



Minutes of
The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors
Annual General Meeting
held on
Wednesday 21 April 2021

In Attendance virtual:

Officers / Executive / SAIF Staff:

Terry Tennens, Mark Porteous, Jo Parker, Mark Horton all other en bloc.

1. Introduction

Terry Tennens welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting, the first one due to Coronavirus and did the formal housekeeping including the voting procedure eligible for full members only.

2. Welcome

Mark Porteous, National President welcomed everyone and explained that there were options to ask questions throughout the meeting or members could send any questions after the AGM direct to him or to the SAIF Business Centre.

3. Obituaries

1st Vice President, Jo Parker read out the obituaries and invited attendees give a minute's silence in remembrance of those who had passed during the previous year.

4. Apologies for absence

Given by Terry Tennens and all received en bloc.

5. Address from the National President Mark Porteous

Mark started by talking about the global pandemic that has hit the UK and the uncertainties that laid ahead for businesses, families, and employees. He mentioned that only a week after the Immediate Past President Jim Auld's banquet the UK entered into a national lockdown. Mark mentioned during the past year the importance of being a SAIF member where support was provided by both National and Scottish SAIF via regular COVID briefings via email and the SLACK platform. This also included data and updates via the Local Resilience Forums and Excess Death Groups. Mark also spoke about in the last year the creation of the CMA task group which ensured member voices were heard and valued, so that the CMA understood the differences between the independent and the larger conglomerates. He thanked those members of the task group, Terry Tennens, Sean Martin, Jeremy West, Paul Allcock and Joe Murren for all their hard work.

Mark explained that as the funeral industry is changing SAIF will need to change and is therefore keen to develop how SAIF communicates to members. He explained that on top of the new SLACK platform

which has been created to provide members with up-to-date information, a new communications team has been created and that a survey will be sent to all members where he urged all members to complete this. Mark explained that SAIF's commitment to its members is how to utilise new technology including the enhancement of the SAIF website and SAIF's online presence to include new commercial partnerships and revenue streams. This will empower SAIF financially to support the member's needs further.

Mark acknowledged that some members may be fearful of the future but assured that "we are all in it together". He said that due to the rollout of the vaccine and Covid restrictions easing he is looking forward to being able to start meeting members in person.

He said that there may still be challenges ahead but reminded members why those chose this profession and that they are "passionate, hard-working individuals who take great pride in supporting their communities at their time of need".

Mark thanked the support of Terry Tennens CEO, Jo Parker 1st Vice President, Mark Horton 2nd Vice President, Scottish President James Carcary and both National and Scottish Executive who have helped navigate his first year of presidency. He also thanked the members for their commitment and support throughout the last year and said that the NHS had been applauded for their hard work but the members, the funeral directors need to be applauded to.

6. Report from SAIF Business Centre by Chief Executive Terry Tennens

Terry began talking about the pandemic and the frustrations that the industry is currently facing where coffins are being piled up whilst awaiting burial.

It was mentioned that back March 2020 DMAG was formed rapidly to work together with the UK Gov MOJ, Cabinet Office and devolved four nations. During the 1st wave of the pandemic meetings occurred daily to discuss the support required for the funeral profession. As part of these meetings questions were raised around the safety of funerals where the deceased had passed from Covid; conflicting advice Public Health England and Northern Ireland regarding the number of body bags required; permitted viewing of the deceased; embalming; family bearing coffins; mourner numbers and other urgent questions that were being raised. He said that the chief win was persuading JCVI that funeral directors should be prioritised in the first group, phase 2. He said that he had drafted the letter on behalf of DMAG to JCVI with persistence that funeral directors were at greater risk than most and potential super-spreaders.

Terry then discussed about how SAIF was represented on LRFs across England and Wales with SAIF Scotland mobilising representation across the RRFs. It was mentioned that every other week there was SAIF LRF representative meetings, which was to ensure there was smooth transfer of information from the local to the national Cabinet Office meetings; and vice versa. There were some LRF's that did not want representation from funeral directors and due to this DMAG have asked for greater co-ordination from the UK Government departments, as well as a common set of approaches by LRF's. Mark Binnersley was thanked for his support in the daily bulletins where on many occasions they were seen to be working 15–18-hour days.

Terry thanked Sean Martin, Jeremy West, Paul Allcock and Joe Murren for their work on the CMA task group. As part of the process, SAIF instructed one of the best law firms Linklaters to help with the presentation to the CMA in response to the CMA findings, in the goal to ensure that the independent funeral director is protected. He mentioned that the Ministry of Justice had also agreed to trial a co-regulated model in England in relation to monitoring Standards, with Wales and Northern Ireland to follow.

Terry then mentioned about online pricing and the Funeral Services Consumer (FSCSR) group. He explained that following the draft legal orders by the 17th June 2021 the CMA will be directing that

pricing online will be an attended (simple) and unattended standardised price list. He explained that the Ministry of Justice is intent that there is a unified voluntary code of practice across England, Wales and Northern Ireland as the Scottish Government already have a draft code that it waiting to be ratified.

The regulatory task group for Financial Conduct Authority which includes Declan Maguire, Sean Martin, Paul Allcock and Jeremy West were thanked for their work in the submission of SAIF responses to the report in ensuring that the independent funeral director was protected and that there was a level playing field.

In December 2020, SAIF was invited long with the NAFD and the rest of DMAG to join the All Party-Parliamentary Group (APPG), with one change being pushed that funeral directors are in the category of group 2 for Health Professionals to ensure that they are given the same priorities as Health and Social Care workers, especially in occasions such as pandemics.

