

## **FAMILIES FIRST – ST ANDREWS**

### **Minutes of the Twentieth Annual General Meeting**

**via Zoom**

**2 September 2021**

Details of those present and apologies for absence are indicated on the attached sheets. There were 38 people present, including 16 members. Apologies for absence were received by 14 people. The meeting was chaired by Alison Cartwright, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

#### **1. Welcome and apologies**

Alison Cartwright welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that it was her first AGM as Chairperson since taking over from David Harrison in April 2021. She announced that a number of people had submitted their apologies, and these were noted.

#### **2. Introduction of staff and Trustees**

Alison introduced the staff and Trustees, highlighting two new Trustees who have joined the board since last year's AGM, Lin McLean and Ronnie Bonnar.

#### **3. Minutes of the Nineteenth AGM held on 3 September 2020**

Minutes were approved by those Trustees present.

#### **4. Annual Reporting**

##### **4.1 Chairperson's Report – Alison Cartwright**

Alison reported on a successful, albeit challenging year of service delivery due to the Coronavirus pandemic, in which we were able to reach 420 people ranging from intensive to moderate support. She noted that staff exceeded expectations, coming up with new and creative ways of adapting service delivery to the new circumstances. The team have embraced new technologies and used them to remain connected to our service users; we learned that Zoom has been a lifeline for many of the families throughout the year. What has given us a lot of encouragement is that some of our volunteers have been able to join in with some of the activities from around the world too. The team also made regular visits to the families, delivering resources provided by businesses in the local community, and when allowed, provided support through walks and talks. This determined effort by staff to maintain contact and support for service users through these difficult times has resulted in the very positive feedback seen in the Annual Report, with service users extremely appreciative of the efforts made by the team.

Alison thanked the staff on behalf of the board, stating that they have done an amazing job over the past twelve months. She described the enormous challenges faced, including the difficulties of organising services via Zoom and the lack of available volunteers. She commended the staff for the increased support they provided to service users while working from home and being impacted by Covid themselves. She

thanked them for their creativity, for working long hours and for the difference they made.

Alison was pleased to report on a successful year in fundraising, with applications specific to Covid in addition to ongoing fundraising. A partnership with the charity Helm has been formed to develop further fundraising opportunities.

Looking forward, Alison reported that there would be a review of strategy to take effect from April 2022. This will involve a change in the way that aims are described, allowing Families First to develop more partnerships and access more funding.

Alison also expressed the hope that we can celebrate Families First's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in person in September 2022.

#### **4.2 Manager's Report – Morag Coleman**

Morag reported on the determination of Families First to continue services through the pandemic. She explained that service users were consulted so that support could be provided in a medium they were comfortable with. Some service users chose to engage through their mums, some liked Facebook, others preferred messenger and text, or Zoom and of course, when we were allowed, face-to-face. Staff discovered hidden talents and developed new skills, enabling them to continue to deliver great service despite the circumstances. Staff were aided by some volunteers who remained connected, including one who got up very early to join her session from New York and, more recently, another trainee volunteer got up at 5 am to join in with our online training from Chicago.

Morag highlighted how important partnership working is to Families First, and that she and Alison Miller undertook an exercise to assess who we partnered with, what our partnerships relationship looked like and how we could work more closely with each other to support our service users. We found that we had relationships with over 80 groups and individuals throughout Fife. They met some new people during this process and found that everyone was keen to take the opportunity to strengthen their connections and work closely together for the benefit of our communities. We are very keen to reduce our carbon footprint and keep business and relationships local – back to our ethos of local people supporting local people.

The team have seen some positive changes this year. We were pleased that Sarah Martin accepted the promoted position of Office Manager, meaning that we were able to offer our Admin Volunteer, Laura Turnbull, the Admin Assistant position. We were also able to offer Neryl Malcomson (Finance Officer) the position of Finance Manager and Kathryn Henderson a permanent youth worker position. We were happy to welcome back Jane Fraser, who returned to us briefly from retirement to help out with office duties until we could consolidate the Business Support team. We were also successful in recruiting a digital intern, Maja Juszcakiewicz Lewis for a summer internship to help us improve Families First website and digital media presence.

There is still more to be done to move our staffing levels to a place where we feel we can competently manage our ever-increasing workload. This increase in workload has not come about because of a significant increase in service user numbers but is a consequence of working better in partnership with schools and

social work; we are now considered part of the team around a child. With this role comes the responsibility to write reports, assess service, count numbers, and put plans in place. This obliges us to keep more records to ensure we are compliant. We also must provide evidence of volunteer development.

