



Clinks AGM, 21st November 2019

Simon Alsop, Treasurer

Good evening everyone, I don't intend to go into a lot of detail, nor will I repeat much of what is already set out in our annual report, rather I will try to give a little more colour to one or two areas that I think are worthy of special mention. I am of course happy to answer any questions now or at a later stage.

I am pleased to report that Clinks has put in a solid performance for the year, with income slightly ahead of 2018.

The costs are also higher – in particular in salaries and recruitment fees (although we have seen an offsetting reduction in freelance expenses) and they are also higher in website development but that is more of a one off expense.

Overall this means that there was a deficit for the year, and reserves have been reduced by £44,000

Some of this was planned - the website costs were budgeted for and we brought forward designated reserves to cover them

The staff expenses reflect the fact that 2018/19 has been a period of transition for Clinks, with a number of staff having left and been replaced.

Overall this is healthy for the organisation but in the very short term it has impacted the cost structure and it is to Anne and everyone's credit at Clinks that it has not been more disruptive.

We have also invested in staff to be more effective across the organisation – finance is one of those areas and I'd like to give a mention here to **Victoria Sadler**, who joined during the year as Corporate Services Manager. I think I speak for all trustees when I say that she has taken ownership and gained our confidence very quickly, and has very much made sure that everything is completely under control.

In doing this she has been assisted in a very major way by my predecessor as interim treasurer, **Liz Calderbank**. I am very grateful to Liz for the legacy she leaves behind.

This is a slightly roundabout way of letting you know that the post audit report from Sayer Vincent – our auditors - found that, as has always been the case, Clinks is soundly run from the perspective of financial management and there were no weaknesses in the finance procedures and controls.

Another area I wanted to mention – and we have given this some prominence on page 22 of the annual report – is the in-depth work we have done in respect of



our reserves policy and the overall level of reserves. That work suggested that we should hold free, undesignated reserves of £486k.

A certain amount of the trustees' wariness around reserves is due to our reliance on the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) grant for such a significant portion of our income. We have always enjoyed terrific support from our funders, and continue to do so, and for that we are hugely grateful - but we cannot take that funding, or the MoJ grant as a given.

We are currently midway through a three-year term with the MoJ, and we are able to demonstrate very effective use of the funds. We have continued to work hard to maintain good relationships with an ever-changing cast of ministers and senior civil servants in key government departments, to ensure they understand the important role of the sector, and that the results of our 17 policy consultations have influence. Nevertheless in a time such as this where there is a great deal of turnover in government, and in government departments, the future can never be certain.

Added to this, we have to take into account the fact that we do not aim to make a surplus – every pound that we receive is spent supporting our objectives and rightly so – which means that our ability to build, or to rebuild reserves to the required level is limited. That said, we have agreed to hold slightly below the level suggested by our analysis and our unrestricted, undesignated reserves stand at £465k.

Finally, to point out that we have again designated reserves this year for future projects: £100,000 has been designated to cover the Women's Breakout work over the next two years, and £20,000 each has been designated for a policy impact assessment and IT consultancy for our website.