**Clinks Annual General Meeting**

**Tuesday 22nd November 2022 4.15pm**

**Drapers Hall, Throgmorton Avenue, London, Greater London, EC2N 2DQ**

**Attendees**

Bthechange, Circles UK, Clean Sheet, DWRM Consultants CIC, Entrepreneurs Unlocked CIC, FASO UK, Irish Chaplaincy, The New Leaf Initiative CIC, Novus, Oak London, POPS (Partners Of Prisoners and Family Support Group), Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact), Prison Radio Association, Prisoners' Education Trust, Rise Up CIC, Stand Out, Sussex Prisoners’ Families CIC, Switchback, The Hardman Trust, The Oswin Project, Transform Justice, UK Acquired Brain Injury Forum, Unlock - for people with criminal records, Women in Prison, Working Chance, YouTurn Futures (26 organisations).

**Minutes**

1. **Welcome and Chair’s address – Roma Hooper**
   1. Roma opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to Clinks’ 24th AGM. Roma reflected on the day and hoped everyone had enjoyed the annual conference content. Roma acknowledged another challenging year which including continued recovery post pandemic and commented on Clinks focus to build strength and unity in our sector. Furthermore, Roma acknowledged the recent changes within our Government and the impacting cost of living crisis as the voluntary sector progresses through this current year and impressed upon members to continue to stay in touch and inform Clinks about how they are doing.
   2. Roma reminded all members of their right to vote. Roma thanked the Clinks team, trustees and CEO for their work not only in orchestrating this conference but for all the work over the last eighteen months. Roma thanked the outgoing trustee, Rachael Byrne for all her hard work and dedication in her many years as a serving Trustee. Roma urged everyone to stay for the drinks reception and make use of the valuable networking time for which we have missed so much over recent years. Roma moved on to the formal business.
2. **Apologies from members**
   1. Apologies were received from Prisoners Abroad and their proxy vote recorded.
3. **Approval of minutes of the AGM held on 23rd November 2021**

**Ordinary Resolution 1**

*That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 23rd November 2021 be adopted as a true record of the meeting.*

The previous minutes are accepted as a true record. Proposed by Rich McStraw, Stand Out. Seconded by Riana Taylor, Circles UK and passed with 12 votes.

1. **Presentation of the** [Annual Report](https://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/clinks_annual-report-2022_4.pdf) **& plans for the future - Anne Fox, Chief Executive Officer**

4.1 Anne presented the highlights of the annual report against each of Clinks strategic objectives and thanked Clinks members Only Connect and Women at the Well for allowing us to take photos and use them in the annual report.

**Strategic objective 1**: *Clinks promote the value and the work of the voluntary sector in the criminal justice system with a particular focus on smaller specialist organisations*

**In 2021/22 :**

* We kept the sector informed and up to date through a range of communications including in depth blogs to provide a digest of what’s relevant to the sector and a report on the sector’s experience of the first round of commissioning under the new reformed probation system.
* Our website continued to be utilised as a source for up to date information in a time of rapid change and we had regularly updated “live” pages dedicated to developments relating to probation reform and Covid 19. This included video “walk throughs” of new systems. There were 206,504website users across the Clinks and NCJAA websites an increase of 16% on the year before.
* Our social media following grew further in this year by 1,672 followers to a total of 27,255 followers across the Clinks and National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance (NCJAA) Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook accounts. These platforms were used throughout the year to deliver breaking sector-specific news and to promote our members’ and the wider sector’s work and amplify its voice. Followers also interacted with us using this platform, creating a space for discussion and debate.

Next year we will...

* promote the sector and its work to commissioners, practitioners, and decision makers through a range of content including social media, case studies/blogs/audio and video content, and in the criminal justice and voluntary sector press
* Provide opportunities for the sector to use our platforms to promote their voices
* Understand the sector’s funding position in the context of COVID-19 recovery and use this to influence funders and commissioners and to connect the sector to resource
* Ensure that our communications resources and activities are focused on assisting us achieve our organisation’s goals as set out in our 2022-24 delivery plan.

