

# Women's Platform

**Annual General Meeting**  
**Wednesday 18 October 2023, 6.00pm**  
**Via Zoom**



## Minutes

### Present:

Louise Coyle (Chair)  
Alexandra Brennan  
Louise Coyle  
Naomi English  
Siobhán Harding  
Louise Kennedy  
Liz Law  
Megan McClure Botha  
Alexa Moore

Emma Osborne  
Danielle Roberts  
Beverly Simpson  
Jeanette Thornton

### Apologies:

Karen Devlin  
Anne McVicker

### In attendance:

Jonna Monaghan, Director (minutes)

Agenda item	Discussion	Agreed action
<b>1. Welcome and apologies</b>	Louise Coyle, Chair of Women's Platform, welcomed everyone to the 2023 AGM of Women's Platform.	<b>Apologies were noted.</b>
<b>2. Minutes of AGM 2022</b>	Minutes were reviewed and agreed.	<b>Minutes proposed by Jeanette Thornton, seconded by Siobhán Harding.</b>
<b>3. Annual report</b>	<p>The Chair provided an overview of the year and highlighted a productive year, despite challenging circumstances. The Chair thanked the Committee for their commitment and the Director for her focus on delivery.</p> <p><b>Year highlights</b></p> <p>The Director provided an overview of highlights during the year. The Director emphasised in particular work on Committee development and capacity, which has re-energised strategic thinking and supported delivery. The Director also highlighted the strong role Women's Platform has built within</p>	<p><b>Annual report to be shared on the Women's Platform website.</b></p> <p><b>Annual report to be shared with funders and members.</b></p>

	<p>the sector locally, and noted invitations from the CEDAW Committee to contribute to a follow up of the Inquiry into abortion legislation and from the Council of Europe to coordinate a civil society submission to the baseline assessment of the UK under the Istanbul Convention as examples of effective use of this role.</p> <p>The Director thanked the Committee for their support and strategic direction, and noted that continuing Committee development and ensuring a strong platform for all women and girls will be a continued focus over the coming year, starting with strengthening communications to enable more effective member and stakeholder engagement. The Director also noted that Women’s Platform is in a positive position through stable funding until 2025 with flexible funders who are supportive of the broader aims of the work.</p> <p><b><i>Policy advocacy</i></b></p> <p>The Director reflected on another year of a heavy advocacy workload, and commended the collaborative spirit of the sector. The Director emphasised that Women’s Platform has developed a clear role and remit within the sector, which is supporting development of positive relationships and effective advocacy messages.</p> <p><b><i>CSW</i></b></p> <p>The Director highlighted the opportunities to engage internationally as a key benefit of CSW, which continues to assist in building relationships with international organisations. The Director noted that CSW is returning to a more in person format, which brings challenges as attendance is more limited, but emphasised the focus will be on enabling as many women and girls in Northern Ireland as possible to engage meaningfully with CSW.</p> <p><b><i>Women, Peace and Security</i></b></p> <p>The Director underlined working with the APG on UNSCR 1325, Women, Peace and Security as a highlight of the year, continuing from recent years. This work has helped build dialogue between decision makers and the sector, and the APG took a strong role in advocating for a meaningful strategy on violence against women and girls. There was also development of concrete collaboration, including APG acting as host for a number of events, which provided opportunities for</p>	
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	<p>women to engage directly with decision makers.</p> <p>The Director highlighted the Women’s Spaces project as a core priority for the year, building into the coming year. The project, a consortium with NIRWN, WRDA and WSN in its first year engaged over 200 women through workshops and events, including an event marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in the Long Gallery at Stormont. Work to date has highlighted a strong demand for women to make their voices heard, and developing this journey will be a priority in year 2 of the project. This will focus on development of a toolkit on good practice in peacebuilding, which is currently being initiated. The Director also noted that the consortium approach has provided significant learning on collaborative working, documented in an inbuilt external evaluation, which can be used to further strengthen delivery in the future.</p> <p><b><i>European collaboration</i></b></p> <p>The Director noted that Women’s Platform has stepped down from the role as UK Board member to the European Women’s Lobby, in line with an agreed two year rotation. A focus in 2024 will be reviewing and developing four nations collaboration, and clarifying the relationship with EWL in a post Brexit context.</p>	
<p><b>4. Annual accounts</b></p>	<p>Jeanette Thornton as Women’s Platform Treasurer introduced the Women’s Platform accounts 2022-23 and thanked funders for ongoing support. The Treasurer also confirmed that independent examination was undertaken in 2020-21 rather than full audit, as company law enables Women’s Platform as a small organisation to do this.</p> <p>The Treasurer noted the accounts confirm that the organisation is in good financial health, and also demonstrate trust in the organisation from funders. In addition to the three year core grant from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, which secures the organisation to 2025, the Women’s Spaces project is funded as a three year Strategic Partnership with the Irish Government’s Peace and Reconciliation Fund, while Women’s Platform successfully initiated communications development supported by a grant from Dormant Accounts Fund NI. These</p>	<p><b>Louise Kennedy proposed adoption of annual report and accounts. This was seconded by Megan McClure Botha.</b></p> <p><b>Director to relay thanks to Sarah Greene.</b></p>

	<p>grants will enable a focus on delivering the strategic plan, and strengthening support to the sector through enhanced communications.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Sarah Greene as finance contractor for excellent support and record keeping, which has enabled smooth running of finances.</p> <p>The accounts were commended for adoption.</p> <p>It was also agreed to reappoint the accountants Clarke &amp; Co for the independent examination of accounts 2023-24.</p>	
<b>6. Election of directors</b>	<p>The Chair thanked the Committee for their commitment and support throughout the year, and confirmed that four positions on the Committee were opened for nominations, and four nominations have been received.</p> <p>The Director confirmed nominations received by the nomination deadline, who under the Women's Platform Articles of Association are deemed elected, as nominations did not exceed vacancies.</p> <p>The new members, confirmed for 2024-26, are:  Naomi English  Aislinn Fanning  Maxine Murphy Higgins  Beverly Simpson</p> <p>The full Committee 2023-24 Committee will consist of:  Alexandra Brennan  Louise Coyle  Karen Devlin  Naomi English  Aislinn Fanning  Siobhán Harding  Anne McVicker  Alexa Moore  Maxine Murphy Higgins  Emma Osborne  Beverly Simpson  Jeanette Thornton</p> <p>Co-option of another two members remains an option during the year.</p>	<p><b>Nominations were confirmed.</b></p> <p><b>Director to organise induction for new Committee members.</b></p> <p><b>Director to ensure new Directors registered with Companies House and Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.</b></p>
<b>Close of AGM</b>	<b>The AGM was concluded at 6.40pm.</b>	