

Resolution of No Confidence in the current Treasurer, to be put to the FoWG General Meeting, Thursday 25th January 2024

Prepared by Viv Whittingham, current Lifelong Member of FoWG and past Secretary and Trustee.

Background:

As a member, according to FoWG's constitution, I have a duty to use that power to, in good faith, do what would be most likely to further the purposes of the CIO. In this case I am calling for a vote of no confidence in the Treasurer who has consistently, over a long period of time, failed in the duties of the post, both as Treasurer and Trustee. This has culminated in contraventions to the Constitution with the potential to cause great harm to FoWG.

Purpose and Consequence of No Confidence Resolution

- A resolution is a main motion expressed formally in writing, which communicates a special or elevated level of importance.
- Resolutions of No Confidence, like all motions, are intended to open debate, discussion and deliberation.
- Resolutions of No Confidence do not—based on the particularity of the form—contain examples and in-depth explanations.

Resolution of No Confidence in FoWG Treasurer

The Resolution of No Confidence in FoWG Treasurer:

- comes from a deep concern for FoWG, its governance, its volunteers, its users, staff and its aims and values.
- is intended to bring attention to and accountability for the pattern of failed leadership at FoWG.
- is a call to restore proper governance and accountability, at FoWG.

A vote of “no confidence” does not, itself, remove a person from her/his position. It does deliver a clear and strong message to the Board of Trustees, all of whom are responsible for the proper and fit governance of FoWG.

Pattern of Failures

Responsibilities not executed

- FoWG's constitution clearly says that the annual accounts **must** be presented to the membership at the AGM. This was not done at the October 2023 AGM. No convincing explanation or apology was given. Questions were raised about this and I subsequently sent 3 emails asking how this situation would be rectified. I received no response from the Treasurer, nor an acknowledgement.
- FoWG Financial policies and procedures had not been updated, in spite of numerous requests. The text of the Reserves Policy was not updated since 2020. Financial controls have not been amended since 2020, and Cash Handling has not been amended since 2021. These policies are outdated and not fit for purpose for current operations. Support has been offered to do these tasks and a bookkeeper was engaged to do the day-to-day tasks but there has been no high level input. Relations with the bank have not been kept up to date, in particular, signature changes and cheque book handling procedures.

- Gift Aid has not been claimed, potentially losing us funding
- All Trustees have a duty to act in FoWG's best interests but the Treasurer has not acted according to the Constitution, or to the role description which states the Treasurer should be active in the role, protect assets, fulfill responsibilities assigned at Board meetings, prepare and present regular financial reports.
- No handover has been made to a prospective new Treasurer who was due to take over the role at the 2023 AGM, in spite of many reminders.

Negative impacts

- There is a reputational risk to the organisation when policies are not current, when the AGM does not receive annual accounts and when accounts are not filed on time with the Charity Commission
- Members cannot be confident in an organisation where there is financial laxity and mismanagement
- Other Trustees are liable when financial mismanagement becomes an issue for the organisation
- Routine due diligence checks by Funders look at financial policies to see if they are up to date. They also look on the Charity Commission website and notice if there is a late filing of accounts. If there is a problem then the funding application is automatically rejected.

Proposed by: Viv Whittingham

Seconded by: Jean Kerrigan