**Strategic Objective 2:** *Clinks support voluntary organisations working in the criminal justice system with individuals and their families*

**In 2021/22 :**

* Probation commissioning and contract mobilisation continued to be a significant challenge for the sector during the year. There was also concern amongst organisations about future funding and service provision due to the uncertainty created by COVID-19, not being able to deliver services as intended and future changes to the prison regime in particular.
* In partnership with the MoJ commercial team, we established a quarterly engagement forum to provide regular and ongoing engagement on commissioning, looking at the pipeline of commissioning and procurement, a review of recent commissioning, and feedback from the voluntary sector on what seems to be working well and what could be improved.
* Our area development team continued to utilise digital technology to provide support and opportunities for voluntary organisations to come together regularly through region-specific criminal justice forums in the North East, Wales and London as well as informal networking hours in the North East, South West and London. Delivering support in this way has meant we have continued to see good engagement from organisations that find these forums an effective way of engaging with Clinks and networking with other organisations in their area.
* In December, we recruited 13 voluntary sector representatives to establish the Clinks member advisory forum, and we see this becoming an important way in which Clinks members have a voice in our operations and development.
* We continued to run all our events online to ensure that we could confidently plan our events programme during what was a turbulent period because of continuing uncertainty from the pandemic. This has helped us to continue to plan and deliver an ambitious programme of events and see higher than ever numbers of attendees. Online events have helped us to broaden our reach to organisations and practitioners that may not have previously been able to take part due to travel times and costs, and our online offer is in response to this need, although we are looking forward to reintroducing in-person events and training next year where it makes sense to do so.

Next year we will...

* Develop a sector support and membership strategy and action plan
* Begin to develop a national support hub, providing
* information, guidance and resources
* Review and grow our events and training
* programme to support the sector
* Maintain a regional presence where possible
* and grow our area development focus
* Provide broader support to the voluntary
* sector across the north of England
* Review and continue to develop our specialist support
* networks for organisations that provide specific support or work to meet the needs of particular groups of people.

**Strategic Objective 3:** *Clinks represents and advocates for the voluntary sector and its service users*

**In 2021/22 :**

* We researched and published findings on the impact of probation unification on the voluntary sector. As part of this we fed our knowledge and intelligence into the findings of Richard Oldfield’s review of the commissioning process. We highlighted that while the voluntary sector had won the majority of these contracts, small, specialist and local organisations were under-represented, meaning that the probation service had missed an opportunity to draw upon the full breadth and vibrancy of the sector.
* Both our research report and Richard Oldfield’s report recommended that HMPPS explore grant funding for voluntary organisations over contracts to address this. Our recommendations were accepted by HMPPS who committed to exploring making grants the presumptive mechanism for funding organisations to work alongside the probation service.
* In July 2021 the government announced a prison strategy white paper was to be published. We raised concern with the MoJ that there was no plan for a green paper and its accompanying consultation to proceed this, and so this vital policy issue would not be informed by meaningful consultation with the voluntary sector working in criminal justice. Our representations contributed to the inclusion of consultation questions in the published white paper. We then held a series of consultation events with over 130 organisations in the sector, to inform our response.
* With funding from the Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales we have supported many voluntary organisations working in the CJS to feel more confident in their ability to speak out on issues that matter to them and their service users. Our *Finding your voice* training programme targeted voluntary organisations working in the CJS with limited experience of using their voice in policy or campaigns. This benefited 142 attendees from 91 different organisations. 82% reported improved confidence in using their voice to influence change after each event.
* Our surveys on the impact of probation reforms and the state of the sector received the highest number of responses we have ever received, giving us a clear and reliable evidence base from which to influence. We have shared the report with officials in the MoJ and HMPPS as well as charitable funders to ensure that decisions affecting the sector and investment takes full account of this context.
* Through our role on the HMPPS Third Sector Strategic Partnership Board Clinks supported HMPPS to develop plans for a framework for MoJ and HMPPS engagement with the voluntary sector. This positive development has the potential to provide clear and consistent expectations for engagement between the sector and the department.

Next year we will...

