

Ethical Consumer Research Association

DRAFT Minutes from the Annual General Meeting

held on Thursday 26th September 2024 at 7:05pm via video conference

Members present

Employee members: Alex Crumbie, Rob Harrison, Marlous Vedt, Richard Stirling, Jane Turner, Francesca de la Torre (Chair), Nadine Oliver, Ruth Strange (minutes), Elizabeth Chater, Jasmine Owens, Katy Bostock, Katalin Csatadi, Louisa Gould, Ruby Muceniek

Non Staff Board members: Dan Welch (investor director), Adina Claire (investor director), Ketan Varia (non exec director)

Investors Members:

David Hoadley Rachel White, Norman Pasley, Joanna Long

1. Introductions and welcome

Fran welcomed attendees and introduced the meeting.

Thanks was given to Shaun Fensom who recently left the board after being a member for many years.

2. Apologies

Anna Clayton, Alyson Tyler, Shanta Bhavnani, Edward Lander, Ruairidh Fraser, Jenny Derry (employee members), Clare Searle (non exec board member) and Paul Delve (investor member)

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 21st September 2023

Approved as a true record

4. Appointment of Investor-Member Directors

We hold elections for investor members to join the board every two years. This year we received two nominations for the two available places from Dan Welch and Adina Claire.

The meeting proposed to reappoint Dan Welch and to appoint Adina Claire to the board and this was accepted.

Adina Claire has worked with Christian Aid, War on Want, NEON and more. She has supported ECRA's work since it started and hope to support ECRA to achieve even more in the future.

5. Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

Rob gave a summary of the financial statements and the Directors' Report and answered questions

The directors' report and financial statement was approved with no objections

6. Reappointment of accountants (Rule 54) and resolution to utilise exemption from filing audited accounts (Rule 55)

We use Third Sector Accounting in Manchester. We don't have a formal audit because our revenue is below the threshold.

We accepted the proposal with no objections.

7. Any Other Business

Ketan Varia (non exec board member) introduction: Friends gifted a subscription. He started making changes to his own lifestyle. In day job helps large corporates with change.

Meeting Ended approximately 7.25pm

AGM (additional minutes – non-official business)

Introduction from Rob

Attendees introduced themselves.

Three short presentations on ECRA projects followed by Q&A

Reader survey results

Annual highlights – nearly 1000 respondents. Most subscribers for 2-4 years.

Mostly use EC as a source of info and ideas, and a buying guide.

Main motivation for subscribing: I like what EC stands for.

Impact people feel EC has on their purchases: Subscribers 72-81% say big impact.

Overwhelmingly positive response to our new rating system.

Questions:

Do we have comparative results from previous surveys? Eg about satisfaction with rating system.

Answer – some questions were for first time, but we knew from trial guides people were overwhelmingly positive about the changes.

The Spain campaign

Worker exploitation in Spanish supply chains to UK supermarkets. Migrant workers in precarious situation.

Began from a reader suggestion, and we've published on it ever since.

Working with unions on the ground.

Built toward publishing a report last year, and we got press coverage and funding as a result.

Funding is to explore the potential of a particular workers rights programme.

Workers in Spain and US are now connected and having online meetings.

Later this year the US workers and the EC Spain team will meet the workers in Spain.

Might seek funding to allow workers in Spain to travel to Florida to see the programme in action there.

Palestine solidarity work

EC started around South Africa boycott in the 1980s.

In 2005 BDS campaign began and EC followed it.

Since October 7th 2023 the profile has risen. We continued to write about the topic and the webpages have been viewed a huge amount.

Due to the interest we have made several Youtube videos to share more information.

Now have a working group and ideas for more future work.