



## The Westminster Foundation for Democracy Limited

Company number: 2693163

### Minutes of Meeting of Board of Governors of Westminster Foundation for Democracy, on 23 February 2023

Meeting IN-PERSON (PORTCULLIS HOUSE) AND VIA ZOOM: 9:30-11.30am.

**Present:** Sue English (Vice Chair)  
Mark Babington  
Yasmin Qureshi MP  
Rt Hon Dame Maria Miller MP  
Thomas Hughes  
Anthony Smith (ex-officio, CEO)  
Femi Otukoya (ex-officio, Finance Director)

**In attendance:** Chris Lane (Company Secretary)  
Shannon O'Connell (Director of Policy & Programmes)  
Michael Nevin (Regional Director, AFRICA)  
Clare Scott (Board Secretary)

#### Welcome and Apologies

Due to the absence of Richard Graham MP, Sue English opened the meeting and welcomed the Board members. It was noted that there were apologies for absence submitted by Richard Graham MP, Brendan O'Hara MP, and Christine Jardine MP.

The meeting was quorate.

#### Declarations of interest

None were raised.

#### Minutes and matters arising

The Board approved the minutes of the November 2022 Board meeting. All actions noted as complete.

ACTION – Anthony Smith and Shannon O'Connell to meet with Sue English and Thomas Hughes to discuss a Programme monitoring system. *Complete, meeting held February 2023*

#### Chair's opening comments

Sue English acting as Chair in the absence of Richard Graham MP, opened the meeting and noted that the annual plan and Budget for the next financial year were to be agreed.

#### 1. CEO's Report

The Board accepted the CEO report (Doc\_2) as presented and noted they agreed with the points outlined and an overview was provided of the programme visit by Sue English.

The CEO advised the Board that he had circulated an article by Samantha Power, Head of USAID titled "How Democracy can Win" before the meeting. An overview of the article was

presented to the Board and a brief discussion was carried out on how the paper crossed over with WFD's strategy.

## **2. Quarterly Progress Report**

The Board accepted Management's Quarterly Progress Report (Doc\_3) covering the Q3 FY2022/23 period and endorsed the latest version of the Corporate Risk Register, as presented.

The Board discussed the Quarterly Progress Report and the Corporate Risk Register, with the main points discussed being:

- The Board were updated on the new format of the Quarterly Progress Report and how the included information contributed to WFD's strategic goals.
- Following the resignation of Valerie Vaz MP and notification that Christine Jardine MP would not stand for a second-term, Labour and the Multi-party consortium are looking to nominate replacements. The public appointments process has progressed with interviews held for the replacement of Simon Walker, approval has also been received to recruit for replacements for Sue English and Thomas Hughes.
- Two risks were noted as moving outside the risk appetite for the board.

The Board were presented an additional paper – Parliamentary Engagement plan, which had been shared with the Board papers. The Board held a brief discussion regarding the plan with focus on the Annual Lecture planned. The CEO informed the Board he was happy to convene a meeting with any Board members that wished to discuss the paper and activities planned further.

**ACTION – Board members to express their interest to discuss the parliamentary engagement plan and outlined activities to the CEO so a meeting could be convened.**

## **3. Report of the People Committee**

Maria Miller MP advised the Board that the People Committee had met in February, it was noted that Peter Taylor, Head of Department for the Safeguarding Unit had been nominated by the FCDO as the interim co-opted member while Jennifer Kelly is unable to attend.

The Board noted that the People Committee had focused on:

- Committee priorities 23-24
- Values and Code of Conduct
- Culture and Engagement
- Wellbeing and Safeguarding

## **4. Report of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee**

Mark Babington advised that the Audit and Risk Assurance committee (ARC) had met in February and reported that the committee has focused on:

- Committee priorities 23-24
- The interim report for the notifiable incident.
- The completed internal audit - Cyber health check.
- The budget for 2023/24
- Planning of an exceptional meeting in April to cover
  - ARC and Programme oversight
  - Notifiable incident – Updated investigation report

## **5. In-depth review: Annual Plan & Budget for next financial year**

The Director of Operations presented the Annual plan outlined in Doc\_5 to the Board. It was highlighted that the annual plan sets out how the annual priorities are aligned to the Strategic goals.

The Finance Director presented the Draft budget 2023/24 and gave an overview of the intended reserve investments planned. The Board discussed the proposed budget and the investments that were set out, considering the opportunities and risks outlined that could affect the budget in the future. The Board agreed the Draft budget but asked that any changes to be circulated to all members for comments and approval.

**DECISION – The Board approved the Draft budget proposed for the FY 2023/24.**

**ACTION – Finance Director to ensure that any revisions to the Draft Budget 2023/24 are circulated to the Board for review and approval.**

## **6. Regional Programme Focus - AFRICA**

Michael Nevin joined the meeting and provided an update on Africa.

Michael presented a series of slides to the Board, the main points discussed were:

- Supply of democracy – There has been a downward trend showing declining satisfaction with how people view democracy.
- Youth satisfaction and working with a population of 60% under 24 years old.
- Women's representation in parliament and local government in Africa.
- GIA programme costs – No 3<sup>rd</sup> party funding secured for Africa, reliant on GIA funding where UK/Western rhetoric of democracy does not translate into funding which is focussed on humanitarian aid.
- Recent impact examples – Kenya: Disabilities programme, Uganda: East Africa Legislature for youth work, Sierra Leone: CSO-Parliament network.

The Chair thanked Michael for his report and the Board held a discussion regarding future funding for programmes in Africa and how WFD could incorporate different ways of working (i. e. Consortiums) to secure them.

## **7. In-depth review: WFD's approach to Political Party Programming**

Shannon O'Connell joined the meeting and presented a series of slides on WFDs Political Party Programming Portfolio. The main points discussed were:

- The differing programme focus of the parties and how their geographical reach helps to support and expand WFDs global reach.
- Cross-Party Programme – A collective look by the UK political parties at the root causes of polarisation.
- PPO Operating models – How the different political parties approach programming and the effect this has on measuring impact.

The Chair thanked Shannon for her report and the Board held a brief discussion on the merits and disadvantages of the different party's approach to programming.

## **8. Any other business**



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There being no other business to discuss, the Board noted that the next formal Board meeting would be held 21 June 2023.