* Redevelop through coproduction with the criminal justice voluntary sector our publication Clinks Thinks to inform our policy priorities and to mobilise the sector to engage and contribute to our policy activity
* Deliver the next phase of Lloyds Bank Foundation funded programme of learning to support organisations, to understand the role of influencing in their work and be competent and confident in using their voice
* Ensure that we continue to prioritise those that experience poorer outcomes and experience structural inequality in the CJS in our policy work and act as an ally to, and amplify the voices of, those specialist organisations working with these groups
* Increase our engagement with other departments and with justice structures and arrangements in Wales
* Continue to work with the Third Sector Strategic Board to achieve a more consistent and strategic approach to the voluntary sector across MoJ and HMPPS
* Continue to engage with the sector through policy consultations to coproduce policy responses and ensure they are based on evidence from the sector
* Work internally to improve the connection between our regional thematic network and our policy work so that intelligence from networks informs policy activity

**Strategic objective 4:** *Clinks identifies challenges and opportunities facing the voluntary sector and its service users, and works together to find and implement solutions.*

**In 2021/22 :**

* We secured dedicated funding to resource part of the women’s network activity this year, enabling us to continue to develop our understanding of, and provide support for, specialist organisations who work with women. By the end of the year we had 163 individual members.
* Following our advocacy and support to the women’s sector in negotiating the Dynamic Framework and procurement process, we were delighted when the outcome of that process resulted in the majority of commissioned rehabilitative services contracts for services to women being awarded to women’s specialist voluntary organisations. Mobilising and delivering these contracts have produced some challenges for the sector and we have met regularly with officials in HMPPS and MoJ to advocate for solutions.
* During this year MoJ/HMPPS began the next commissioning round to contract for family support services to start from October 2022, and a national competition to re-tender these contracts provided both opportunities and challenges. We set about making sure that voluntary sector organisations were engaged in, and able to provide feedback on, the development of the commissioning process and service specification. Following submission of a feedback paper and recommendations submitted to the MoJ and HMPPS in December, the Invitation to Tender documentation went live on 28 January 2022 and we welcomed a number of changes made to procurement. However, some challenges remain.
* We continued to build the online evidence base for the voluntary sector working in the CJS. This series of articles aims to develop a far-reaching and accessible evidence base covering the most common types of activity undertaken within the CJS. It aims to increase the extent to which the voluntary sector bases its services and work on the available evidence base and encourage commissioners to award contracts to organisations delivering an evidence-based approach. Each article is written by a leading academic with expertise on the topic in question. The topics are selected by Clinks’ members as areas of priority interest.
* Since setting it up in 2020 there are now 70 organisations in our race and justice network – all led by and focused on racially minoritised people. With funding from MoJ, in partnership with the Black Training and Enterprise Group (now Action for Race Equality) and Eastside Primetimers we ran a national programme of free consultancy support for organisations led by and supporting racially minoritised people. 46 organisations took part, participating in a blend of one-to-one consultancy, workshops and small group sessions that suited them best, with approximately 112 days of one-to-one consultancy. The evaluation has shaped our offer to these members, ensuring that we have prioritised promoting funding and consultation opportunities and supporting organisations to take them up. We also shared this information with MoJ to support their understanding of the support needs of specialist organisations and their experience of commissioning processes.
* In June, and in partnership with the HMPPS Arts Forum, NCJAA promoted practical information on how to continue the provision of in-cell arts activities during COVID-19 restrictions to our network and HMPPS staff. *Creativity in a restricted regime: a guide for prison staff* was downloaded 1,500 times within six months of publication.
* In late summer we completed the governance and management review of the NCJAA and recruited a new manager to lead it’s work. The NCJAA retains its own identity with its own vision and aims, and is now a fully embedded thematic network of Clinks with an independent advisory board and co-chairs. These changes, and the appointment of the new manager, have laid solid foundations for the NCJAA to build into the future. By late autumn, the NCJAA secured extension funding for 2022-23 from Arts Council England, enabling us to prioritise the development of a future work plan that builds on our strong track record .

Next year we will...

