



Minutes of a Meeting of the Karten Network Board

10.30am, Thursday 11th November 2021

Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Directors present:

Arwyn Jones (Chair)
Rohan Slaughter (Vice-Chair)
Joe Cash
Vicky Myko
David Finch
Robert Boyce
Paul Boyle
Max Bianconi

In attendance:

Dawn Green
Martin Pistorius
Liz Howarth
Sean Connolly
Ines Meza-Mitcher (minutes)

Apologies:

Vicky Myko
Sal Cooke

Minutes

1. Apologies

- Apologies were noted from Vicky Myko and Sal Cooke.

2. Declarations of Business Interests

- It was noted that DF is on the board of another charity which has just been registered with the charity commission.
- It was noted that RS is a school governor at 2 schools.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

- The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true record by those present.

4. Matters arising

- All matters arising had either been dealt with or would be dealt with as part of this meeting.

Items for discussion/decision/approval

5. KN Ltd governance update and next steps

- AJ gave an update on the current discussion around Karten Network Governance. Directors were reminded that at the previous meeting the formation of a charitable entity had been discussed. A sub group of the board took this forward and took more formalised legal advice from BDB Pitmans. The outcome of this was that the sub group was advised that the Network would be able to convert to charitable status without unpicking the existing legal entity. This has been checked with Nuvoic and they are happy with this proposal. AJ asked Directors for any comments or questions on next steps.
- AJ confirmed training would be provided for Directors on the transition to trustees and their responsibilities in this area, when the time came.
- Trustees of the Ian Karten Charitable Trust have confirmed that they are supportive of the Network transitioning to a charity and the IKCT would be happy to underwrite costs associated with that based on the quote from BDB Pitmans of around £4/5k. The next step is to go back to BDB Pitmans and map out a more detailed transition plan. **ACTION: this plan will be brought back to the February meeting with a view to registering the charity in April.**
- There was unanimous support from Directors for the proposal.

6. Robotics and home automation

- Liz Howarth and Sean Connolly from the Nuvoic project joined the meeting at this point.
- PD gave the board a presentation on his work with Kinova: specifically, he discussed use of the Jaco robotic arm and other similar technologies, and the role they currently play in assistive technology. He also discussed the use of home automation and its role in assistive living.
- PD was thanked by Directors for his thought-provoking and inspiring presentation.
- **ACTION: PD to send slides to Directors.**

7. Nuvoic project update

- LH gave an update on the Nuvoic project to accompany the paper Directors had been provided with.
- It was noted that participant recruitment was going well, with the target of 48 now exceeded. Feedback has continued to be collected and continues to be shared with Voiceitt. One issue that is currently coming up is the reliability of voice recognition, particularly for newer users. It was noted that the project video had been completed and that this had been submitted to the EU. Colleagues who had already seen the video felt that it was excellent.
- DG highlighted to Directors that 12 month extensions had been offered to project technologists given the next phase and expected participation moving forward.
- The Nuvoic project team were thanked for their continued excellent work.

8. Use of Nuvoic indirect funds

- It was noted that the Nuvoic project had generated some surplus funds, and a paper had been provided by DG on how to utilise these. It is estimated that this would amount to around £16,000 annually.
- One proposed use of these funds would be to enable MP to undertake Certified Professional training with Microsoft, and another proposed use would be around a Policy Connect membership subscription, which would cost around £5,000 annually.
- Directors questioned whether the Trust might be willing to fund the subscription. It was felt that it would be worth having a conversation about this but that generally trustees were more in favour of supporting a specific project. Nonetheless, Directors agreed the subscription would be something they would like to support.
- MP's Microsoft training was unanimously supported by Directors.

Items for information

9. KN Ltd 2020-2021 and Nuvoic expenditure to date

- The papers provided were largely taken as read, with it being noted that there had been an underspend this year due to lack of travel.
- It was noted that next year's budget (1 October 2021 – 30 September 2022) had been modestly increased to £69,000, which the Trust have agreed to.
- It was noted that the next tranche of Nuvoic funding has been released.
- It was noted there was currently an excess of funds in the Business account and it might be prudent to move these elsewhere. It was agreed that AJ and DG would discuss this outside the meeting.

10. 2021 Strategic and Operational Plan update

- DG highlighted that this would of course need a rewrite once the Network becomes a charity. Directors agreed with this and felt that a workshop or longer meeting would be appropriate for this.

11. Karten Network Development Co-ordinator update

- DG's update was largely taken as read. It was noted that the TechAbility conference had taken place on the 10th November and excellent feedback had been received.
- DG gave an update on the Lifetime contribution awards. A paper on this had been presented to the September Trust board meeting. The trustees were happy to pursue awards for Tim Simon and Tony Kushner. It was noted that DG was currently waiting to hear back from trustees regarding this.

12. Technology Adviser update



- MP's update was taken as read and he was thanked by directors for his continued excellent work.

13. Israel Karten Centres update & presentation from Chimes

- Directors viewed a video presentation from Chimes in Israel, which was very well received.

14. Any other relevant business

- It was noted that the next meeting (February 17th, 10.30am) would be virtual.