Morag stated that the best measure of our success is what the service users tell us. At every opportunity they sing our praises, and they couldn't wait to get back to face-to-face services. We look forward to this coming year with confidence and hope that normal services will resume as quickly as possible.

Morag praised and thanked the team for all their hard work and those present for their continued support of Families First.

## **5. Trustees Annual Report (TAR): Accounts to 31 March 2021**

Mark Geary, Trustee, reported that overall Families First is in a very positive place financially.

Mark explained that it has been a very challenging year for organisations like Families First, with demand increasing while funding reduced. Other charities have been using up their cash reserves, with diversity of cash flow being critical for stability. Successful management results in a build-up of cash reserves, allowing the organisation to go forward with the stability to deliver the services we want to.

He reported that there was a 15% increase in income over the year from a good breadth of sources. 1/3 of funds were unrestricted, allowing flexibility. 41% were from three key donors, with the St Andrews Baptist church providing significant benefits in kind.

In terms of expenditure, Mark reported that 63% was on service delivery, which is in line or ahead of the sector average. Families First is as lean as it can be while providing the required level of service.

Mark reported that there is significant headroom over the minimum level of cash reserves set by the board, demonstrating great performance in managing financial stability and great evidencing work by Morag and the team to obtain future funding.

Looking forward, Mark stated that it will be a tough environment for funding, with tightening budgets at Fife Council and other donors. Positive discussions have been held with partners and new resources will be targeted, including non-competitive cost sharing opportunities.

## **6. Acceptance of the annual report and financial accounts**

The annual report and financial accounts were approved by the board on 12 August 2021.

## **7. Appointment of chartered accounts for the coming year**

Having done a review of local accountants at their board meeting on 11 February 2021, the Trustees approved the re-appointment of Henderson Black & Co. for the next financial year.

## **8. Trustee resignations and appointments**

Alison Cartwright took over as Chairperson of the Board in April 2021, and although due to retire by rotation, is happy to continue with the support of the board. There have been two new appointments, Ronnie Bonnar, who joined in April 2021, and Lin MacLean who joined in June 2021. There were no resignations to report.

## **9. Organisational History – Ian Smith**

Ian Smith, Trustee, presented a brief history of Families First, based on research conducted by a team of 8 university students who interviewed a number of people associated with the charity.

The origins of Families First date back to a minister of St Andrews Baptist Church, Rev. Tim Burns. Tim set up a social concern working group, and recruited George Baird who he identified as a key church member with project development knowledge to help set up a social project to identify the unmet support needs of vulnerable families and children in the local community. A lot of time was spent speaking to local people and statutory and voluntary agencies to see where the gaps were in provision.

Tim had previously been involved with an organisation called Spurgeons Child Care Trust, a Christian charity, who he had worked with at Kings Cross Baptist Church. Tim realised that their expertise and professionalism would be important for setting up a charity in St Andrews. Spurgeons agreed to manage the employment contracts, payroll and staff support and supervision, everything related to human resources. On July 1<sup>st</sup> 2001, the inaugural meeting of Families First took place at the St Andrews Baptist Church. Families First opened its doors on January 7<sup>th</sup> 2002, with Bryn Richardson appointed as Project Manager. Bryn was joined in April by a Project Administrator and part time Children's Club Assistant, and a year later by a Family Support Worker. Early on the focus was very much on securing the start up. Within a year, George Baird had submitted 42 funding applications and with some success had secured lots of funds. Since Bryn, there have been four more project managers (now named Manager). The current manager, Morag Coleman has been in post since 2011.

Tim left the Baptist Church in 2002 to emigrate to Australia and was replaced by George Baird. To date, there have been a total of 10 Chairpersons of the board and 8 company secretaries.

In terms of continuity and change many things have stayed the same. After 20 years, Families First is highly valued and respected in the local community. It has always had a Christian ethos and has kept a close relationship with the Baptist Church, who continue to provide premises as a gift in kind. Families First has also maintained continuity in its dedicated staff, large volunteer base and person centered service delivery.

There have been difficulties over the years, with the financial crises in 2006/7 and 2017 resulting in staff having to reduce their hours to ensure the survival of the organisation. The challenges throughout have been fundraising, recruitment of staff and Trustees. Donations are received from a large number of diverse sources; Families First has had a service level agreement with Fife Council since 2014 providing over £30,000 a year.