During the last year, stress and wellbeing has been a major factor for members' staff where they have been handling their and providing support to their clients and he highlighted SAIFSupport, which was a legacy from previous Past President Alun Tucker.

Terry discussed the different sub committees:

- Quality Assurance & Membership. The Quality Assurance scheme is being further reviewed to being class leading both in the front and back offices following on from the risk-based system that was introduced in 2019.
- UK Government Liaison. Terry thanked Paul Allcock for the work that is currently going on behind the scenes with the DWP and medical examiners.
- Next Generation. He explained had been in abeyance due to the pandemic, but this will be picked up again going forward Spring / Summer.
- Professional Standards. Due to the CMA & Ministry of Justice looking at standards and quality assurance, it is more important than ever that these are fit for purpose.
- SAIFCharter Representatives, Declan Maguire and Jeremy West were also thanked.

Terry mentioned the new qualifications by the IFD College including the new Diploma Level 4 in Funeral Directing and how under the direction of Chris Parker the college continues to thrive.

He then mentions about the future and that is bright for the independent sector with the members having the agility to adapt and pivot. He advised that due to society changing to the world of digital that SAIF has started to create working groups to look at communications and how SAIF can support its members with these changes.

Lastly, he thanked the sub committees, the officers, and the team at the SAIF Business Centre.

7. To confirm the Minutes of the AGM held on 14 March 2020.

The minutes were formally adopted en bloc.

8. To receive the Financial Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2020

John Helps referred everyone to the summarised accounts of Income & Expenditure in the AGM booklet. He advised the following:

- The Quality Assurance expenditure decreased from £70k to £12k due to the fewer on-site visits due to the pandemic.
- Reduction in expenditure on meetings decreasing from £91k to £47k.
- Increase in consultancy & professional fees from £2k to £108,000 due to £104,000 for Linklaters LLP in relation to support regarding the CMA.

- Computer & Office costs increased from £29k to £46k, due to £12k for technical IT issues that the SAIF Business Centre incurred.
- Membership and subscriptions have increased, but other income has decreased because of the decreased income for SAIFCare following a change in the administration of that scheme. This has resulted in a reduction in other income from £103k to just £33k.
- Overall, the accounts show a total income of £721k compared with £736k in the former year. Expenditure for the year totals £627k compared with £654k in the former year.
- Overall, SAIF shows a surplus for the year of £89k compared with a surplus of £71k in the former year.
- The net assets of SAIF have increased from £241k to £313k, and these reserves are almost entirely represented by cash in the bank.

John advised that if anyone wanted to see the full accounts, he had some on him or he would email them, on request.

Accounts were audited by appointed company D Hughes with a good, clean report.

The accounts were formally adopted en bloc

9. To receive the following reports (which were pre-recorded):

- i. SAIFCharter**
Adam Ginder provided a summary of the written report from the AGM booklet.
- ii. Quality Assurance / Membership**
Mark Horton provided a summary of both written reports from the AGM booklet.
- iii. SAIFScotland**
James Carcary provided a summary of the written report from the AGM booklet.
- iv. IFD College**
Chris Parker F.SAIF provided a summary of the written report in the AGM booklet.
- v. Profession Standards**
Liam Roberts provided a summary from his written report in the booklet as well as providing a visual aid of his analogy of two glasses of water, one clear and one murky and how one or more member's complaints can bring public attention to poor practices or poor standards.
- vi. SAIF Support / SAIF Care**
Catherine Betley provided a summary of the written report in the AGM booklet.
- vii. SAIF Insure**
Brian Hart provided a summary of the written report in the AGM booklet.
- viii. Public Relations and Media**
Mark Binnersley provided a summary of the written report in the AGM booklet.
- ix. UK Government Relations**
Paul Allcock provided a summary of the written report in the AGM booklet.
- x. SAIF Next Gen**
Inez Capps provided a summary of the written report in the AGM booklet.

All reports were formally adopted en bloc.

Following the recorded reports those presenters were then live to answer any questions from the attendees.

10. Election of the National Executive Committee & Officers
(by postal votes only – externally verified by John Helps, Treasurer)

The nominees for the SAIF Executive Committee received were:

Paul Allcock
Amanda Dalby
James Gardener
Daniel Ginder
Ross Hickton
Declan Maguire
Gemma O'Driscoll
Gary Staker
Julian Walker

Votes were received prior to the AGM and those elected were:

Paul Allcock
Amanda Dalby
Ross Hickton
Declan Maguire
Gemma O'Driscoll
Gary Staker

It was explained that due to the pandemic the National Executive Committee agreed that the current officers would serve a further year in office. Then the election of SAIF Officers which included the National President, the 1st and 2nd Vice President, Chief Executive, Secretary, Treasurer and SAIF Charter Representative were formally adopted en bloc.

11. Any Other Business

There was no topics submitted in writing to the Secretary by the 14th April 2021 and no other business. Terry mentioned about the Education Day in Leicester on the 10th November, with further information coming available in the coming months.

12. Closing remarks from the National President Mark Porteous

Mark commenced by giving a special thank you to Terry Tennens who has worked tirelessly on behalf of SAIF. He also thanked Jeremy West for his work on the CMA Task Group and his continued professionalism and passion in supporting SAIF members.

Mark then thanked the associate members who he assured had not been forgotten and is hopeful of meeting with them in the coming months.

He reminded everyone his banquet weekend which, all being well is to be held at the Dalmahoy Hotel & Country Club, Edinburgh in March 2022 and closed by reminding about his chosen charity Winston's Wish.

13. The meeting formally closed at 17.40.

These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting.