



Minutes

Special Meeting

27 April 2023

Hybrid: In-person at 15 Hatfields, London SE1 8DJ and online

1 Welcome

Julie Barratt (President and member of the Board of Trustees) welcomed members to the meeting and read the motion that was to be considered.

Given that parts of the motion related to individual members, she reminded members to focus on the posts rather than the people themselves and asked everyone to be respectful in the comments that they made.

She explained that CIEH staff would be monitoring the online element of the meeting in order that members online could be invited to put any questions they wished, alongside those in the room.

2 Motion 2 (stem and clauses 2c and 2d)

Annie Sargent (of behalf of the proposer of Motion 2, Ceri Edwards, who was absent from the meeting) explained the background to the motion.

She submitted that:

- She was proud of the profession of environmental health and wished to see it thrive.
- The 'rewriting' of motions that had been undertaken, the decision of the Board not to disclose legal advice that it had been given and the lack of an independent chair of the previous Special Meeting were all issues that had damaged confidence.
- This was a timewasting meeting that did not need to have taken place.
- There were concerns about CIEH's ability to represent the profession in discussions with governments, particularly in light of the removal of the director roles for Wales/Cymru and Northern Ireland.

- That it was not clear which decisions in respect of these matters had been taken by the Board and which by the Chief Executive.

Julie invited questions from members.

A member spoke in support, suggesting areas on which CIEH might focus its attention.

A member said Annie's comments resonated with them and that CIEH was an organisation that should have members at its heart.

Three other members spoke in support of the views expressed in proposing the motion.

A member explained some of the challenges faced by early career environmental health practitioners, particularly in securing entry level roles in the profession.

A further member submitted that they had given countless free hours to CIEH and thought there was a 'growing influence of people who don't share our values and our culture'. They commented that they thought CIEH's operational procedures were invalid as they were not correctly referenced to the regulations. They regretted that the inevitable consequence of the motions was a focus on a single individual, for whom they felt sorry.

A member commented that they thought that finding a role in the profession was dependant on who one knew. They added that the Directory of Student Opportunities was valuable and paid tribute to the excellence of the academic staff at the institution at which they had undertaken their professional studies.

A member asked if a trustee who had been removed or resigned was able to seek re-election or re-appointment to the Board. The Governance Adviser confirmed that that was the case and that any member who met the relevant requirements could stand in a Board election or apply for vacant roles when they were advertised.

A member commented that there had been a lack of engagement by CIEH and that it had been defensive.

A member spoke in support of the motion, saying that the observations made during the meeting by two recent students had been saddening to hear.

Julie invited Judith Hedgley (as the proposed replacement Board member) to address the meeting.

Judith emphasised that the motion sought to address the Board as a whole and not an individual member. She submitted that the position that the meeting was in was something manufactured by CIEH.

She had been disappointed and disgusted by the behaviour of the Board. She submitted that what was proposed was not a takeover by members with a local authority background.

She said that, as a Board member, she would always listen, be open and transparent, make informed decisions, ensure that minutes were a true record, be polite and not shout at attendees, represent both the private and public sectors, not refer to others in a derogatory manner and not engage in discussion of matters where she might have a prejudicial interest.

The meeting adjourned from 1451 to 1500 to allow a member's technical access problems to be addressed.

Julie invited Vanessa Wardle (as the member of the Board proposed to be removed) to address the meeting.

Vanessa said that she was disappointed that things had come to this. She explained the personal commitment of time and expenditure that she had committed to undertaking her trustee role. She went on to explain her professional background in environmental health.

She thought that elements of what were happening were redolent of the takeover behaviour in Orwell's Animal Farm.

Julie invited Peter Wright (as seconder) to conclude this item.

Peter expressed his thanks to the Chief Executive, staff and the Board for arranging this meeting.

He submitted that it was awful that a member had been put in the position of being the subject of a meeting such as this and that that was all down to the way in which CIEH had dealt with things. Members had 'not been given democracy' and he was disgusted at how matters had been dealt with.

He had heard from former trustees who had resigned after the previous special meeting, who he said had told him that they had not been given access to CIEH's legal advice.

In his submission it was possible for the CEO to remove appointed trustees.

He said that appointed trustees had ignored the outcome of the previous special meeting, commenting that 'they didn't have to go but they could have done.'

In his submission, a request that the two special meetings could have been held as a single event had not been considered. Having to have an expensive and disruptive meeting was the fault of CIEH.

CIEH had now not had an environmental health professional on its staff for four months; it was a failing professional body.

The 236 members who had signed the request for this meeting were not all local authority staff.

He said that the Board should trust and respect members.

He emphasised that adverse comment on social media was not helpful to the profession and that people should avoid doing that.

Members were hurt and annoyed by the response to the motions passed at the AGM in 2022.

The current Board were the problem and should 'go now and show some respect'.

Julie reminded members that the vote would close shortly and used the time before that to remind members of the timetable for the forthcoming Board election and to encourage as many members as felt they could to stand for election and contribute to the work of the Board.

Julie closed the vote in respect of this motion and, subsequently having thanked everyone for attending, the meeting.

Post meeting note – this motion was carried.