* Gather intelligence from the sector to identify trends, challenges and opportunities
* Support the sector with access to evidence and provide support to develop and utilise evidence
* Promote the principles of the Good Prison voluntary sector model across the prison estate, champion voluntary sector coordination as an enabler of rehabilitation, and pilot voluntary sector coordination in a London prison
* Promote good practice in commissioning to enable the sector to engage with commissioning
* Develop and deliver a programme on work in Plymouth as part of the Changing Futures programme to improve outcomes for people experiencing multiple disadvantage
* Support the sector through the probation reform programme
* Grow the reach and impact of the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance
* Work towards becoming a network of networks, building on our existing networks for organisations working in the arts, supporting women and working with racially minoritised people, reviewing how we provide specialist networks for organisations working with specific groups

**Strategic Objective 5:** *Clinks is effective, efficient, and professional in our work and operations. We ensure we have systems, resources and processes to achieve maximum impact*

**In 2021/22 :**

* We worked with our Board of Trustees and Chair to continue to navigate post-pandemic restrictions. The year presented many challenges in terms of staffing and team culture, and we worked hard to ensure that people were well cared for and felt their value to the organisation as well as our commitment to their wellbeing.
* Our staff continued to work remotely ensuring their safety but continuing to deliver high quality services, meeting the needs of the sector and supporting our staff wellbeing.
* We worked together to determine the kind of culture we want and supported staff to work in coaching pairs and in cross-charity project teams to embed the principles of growth, belonging and practice in how we work.
* In this year we introduced a new monthly wellbeing day for all full time employees (half a day for part time employees) as a staff benefit which has continued to support high levels of productivity and has also been positive in supporting those staff facing challenges in life outside of work.
* During this year we recruited new Trustees to our board and created placements for two board fellows – encouraging younger people under the age of 30 to have insight and contribution to the Board and ensuring we have a diverse and representative leadership for our organisation. We are now confident that our leadership is authentically representative of the sector we work in and, we are led by people who bring immeasurable value from their personal and lived experiences
* We refined our staff recruitment processes to be more inclusive and accessible for all and actively encouraged people with protected characteristics and lived experience of the CJS to apply for posts. The geographical spread of our staff team has also widened through recruiting to home-based roles that had previously been based in our London office. In February we made the decision to become a head-office-less charity and reinvest the budget for office accommodation in supporting staff to work from any location and building connectedness in the team and with the sector through travel, meetings and events. We were sorry to lose some staff for whom an office based team is an important factor but we are confident that not only can we improve how we work for the sector but we can further diversify our staff team through working remotely.
* We developed a new approach to our income generation considering the external environment facing our sector and our own challenges and opportunities. We continue to look at how to generate income from our activities from those who can afford to support our growth and invest funding and income in expanding our offer at low and no cost to specialist organisations.
* We were delighted to secure a new three year infrastructure grant from HMPPS ensuring our core activity is secure and enabling us to continue to deliver quality services to the sector from April 2022.
* In this year we worked to towards are ambition of being an intentionally anti-racist organisation with activities reflective of this across the charity. Our anti-racist working party, drawn from the staff and trustee team, met regularly to lead the work collaboratively and consider ways in which Clinks needs to change and to work together to bring about change. In this year the group trialled reverse mentoring and developed an approach to introducing staff led groups to provide a safe space for racially minoritised staff, to promote inclusion and recognise the impact of racism on people’s working and wider lives.
* Working closely with leaders across the voluntary sector from organisations led by, and focussed on, racially minoritised people, our trustees and staff team, we reviewed the way in which we talk about race and racism. This led to a number of changes to our language and messaging which we hope will ensure that in the future the language we use challenges– rather than contributes to – racist ideas, actions and policies.
* We have seen the massive financial impact the pandemic has had on the voluntary sector working in criminal justice during COVID-19. So, in 2020, we were very pleased to obtain funding which enabled us to support the sector with a time-limited free membership offer and we were able to continue free membership during 2021-22.
* At the end of the year, we had 612 voluntary sector organisations as members of Clinks.
* From April 2022, we are delighted to be following through on our commitment to make sure Clinks membership continues to be extremely cost effective. We will introduce a simpler pricing structure, and membership will be free for around 50% of the current membership, reflecting our particular support and commitment to smaller and specialist organisations.

