

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of York and District Citizens Advice Bureau

**Held in the George Hudson Room, West Offices
at 18:00 on Thursday 23rd October 2025**

Members:

Julia Atwater, Jim Cannon, Mary Cannon, Joanna de Groot, Mike Hemmings, Simon Mallett, Adam Middleton, John Nodder, Jane Rendell, John Short, Rosemary Suttill, Phil Thomas, Cllr Andrew Waller, Kate Wiggins

Others:

Ellen Bradbury, Mirela Ciobotaru, Eleanor Daniels, Eileen Day, Ian Goodwin, Cllr Pete Kilbane, Vanessa Lindsay Smith, Lewis McCann, Maryrose MacAulay, Fiona McCulloch, Andy Mendus, Jeh Mukkar, Matthew Pells, Sue Royston, Jo Trythall, Natalie Wilby

Guests:

Dr Heather Melville - Chancellor of the University of York
Fran Manley - SJP Law
Julie Parker - SJP Law
Helen Richardson - SJP Law

Apologies:

Gill Bull, Simon Crack, Margaret Everall, Vicky Ling, Janet Looker, Manar Matusiak, Michael Sturge

Proxies:

received from Margaret Everall, Vicky Ling, Michael Sturge

Welcome:

Joanna de Groot, Chair of CAY, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She first introduced Dr Heather Melville, Chancellor of the University of York, and invited her to give the keynote address.

Dr Melville used her life experiences to emphasise the importance of, and benefits to be obtained by, a focus on inclusion across all aspects of personal, social and business life. She used specific quantified examples of the benefit brought to the UK by immigrant groups, and explained the importance of her work in supporting and developing under-represented communities, especially in the finance and banking world.

Formal AGM

The AGM started at 19:00

Minutes of 2024 AGM

The minutes from the AGM held on 24th October 2024, were agreed as a true record. Acceptance was proposed by John Nodder and seconded by Fiona McCulloch. All were in favour.

Matters Arising

Cllr Waller repeated his special thanks for the outreach sessions run by Citizens Advice in wards across the city. He emphasized the importance of organisations like CAY bringing help and support into local communities, and encouraged CAY Management to strive to further extend these services.

Adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025

Phil Thomas, Trustee Treasurer, introduced the annual report and accounts, which had been circulated to members for their information. In his presentation he summarised the improved outturn for 2024/25, with a virtually 'Break Even' position reported, and expressed his confidence that in 2025/26 CAY will deliver a small surplus, principally thanks to the efforts of staff, and especially the CEO, in pursuing further funding opportunities while keeping a close control on costs.

In 2024/25 income exceeded £500,000, with improvements in donations and legacies supporting continued support from City of York Council and various public and commercial funders.

He also thanked York Rotary Club for nominating CAY as the principal charity in their Dragon Boat race, and the enthusiastic rowers who drove the CAY boat. At the end of the year CAY had funds of £158,000.

Fiona McCulloch, CEO, outlined the key achievements in the year, which saw an increase in the number of outreaches to 26, a 62% increase over the last two years. 7200 clients were helped, with around 17,000 individual issues. This was achieved despite CAY capacity being limited, and in response to the ever-increasing demand, an ambitious programme to increase volunteer numbers was launched. There are now 16 volunteers in training, and 4 have already qualified, ahead of the target set.

CAY staff and volunteers have helped York citizens to claim over £2.5m in previously unclaimed benefits or tax credits, and to write off a similar sum in debts. Overall, this shows £11.20 benefit for every £1 invested in CAY.

Appointment of Independent Examiners 2024-2025

The meeting voted unanimously to reappoint Karen Wood from Outsource Accounting Services & Independent Examinations as the Independent Examiner of CAY Accounts

Election of Trustees

Members unanimously approved the re-election of Julia Atwater, and the appointment of new Trustees Gill Bull and Kate Wiggins

Any other Business

Joanna de Groot closed the AGM, telling the meeting that these achievements had been made in the context of a particularly challenging year for CAY. She gave an overview of our achievements of the last year, with more people being helped with more and more complex needs. She thanked and congratulated staff and volunteers for their performance in the light of these increasing local and national challenges.

She expressed her personal thanks, and those of the Board of Trustees, to all staff and volunteers who had delivered this performance, and her special thanks to Fiona for her resilience and drive.

She was also able to announce that a second weekly drop-in session was being introduced, which should help CAY to reach more clients.

Finally, she congratulated Fiona on being named by CEO Monthly Magazine as:

“2025 Most Influential CEO - social advice and support”

There being no other business, the AGM closed at 19:20.

Guest Speaker

Joanna introduced the guest speakers Fran Manley and Julie Parker from SJP Law.

They talked about ‘Pave the Way’, a CIC run by SJP Law which provides signposting and support for people living with life changing injuries in the York and Hull region, and which partners with CAY and others to help people to better health and a better life.

There is more information available on the CAY website

The meeting ended at 19:50 with Joanna thanking the SJP team for their inspiring talk, and everyone for their attendance and participation.

Andy Mendus (Clerk to the Trustees)