBK to look at the whole of the Voluntary and Community Sector funding again to see if Commissioning was the right funding option.

John Azah finished by thanking the Executive Committee for their continued support, KREC staff Freya Monk-McGowan, Marian Morrison and volunteer Ken Bryan and the Executive Committee members for tolerating the stress he creates in the office. There was special thanks for Javed Rafiq, Chair of KREC, for his total support, the KREC F&GP for financial scrutiny and all the Executive Committee for their unflinching dedication and support.

10. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

There were no elections because the vacancies available were filled by the number nominated.

11. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP PANEL

Victor Olisa and Fleur Stranding were appointed to the Membership Panel.

12. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM HONORARY OFFICERS

It was agreed that the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and the Company Secretary would take charge of KREC until the first Executive Committee meeting that would take place.

13. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

A series of announcements were made about forthcoming events: Black History Month – Guildhall Culture Day on 20th October 2021; Disability Awareness Day; Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2022; LGBT History Month in February 2022; National Hate Crime Awareness Day between 9th to 16th October 2021.

14. AOB

None.

15. CLOSING REMARKS DEP. MAYOR OF KINGSTON CLLR SUSHILA ABRAHAM

The Deputy Mayor Cllr Sushila Abraham thanked KREC for inviting her to the meeting and helping to take the meeting through the agenda items.

She spoke briefly about the work she has been doing as Deputy Mayor in Kingston and meeting residents. She felt she was having an introduction to becoming Mayor next year working as Deputy Mayor.

She had undertaken some work with members of KREC attending schools to help with workshops and talk about Hate Crimes. She felt it was important to work with young people and to raise their awareness on Hate Crimes and Equalities Diversity and Inclusion.

Cllr Abraham also spoke about Co-Chairing a BLM Let's Talk About Race events organised by KREC and RBK and felt that it was very important that Race was being supported in Kingston. She finished by wishing KREC future success and also said she was looking forward to working closely with KREC when she became Mayor next year.

16. VOTE OF THANKS

Vote of Thanks was given by Dr John Farmer, Vice Chair of KREC.

He thanked Cllr Margaret Thompson for attending the KREC AGM and speaking so positively about KREC. He thanked Cllr Sushila Abraham for taking us through the agenda of the meeting and wished her success for the future when she becomes Mayor next year.

He also thanked The Executive of KREC for all their hard work and making sure the organisation continued its work.

He finished by thanking all those who attended the AGM to support KREC's work.

17. SAFE JOURNEY "HOME"!

KREC Chair Javed Rafiq closed the meeting and apologise that KREC this year could not invite people to stay for our lovely Refreshments.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm