FIGHTING GLOBAL POVERTY

Minutes of War on Want (WoW) AGM, Saturday June 14th 2025, 12-1pm held in-person at RichMix in London and remotely via zoom

Council members in attendance:
In Person: Alia Al Ghussain (Chair) Esther Giles (Treasurer), Mark Luetchford, Norina O'Hare, Rajiv Menon
Online: Shaben Begum, Nesar Rafiq

Members:
In Person: Clare Evans, Naheed Malik, Martin Prior, Kaysara Khatun, Debbie Quail
Online: Tony McMullan, Gareth Glynn, Sue Blackwell, Ken Ritchie, Andy Giess, Joe Sim, Ron Berry, Ruthie Taylor, Ann Barber, Jiggie Bhore

Staff members attendance:
In Person: Asad Rehman, Tyrone Scott, David Rudkin, Gayatri Dev, Jackie Simpkins, Liz McKean, Martin Dale, Hannah Page, Tash Allan (minutes)
Online: Lisa Khaydari

1. Chairs Welcome and Introduction

Alia (WoW Chair) welcomed Members and Trustees to the 2025 AGM and explained that she would be chairing the meeting and that the meeting would be hybrid with some attending in-person and some online. She also explained that the meeting would be recorded. Alia opened by thanking the Trustees and the Staff for their work throughout the last year. The meeting then ran through housekeeping of the venue (fire exits, accessible bathrooms, first aid etc.).

Alia then highlighted the state of the current world that we are operating within (most notably watching a live and very plausible case of genocide by Israel against the Palestinian people and the ongoing UK complicity in this). She noted the importance of the work that WoW engages in and noted how it makes a real difference in ensuring that there is a strong voice allowing people to speak out boldly, especially on Palestine (and the ending the arms trade). In addition to engaging with a number of different crises – amongst others, climate, cost of living a number of ongoing injustices. She noted that this work would not be possible without the support of the Members, Trustees and Staff. Alia then went onto introduce the Senior Management Team (SMT) including WoW's outgoing Executive Director (Asad Rehman) and the other Trustees in attendance (including Esther Giles who is the WoW Treasurer). Alia explained that Liz McKean will be stepping in as interim Executive Director whilst the search begins for Asad's replacement.

Alia and Liz then talked through the voting process for the resolutions in-person and online and explained how to vote on the resolutions within Zoom.

2. Executive Directors Report

Asad opened noting that this will be his last official function as the Executive Director of WoW. He began explaining that WoW is unique as it is a membership organisation and is driven by its members and supporters. WoW has often paved the way for radical issues, particularly in relation to Palestine and Apartheid. Currently, we are moving towards a world where even the international community is moving away from solidarity which we are seeing in the cuts in overseas development aid & the UK government. Within this time, Asad commented that WoW has stayed true to its commitment to partners in the global south and WoW is in a unique position that it is growing, in terms of staff base, membership and donor base. Asad noted that this has only been possible due to the work of staff, trustees and the donors. Asad then directed the attendees to WoW's annual report which showcases the work of the last year and how WoW engages with this point of multiple crisis. Asad wanted to pick up a few points in the annual report; 1) WoW was one of the first organisations that identified that the energy charter treaty was fundamentally a challenge to climate justice and now the UK government has finally withdrawn from this; 2) WoW was part of a delegation that went out to Colombia to see the impact of these ISDS clauses and now a new climate agreement has been agreed to without an ISDS clause and this was only possible due to the work WoW has done; 3) WoW also stands with workers in struggle, importantly standing with our trade union partners in Sri Lanka (for example, Next is closing its only unionised factory) and the work that WoW does on this is absolutely pivotal; 4) WoW's Palestine work has called for a unified end in arms sales to Israel and has consistently called to end UK complicity in the Palestinian genocide.

Asad also encouraged those in attendance to pick up the WoW briefings on debt, tax and trade.

Asad then closed with a number of key points, he wanted to thank CJC who are currently hosted at WoW. He continued to note that one of the biggest challenges we continue to face is resource – WoW's current plans to host convergences in South Asia, Latin America and Africa this year are only possible as a result of the financial stability and thus the bedrock of the organisation really are it's supporters and funders. Asad formally closed by saying that he hopes that WoW can continue to be a transformative force in these moments of deep despair and recognises the power and importance of the people.