Next year we will...

* Finalise a delivery plan reviewing and extending our goals for the next
* two years as we face emerging changes and challenges in the sector
* Continue to be a strong and well-run organisation with access to resources to meet those emerging needs
* Continue our anti-racist work to become a leading organisation in this area and establish training for our team in key areas
* Prioritise our income generation activities using

more efficient systems and processes

* Grow our membership under a new pricing structure
* which prioritises small and specialist organisations
* Ensure we understand our impact and how we measure it
* Retain a valued core team and strengthen Clinks ways of working incorporating a hybrid approach to our teams collaborations.

Anne reflected on the value of having such a committed team of staff and trustees. Despite challenges in their personal lives, shaped by the pandemic and other issues, they have continued to give their all and find new ways of ensuring that the criminal justice voluntary sector is valued and included. We are grateful to all who have helped us achieve the things we set out in this report – our funders, partners and supporters, and the organisations who trust us to provide them with support and to advocate for the changes they need to, in turn, help people change their futures.

1. **Presentation of the Annual Accounts** 
   1. Treasurer Simon Alsop presented the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st Of March 2022. Simon reported at the beginning of the year, the trustees used customary practice and approved a deficit budget of £75k. We were able to mitigate this deficit throughout the year through additional funding, natural cost saving and strict financial planning. Clinks closed the year with a slight deficit of £10k against a £1.6m turnover.
   2. Clinks has once again, faced a challenging year, one that has tested the resilience of the team as we try to traverse this financially austere climate, raise funds and navigate the changing external environment. We are still acutely aware of the residual impact left from the Covid pandemic and the horizon is not yet clear as we brace ourselves for the impact of the rising cost of living crisis.
   3. Clinks was able to meet and satisfy funder commitments as well as delivering on planned activity and additionally, delivering a small grants program on behalf of the Criminal Justice in Wales Board to support the race equality community engagement scheme and, by supporting HMPPS’ competition for Family and Significant Other Services contracts for prisons.
   4. Clinks calculated reserves level is £427,555 and Clinks free reserves held are £443,422. We have taken the strategic decision to leave clinks free reserves above the required level so that we can counter some of the risk of running at a larger than usual deficit budget, The agreed deficit budget at April 2022 was £250,000 as we continue to fundraise from all available external avenues as well as improving and developing our self-generated income model to diversify our income streams and to bring a reliable self-sufficiency in these uncertain financial times.
   5. We acknowledge and are very grateful that some of our resilience is due to the statutory funding we receive. We are thankful for the continued support from all our key funders.
   6. The Treasurer invited questions and there were none.

**Ordinary Resolution 2**:   
*That* *the audited Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 for Clinks be received and adopted.*

The audited Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 for Clinks be received and adopted. Proposed by Nicola Drinkwater, Women in Prison. Seconded by David Morgan, Entrepreneurs Unlocked CIC and passed with 17 votes.

**6.Resignation, re-election and election of trustees**

**Ordinary Resolution 3:**

*That the following trustee be re-elected as trustees of Clinks in accordance with Article 37 of the Articles of Association: Simon Alsop*

Simon Alsop was nominated to be re-elected as a trustee of Clinks in accordance with article 37 of the Articles of Association. Proposed by Rich McStraw, Standout. Seconded by David Morgan, Entrepreneurs Unlocked CIC and passed with 22 votes.

**Ordinary Resolution 4:**

*That the following trustees be elected as trustees of Clinks in accordance with Article 37 of the Articles of Association: Amina Ditta, Salim Baba, and Donna Everett.*

Amina Ditta, Salim Baba and Donna Everett were nominated to be elected as trustees of Clinks in accordance with article 37 of the Articles of Association. Proposed by Nicola Drinkwater, Women In Prison. Seconded by Jon Collins, Prisoners Education Trust and passed with 21 votes.

***With formal business concluded, Roma Hooper closed the meeting at 5pm***