



Northern Ireland Women's European Platform

Annual General Meeting Wednesday 6 October 2021, 5.30pm Via Zoom

Minutes

Present:

Louise Kennedy (Chair)
Anne Carr
Louise Coyle
Ruth Galwey
Emma Johnston
Louise Kennedy
Anne McVicker
Emma Osborne
Gaye Partridge
Robyn Scott

Apologies:

Charmain Jones
Sonya McMullan
Liz Law
Danielle Roberts
Jeanette Thornton

In attendance:

Jonna Monaghan, Project Coordinator
(minutes)

Agenda item	Discussion	Agreed action
1. Welcome and apologies	Louise Kennedy, as Chair of NIWEP, welcomed everyone to the 2021 AGM of NIWEP. The Chair thanked Vivien Holding, who stood down from the Committee earlier in 2021.	Apologies were noted.
2. Minutes of AGM 2020	Minutes were reviewed and agreed.	Minutes proposed by Anne Carr, seconded by Anne McVicker.
3. Annual report	The Chair introduced the 2021 Annual Report and thanked the Committee for their dedication and support, and the Project Coordinator for her commitment. The Chair also highlighted that a rebranding is forthcoming, to be initiated through the special resolution on a change of name at this AGM. Year highlights The Project Coordinator provided an overview of highlights during an intense and productive year. The Project Coordinator highlighted in particular the	

increased opportunities for international collaboration and sharing learning through the normalisation of online events, and highlighted a series of webinars on women, peace and security organised in collaboration with international NGOs and organisations in other post conflict regions.

CEDAW

The interim shadow report to CEDAW was submitted, and NIWEP supported the development of a four nations report with Engender in Scotland, WEN Wales and Women's Resource Centre in England. The interim reports highlight the lack of progress on CEDAW recommendations and underline the need for focused action.

CSW

The Project Coordinator highlighted the opportunities to involve a greater number of women from Northern Ireland, through the virtual format of CSW65. NIWEP supported a delegation of 20 women from Northern Ireland with daily updates and highlights on CSW65, and provided training to support participation. This received positive feedback, but participants called for more preparation time, and this will be prioritised for CSW66. The Project Coordinator highlighted opening up new participation opportunities as a priority in the new strategic plan 2022-25 currently being finalised.

UNSCR 1325

The Project Coordinator underlined working with the APG on UNSCR 1325, Women, Peace and Security as a highlight of the year. The APG took a keen interest in the impact of the pandemic on women, and played a key role in securing a response to the Feminist Recovery Plan from the NI Civil Service and the Executive. This will be developed further over the next year.

The webinar series on women, peace and security sharing learning from different post conflict regions was also noted as a highlight of the year. NIWEP secured an opportunity to run one of these webinars as part of the run up to the Generation Equality Forum Paris, which underlines the value of sharing experiences and

	<p>learning across post conflict regions. The newsletter coordinated by the Transitional Justice was another highlight in terms of information sharing, and will inform future development of the organisation.</p> <p>The Project Coordinator noted strong collaboration locally with the Women’s Policy Group, NI Women’s Budget Group and others including Reclaim the Agenda, and stressed the supportive nature and importance of collaboration in a year of extensive consultation. The shared work on the Bill of Rights consultation was a key example that contributed to ensuring a women’s perspective was highlighted.</p> <p>The collaboration was also highlighted by Ms Coyle, who noted that the Feminist Recovery Plan has helped begin inform policy making, which provides a new basis for future engagement. Ms Coyle noted that the work of the APG contributed to this by keeping the Feminist Recovery Plan on the agenda.</p>	
<p>4. Annual accounts</p>	<p>Anne McVicker, NIWEP Treasurer, introduced the NIWEP accounts 2020-21 and thanked funders for ongoing support. Ms McVicker confirmed that independent examination was undertaken in 2020-21 rather than full audit, as company law enables NIWEP as a small organisation to do this. Ms McVicker confirmed that the organisation is in good financial health, and outlined plans for securing further funding to sustain the organisation.</p> <p>Ms McVicker thanked Sarah Greene as finance assistant for excellent support and record keeping, which has enabled smooth running of finances.</p> <p>Ms McVicker thanked the Committee finance sub group for effectively overseeing finances.</p> <p>Appointment of independent examiner Ms McVicker confirmed that the independent examination was undertaken by Clarke & Co. It was proposed to reappoint Clarke & Co as independent examiners of accounts 2020-21.</p> <p>Financial overview</p> <p>Ms McVicker provided an overview of organisational finances and confirmed a</p>	<p>Louise Coyle proposed adoption of annual report and accounts. This was seconded by Emma Osborne.</p> <p>Project Coordinator to relay thanks to Sarah Greene.</p> <p>Emma Johnston proposed reappointment of independent examiners. This was seconded by Ruth Galway.</p> <p>Project Coordinator to confirm</p>

