

MINUTES

Extraordinary General Meeting

Tuesday 2nd March 2021

1.	Welcome and Introductions from the Chair	Actions
	Sir Les Ebdon (LE), Chair of NEON welcomed members and opened the meeting.	
2.	NEON Change in organisational arrangements 2021	Actions
	<p><u>Paper 1: Change in organisational arrangements 2021 Briefing Paper</u></p> <p>Professor Graeme Atherton (GA), Director of NEON discussed the briefing paper and Martin Webster (MW), Operational Consultant, discussed part 2.3 Applying for charitable status of the paper.</p> <p>Johnny Rich, Push, asked if NEON become a charity, if it would limit our ability to campaign politically. <i>MW informed members that NEON would not be more limited, and NEON's work would be to carry out its charitable status to serve its members and support learners.</i></p> <p>Johnny Rich, Push, also asked about who a trustee could be and passing the 'fit and proper' test to be a trustee. <i>LE responded that this is not a difficult test to pass, and we would expect members to pass. However, it does mean some people won't be eligible, for example, members who are paid to deliver NEON training.</i></p> <p>Ted Jensen, Queen's University Belfast, asked how long it would take to obtain charitable status. <i>MW responded that he believes it would take around six weeks to get approval from putting in the application.</i></p> <p>Heather Cooper, York St John University, asked if getting charity status would change NEON membership, i.e., would different types of organisations be able to join. <i>MW informed members that is unlikely, as NEON is already available to several different types of organisation. However, highlighted that NEON may need to create a new membership for individuals who wanted to join.</i></p>	

Jo Marchant, King's College London, asked if NEON was planning to apply to be charity in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

GA informed the members that the first step is to gain the charity status in England and Wales. He stated NEON would then explore what else needs to be done and highlighted that NEON wants to serve its members across the nation.

MW also highlighted that if we register as a charity, NEON would be able to operate in Scotland already, as well as England and Wales and that we will look into Northern Ireland, as Martin was unsure.

Johnny Rich, Push, asked if in order to stand for election, would trustees have to be NEON members? If so, is that a wise limitation to the expertise we might want to draw on (especially if some members don't want to put themselves forward because they might want to be in a position where their organisations might be in receipt of funds from NEON)?

MW responded that NEON would take a mixed model approach. That we would have a number of trustee positions that are elected but also have some positions open, depending on expertise required, i.e., financial skills.

Also, individual's will be applying to be a trustee not as members of their institution, so it won't affect their application if their institution has received funds from NEON.

Anisha Smith, Coventry University, asked if the current service provided to members would look or feel any different on a daily basis if NEON is to achieve charitable status?

GA responded that nothing would feel different – that the new structure will not affect the way NEON operates.

Johnny Rich, Push, stated that mixed trustees sound sensible, but we may find five is therefore quite a small number.

GA informed members that NEON would want more than five trustees in the future but for the process of the application and short term we would want five trustees to start.

Peter Riley, Manchester Metropolitan University, asked what is the process of signing off the accounts when we move from London Higher - and do we have any idea of what the balance of the account is?

GA responded that NEON is part of London Higher and therefore all monies belong to London Higher. However, that does not mean that there won't be any money taken forward. For example, income from membership that we have just received would be deferred into the next financial year. However, at the moment it is hard to say that this exact amount would be - an estimate sum of £15,000 to £20,000 was given. And London Higher is in the process of getting this transfer ready.

	LE discussed needing trustees with financial knowledge and if any members know of anyone, to please notify NEON. Hollie Baker, University of Surrey also suggested that the student voice should be on the trustee panel.	
3.	NEON charitable formation – motion	Actions
	All attendees were asked if they approve the motion of NEON applying to be a charity as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)? All attendees voted yes. <i>There were 42 members in attendance and 37 members voted.</i> The motion was carried.	NEON will press on with the application for charitable status
4.	Any Other Business	Actions
	LE asked if any members would like to be named as a trustee to get in touch. To view the recording of the meeting, please click here: https://vimeo.com/520968099/650d06bf19	NEON will send a formal invitation to its members so that they can come forward as a trustee.