

**Minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Guillain Barré  
Syndrome Support Group New Zealand Trust held at 1100 hours on  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at the Miramar Links Conference Venue  
Wellington**

**Present:-** Doug Young (President), Peter Scott (Treasurer), Tony Pearson (Secretary), and Trustees Chris Hewlett, Meike Schmidt-Meiburg, John Podd, Matt Peacey, Ansie Nortje.

Doug welcomed the 13 members attending and also to those members who had joined the meeting via the Zoom link and, with Tony confirming that the meeting was quorate, commenced the business of the meeting. Tony advised that 6 Proxy votes in favour of the President, 3 in favour of himself, 6 for Meike and 1 for Chris had been correctly lodged. Doug advised those members attending via Zoom that they were able to register their votes during the course of the meeting using the “Chat” facility- with Matt recording votes so cast.

**1. Apologies:**

Apologies had been received from:- Hine Bailey, Jos Roebroek, Robin Scott, Margaret Stothart and Lil Morgan.

**2. Minutes of the last AGM held in Wellington on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020.**

The minutes had been previously circulated to all members and Doug proposed they be taken as read and be accepted as a correct record. The motion was seconded by Peter and the members signified their unanimous agreement.

**3. Matters Arising:-**

**A. Report on Regional Meetings and future plans:**

Moving to a more cost effective format of Regional meetings which gave members the chance to meet face to face with members of the MAB had proved successful in Christchurch and Wellington. The next meeting is scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> May in Hamilton with Meike and Chris undertaking the organisation with Gareth in attendance together with quite a number of the MAB members. An Auckland meeting in November is being contemplated.

**B. Website and Facebook site activity reports:** Matt reported that statistics for the year had been corrupted by a massive influx of computer generated spam apparently from the USA. The best he could estimate was that genuine traffic was much the same as last year. In the first 3 months of this year there had been 183 user – most new - who spent an average of 5mins on the site viewing 9 pages – he confirmed this was a good “hit rate” in terms of general website usage. Matt will ask the Board to consider restricting acceptable traffic to New Zealand based originators in future. Tony suggested we should also included Australian traffic. Meike reported on the Group’s Facebook activities with a total of 347 members of which 236 had been active in the last month. 216 of these were based in New

Zealand with a further 74 from the USA, Australia and the U.K. with small numbers from around the world. New membership was restricted to New Zealanders only. Top cities are Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington. The biggest age group category is in the 45-55 range and females always outnumber males in any of the age categories.

#### **4 President's Report. (Copy Attached)**

Doug read his report to the meeting noting that this was his second report in 6 months following the delayed 2020 AGM and our first AGM involving the Zoom facility providing a cost effective way for members to attend from the comfort of their homes. Doug thanked Matt for handling the Group's Zoom facility and setting up this meeting. Group operational matters had been dealt with promptly and efficiently and Board members had carried out their allotted tasks with dedication and commitment. Louis Nortje has tendered his resignation owing to other work commitments. Doug thanked Louis for his work as AHV co-ordinator and his assistance in producing the Newsletter. Doug recounted each Board member's duties and thanked them for their services as well as Dr Gareth Parry for, in particular, keeping our membership abreast of Covid -19 issues relevant to their condition over the past year. As Head of the MAB Gareth leads a team of highly qualified medical professionals all of whom have a special interest in GBS and it's related variants and so provide a hugely valuable source of advice, support and information to the Group as well as providing us with a unique level of credibility to the medical profession generally. Our group of Hospital Visitors are a vital part of our work and Doug extended the Group's appreciation for their efforts. We are moving to develop an on-line training facility for new and existing AHV's. Donations are essential to enable us to continue our work and members donations are always gratefully received. A number of initiatives are being considered to increase donations and members will be able to contribute and support those efforts with specifically targeted donations. The Newsletter continues to be our main form of communication with both members and other organisations with some 340 on the distribution list – 2/3rds by Email. Ansie was congratulated on doing a great job in her first year as Editor. Coffee gatherings are growing in number and provide a good source of feedback to the Board about members wishes and concerns – well done to the organisers of these get togethers. Sponsorships are extremely important to our continuing operations . The ongoing support of the ARA Lodge No. 3481C on the north shore in Auckland and the Parry Foundation is very much appreciated. Doug extended his and the Group's sympathies to Ken Adern's family with his passing during the year. The funding of Research projects continues to be an important part of the Group's objectives. The Onga Onga project continues and is now in the detailed investigation of the plant extract composition stage in conjunction with the Cawthron institute in Nelson. Currently the Board is considering requests for assisting in funding a project into the relief of Fatigue and another into the effectiveness of Plasma Exchange compared to Ivig in severe GBS cases. A provisional undertaking has been given in respect of funds for the Fatigue project, the

other is still under consideration. Doug completed his report by expressing his appreciation for all those who have supported him in his role as President in the year. Doug proposed his report be accepted as a true record of events in the year. Peter seconded the motion and the meeting signified its unanimous support.