Alia thanked Asad and noted how invaluable his contributions have been and wished him all the best in his new role at Friends of the Earth.

3. Governance

Alia noted that there were a few items under governance forming the business part of the AGM to go through. Alia noted that this year, there was an uncontested election – 5 vacancies were available on the Council of Management and we had 5 valid nominations for the positions available. Esther Giles, Roger McKenzie, Rajiv Menon, Wilf Sullivan and Nesar Rafiq will be considered appointed onto the Council of Management at the close of the AGM. Sam Mason is standing down and Alia would like to thank her for the time committed to the organisation.[1]

(i) Minutes of the 2024 AGM

The minutes of the last AGM, held on 2 August 2024, were APPROVED.

There was no formal vote for this but no objections were raised.

No matters arising were raised from the minutes.

[1] At the time of the meeting, Alia also mentioned that Mark Luetchford would be stepping down. However, this is incorrect and he continues to serve on WoW's Council of Management until next year when his term is finished.

(ii) Audited Report and Accounts for year ended 31 March 2024 - Presented by Esther Giles (Treasurer)

Esther noted that we are looking back at the accounts for the financial year from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 which have been audited by Moore Kingston Smith.

Esther flagged to the meeting that she would be referring to page numbers throughout her presentation and explained that she would be rounding figures up and down but the accounts detail the full numbers. The figures show that WoW's position has been fair, with cash and short term deposits at the end of the year standing at £2.5m which is a decrease of around £3.6m in the previous year (page 31). In addition to cash held at the end of the year, we had £850k held in short term investments. On page 30, total income is £2.1m this year (previous year was £2m) so slightly more than the previous year. Total expenditure was £2.5m compared to £1.9m in the previous year. Restricted income (income which can only be used for a designated purpose) £1.1m and unrestricted £984k. On page 36, unrestricted income, was made up as follows regular donations, appeals and donations and another year of generous legacies (totally £174k). Other trading and investment income added £15.5k. Important to determine that legacies can be an unpredictable source of income and the Council of Management have agreed to use this prudently especially in times of uncertainty. Turning to page 30, and looking at expenditure, 43% was spent on restricted purposes whilst 50% was spent on unrestricted and 7% spent on designations. The fixed asset fund has stayed largely unchanged. At the 31st March 2024, total unrestricted funds stood at just over £1.7m (over the recommended upper limit of the current reserves policy).

Esther then opened the floor for questions to which there were none.

(iii) Resolutions

The meeting then moved to the business part of the AGM.

• Resolution 1 – **Annual Report & Accounts -** To receive and adopt War on Want's Annual Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2024, together with the last directors' report and auditors' report on those accounts.

Martin Dale, Director of Income and Engagement, shared the results.

Resolution carried.

• Resolution 2 – **Appointment of Auditors -** To reappoint Kingston Smith as auditors to hold office from the conclusion of the meeting to the conclusion of the next meeting at which the accounts are laid before War on Want, at a remuneration to be determined by the Council of Management.

Martin Dale, Director of Income and Engagement, shared the results.

(iv) Emergency Resolutions

There were two emergency resolutions received. Voting results were as follows (shared by Martin Dale):

Emergency Resolution 1 - War on Want reaffirms its support for the Saharawi people and their inalienable right to self-determination.			

Introduced by Mark Luetchford & seconded by Ken Richie			
Emergency Resolution 2 - War on Want AGM condemns the seizure of the Madleen by the Israeli Navy and the kidnapping and detention of its crew. This assault in international waters is a clear criminal act of piracy. ***Introduced by Norina O'Hare & seconded by Alia Al-Ghussain***			

Resolutions carried.

(v) **Chair's closing remarks**

Alia paid thanks to all War on Want Staff and to Trustees. Alia especially wanted to thank and pay tribute to members who left generous gifts in their wills as a way to ensure they continue to support the work of War on Want. Alia closed by thanking everyone for joining us today. Alia also mentioned the public event that followed the formal business AGM and encouraged people to attend that as well.