	<p>positive situation, building on successful fundraising over the recent 18 months. This included an adaptation grant from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, enabling development of work to support delivery in the context of COVID-19 and utilised to invest in evidence gathering and the newsletter developed with the Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University. It also included a grant from The National Lottery Fund, which enabled the identity review that has led to the pending rebranding, and funding from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs for the project exploring a women’s vision for a future Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Ms McVicker concluded that overall, NIWEP is in a strong financial position for the future and confirmed that the independent examination has given a clean bill of health to the accounts.</p> <p>The accounts were commended for adoption.</p>	<p>reappointment with Clarke & Co.</p>
<p>5. Special resolutions</p>	<p><i>Change of name of organisation</i></p> <p>The Chair introduced the special resolution proposing changing the name of NIWEP to Women’s Platform. The rationale for this is modernising the organisation, and highlighting the organisation’s role in amplifying the voice of women and girls internationally, not just within Europe.</p> <p>The resolution was adopted, including through a number of proxy votes submitted by members in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><i>Amendments to Articles of Association to clarify definitions and proceedings with regard to participation in meetings by electronic means</i></p> <p>The Chair introduced this special resolution, which makes minor technical amendments to the Articles of Association to clarify that all meetings can be held by electronic means, and being present includes being present via suitable electronic means. The rationale for this is to ensure Articles are fully up to date and</p>	<p>Louise Coyle proposed adoption of the resolution. This was seconded by Anne McVicker.</p> <p>Project Coordinator to register change of name with Companies House and ensure name is changed with all relevant institutions, organisations and service providers.</p> <p>Emma Osborne proposed adoption of the resolution. This was seconded by Anne McVicker.</p>

	<p>enable fully modern procedures, the need for which has been highlighted during the ongoing pandemic.</p> <p>The resolution was adopted, including through a number of proxy votes submitted by members in advance of the meeting.</p>	
6. Election of directors	<p>The Chair confirmed that Ms Gaye Partridge has been elected as a new Director, nominated by NIC-ICTU Women's Committee.</p> <p>The 2022-23 Committee will consist of: Louise Coyle Ruth Galwey Emma Johnston Louise Kennedy Liz Law Anne McVicker Emma Osborne Gaye Partridge Jeanette Thornton</p> <p>Co-option of additional members remains an option during the year. Co-opted members will need to stand for election or stand down at the next AGM.</p>	<p>Chair and Project Coordinator to organise induction.</p> <p>Project Coordinator to ensure new Director registered with Companies House.</p>
Close of AGM	<i>The AGM was concluded at 6.10pm.</i>	
8. Presentation: Voices of women in Afghanistan Hasina Safi	<p>The Chair introduced Ms Hasina Safi, the former Minister of Women's Affairs in Afghanistan as the speaker to conclude the AGM. The Chair thanked the GAPS network for making the link to Ms Safi.</p> <p>Ms Safi also thanked GAPS for the link made and welcomed the opportunity to speak to the AGM. Ms Safi provided a personal account of experiences in recent weeks, and emphasised her commitment to continue fighting for women's rights, in Afghanistan and globally.</p> <p>Ms Safi outlined the history of the women's movement in Afghanistan over the last 20 years. This began with awareness raising and advocacy, and led to participation, including slowly to meaningful participation. Ultimately, there was a National Action Plan on women, peace and security, which highlighted the dedication of women and women's rights advocates in Afghanistan. In recent years, the situation was something of 'golden years' for women and girls in Afghanistan,</p>	NIWEP to explore practical ways to express solidarity and share messages across networks in Northern Ireland.

	<p>but Ms Safi noted that uncertainty always remained. Ms Safi emphasised that solidarity and working together are critical in the current circumstances, to keep highlighting human rights commitments and the needs of local people to decision makers. She noted that COVID-19 is another example of how solidarity is critical for an effective response, but Afghanistan needs this even more.</p> <p>Ms Safi explored the role of UNSCR 1325 in responding to the current situation, and noted CSW is another important platform for bringing forward individuals and their needs, including the most vulnerable.</p> <p>‘All human beings are part of the body of the world’. This is a saying in Afghanistan, and means that if someone is not well, the body as a whole is not well. How can women live without music, especially when they have lived with it their entire lives? There is a generation of Afghan girls who have seen a different way of life, and they need the solidarity of the international community to keep faith for the future.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Ms Safi and emphasised the solidarity of women in Northern Ireland with women in Afghanistan, and asked what could be done in practice. Ms Safi said that a group of supportive people can be established very easily, and this can be used to put pressure on policy makers to keep highlighting the issues and challenging misconceptions and stereotypes. This is vital to create a change; women have left the country to keep sharing the message and this is what concrete solidarity can look like.</p> <p>Ms Carr welcomed the proposal to define solidarity in practical action, and stressed that it resonates across the world, including in the experiences of women and girls in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Members collectively thanked Ms Safi for her open and heartfelt message and committed to taking action personally and through networks in Northern Ireland.</p>	
	<p>Meeting ended at 6.35pm</p>	