## **5. Presentation of the Accounts for the Year to 30.11.20.**

Peter circulated a copy of the Accounts in both the traditional and Charities Commission format to all members. He confirmed that the figures presented in the traditional format were identical to the re-formatted Charities Commission presentation examined by the Reviewer in accordance with Rule 9.2. of the Trust Deed.

Donations were higher than previous years at \$10,000 with contribution from the ARA and Parry Foundation and a number of sizeable one off and smaller regular donations from members. With the diminishing of rates generally Bank Interest becomes of lesser importance in our income intake. General operational expenses reflect the fact that there was no Conference expenditure although the new Regional meetings accounted for some \$900 of expense. Trustees travelling expenses \$2000, Newsletter \$1800 and postage \$1000 are the main items of expenditure. Overall we recorded a \$2700 surplus for the year.

Current Assets of the Group – essentially cash and deposit balances with the bank and a small stock of badges and books - showed a \$2500 increase in the year to \$22500. The Group does not have any outstanding Liabilities.

The GH Jones Memorial Fund stood at \$119,000, an increase of \$4,000 in the year. There were no grants from the fund in the year. Peter expressed his satisfaction that the results were a lot better than previous years. There were no questions arising from the Accounts.

Peter proposed that the presentation be accepted by the meeting and Chris seconded the motion All members signified acceptance of the motion – none against. Doug thanked Peter for his presentation.

## **6. Election of Officers.**

Doug asked Tony to take the meeting through the election process. Tony advised that since the last AGM, as the meeting had already heard, Louis Nortje has resigned from the Board. To fill that vacancy the Board co-opted Louis' wife Ansie our Newsletter Editor to join the Board and she now needs to be formally elected to that office on the proposal of Doug seconded by Tony.

Tony explained that in accordance with the rotational rules of the Trust Deed the Trustees who are required to resign this year are:-

Meike Schmidt-Meiburg, Chris Hewlett and John Podd. These Trustees, being eligible, now offer themselves for re-election.

There have been no nominations to become a Trustee received by the Board – Tony asked if there any nominations from the floor? – no nominations were forthcoming.

As there were no nominations Tony proposed that the meeting accepts “en bloc” the re-election of the three retiring Board members and the election of Ansie. Matt seconded the proposal which was accepted by the meeting and accordingly the members were duly elected to the Board of Trustees. There remain two vacancies on the Board.

Doug advised the meeting that it was the Board’s intention, at the Board meeting to be reconvened after the AGM, to appoint the Officers of the Group as follows:-

President – Doug Young

Secretary - Tony Pearson

Treasurer – Peter Scott

The meeting concurred with the intention.

Doug said the Board would look for other suitable members to join the Board and had the power to co-opt them pending formal election at the next AGM.

## **7. Membership Subscriptions**

Doug asked Peter if our current practice of no subscriptions was sustainable. Peter said that with the current level of donations this was the case. Meike presented a proposal from Michael Cameron that the Board considers re-instating a subscription of \$50pa to increase the funds available to the Group. Doug responded noting that our previous subscription policy had resulted in a diminishing members base and hence the reason for abolishing it – this was in line with the practice and experience of the UK and USA Groups and provided we can maintain the level of donations he believed we should continue with a nil subscription policy. Tony was asked to write to Michael accordingly but noting that the Board will review this situation annually as required by the Trust Deed. Peter then proposed that the nil subscription be continued for the 20/21 year, seconded by Gareth and unanimously supported by the meeting.

## **8. General Business:**

### **8.1 Proposal to change the basis of Research Funding from the G.H. Jones**

**and Others Memorial Fund:** Doug advised that there was no change proposed to the principle of maintaining the original Capital element of the fund, as approved by an earlier AGM, however it was felt that we need to give a clear indication to funding requesters as to just how much might be available for their proposals. In essence this was anticipated at a maximum of \$20,000 for a single grant– although it could be more if the Board felt the project justified this level of support. Such funds would come from the non-capital element of the Memorial Fund although a temporary use of some of the capital element may be used provided it was replenished as quickly as donations permit. In reviewing the current proposal requests, as mentioned earlier in his President’s Report, Doug confirmed the Board would be adopting this approach.

**8.2 Report from the Sub- Committee on new fund-raising ideas:** Doug referred to his President’s Report about new ideas that the Board was considering – these would be developed in the coming year.

**8.3 Blood Donations:** David Meyer – a Zoom attendee based in Napier - asked if we could encourage Group members to give blood as there was a growing national shortage of blood donors. Doug said we would follow this up.

There being no further business Doug drew the meeting to a close at 1145hrs hours, thanked members both present and on Zoom for their attendance and invited those present to join the Board for lunch.

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Signed as a True Record of Proceedings

Date

Chairman