In 2009 Families First became independent from Spurgeons.

There has been some streamlining of service provision over the years, Breakfast Clubs were handed over to Fife Council in 2015 and there was a move away from support in the form of practical service e.g. gardening, DIY and a furniture bank. The emphasis moved towards emotional support and needs of children and their families.

The Directors became Trustees, the Manager became the Chief Fundraiser, and a Finance Officer was employed to replace the Treasurer role.

To conclude, Families First has survived and flourished over 20 years, raising a total of £2.5m, a testament to the hard work of the staff and volunteers.

## **10. Video Presentation by Ellieanna Nicholl – Service User**

Ellieanna, a former service user who attended Youth Group, reflected on her time at Families First.

In her video Ellieanna stated that without the support of Families First, she wouldn't be who she is today. She thanked Alison, who she would have been lost without, for supporting her, in particular with her transition to high school. She talked about her close bond with Kathryn, which developed during her youth group sessions, describing her as the 'big sister' of the group.

She went on to introduce the rest of the team, explaining their roles and responsibilities. Ellieanna ended by saying that "we are a family at Families First, service users, staff and volunteers; everyone matters".

Alison Cartwright described Ellieanna as a great ambassador for Families First and asked staff to thank her for her contribution.

## **11. Any other competent business**

Alison paid tribute to Chris George who passed away this year. Chris made a big contribution to Families First over many years and will be sadly missed.

## **12. Date of next meeting**

The next AGM will be held on 29 September 2022.

## **13. Vote of thanks**

Alison finished the meeting with thanks to all who took the time to attend, to our funders for their support, to our political representatives, and to our volunteers. She ended with special thanks to the Baptist Church for their continued support and for continuing to gift us the use of the Rose Lane Centre.

**Twentieth Annual General Meeting - Attendance Register**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
1.	Jan Clarke	Staff
2.	Morag Coleman	Staff
3.	Kathryn Henderson	Staff
4.	Chris Johnstone	Staff
5.	Maja Juszcakiewicz Lewis	Staff
6.	Neryl Malcomson	Staff
7.	Sarah Martin	Staff
8.	Alison Miller	Staff
9.	Alexis Rinaldy	Staff
10.	Laura Turnbull	Staff
11.	Ronnie Bonnar	Trustee/Member
12.	Alison Cartwright	Trustee/Member
13.	Mark Geary	Trustee/Member
14.	David Harrison	Trustee/Member
15.	Tony Jeavons	Trustee/Member
16.	Lin Maclean	Trustee/Member
17.	Barbara Maggs	Trustee/Member
18.	David Maggs	
19.	Ian Smith	Trustee/Member
20.	Fiona Barnard	
21.	Cllr Ann Verner	Ward 18 St Andrews and Strathkinness
22.	John Winter	Volunteer
23.	Jane Maciver	Link Befriending
24.	Lindsay Glasgow	Member
25.	Anne Glasgow	Member
26.	George Baird	Member
27.	Nicola Bain	
28.	Joan Riddell	Member
29.	Wendy Chamberlain MP	Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for NE Fife
30.	Hamish Tait	Rotary Club of St Andrews
31.	Nicole Yule	Youth 1 <sup>st</sup>
32.	Philippa Cook	SABC Member
33.	Peter Cook	SABC Member
34.	Ian Docherty	Member
35.	Cilla Jackson	Member
36.	David Jackson	Member
37.	Caroline Main	Member
38.	Abi Ngunga	Pastor SABC

**Twentieth Annual General Meeting – Apologies for Absence**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
1.	Keith Main	Fife Council
2.	Professor Sally Mapstone	University of St Andrews Principal
3.	Gillian Morton	The Robertson Trust
4.	Sarah Field	Volunteer
5.	Jane Rosegrant	Corra Foundation
6.	Brian Walters	Barbara Ward Children's Foundation
7.	Dr Wendy Simpson	CAMHS
8.	Margaret Lees	St Andrews Community Trust
9.	Phillipa Charles	Garfield Weston Foundation
10.	Flora Warshaw	Volunteer
11.	Silvia Willis	Member
12.	Rev Allan McCafferty	Hope Park and Martyrs Parish Church St Andrews
13.	Caroline Rochford	Caroline Rochford Consulting
14.	Elma Baird	Member
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