

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Retina UK**

Wednesday 30th July 2025 at 7:15pm - Webinar

### **1. Welcome**

Kathy Evans opened the AGM by formally welcoming all our members, supporters, staff members and Board of Trustees who have joined today. Joining Kathy Evans on the panel today is, our treasurer, Ashley Grist, and our chief executive Tina Garvey. Kathy Evans advised that there is the opportunity to put questions to the panel, you can either raise your hand at the bottom of the screen or you can put a question in the Q&A section, and that question would be answered in any other business at the end of the session. If we can't answer the question today, we will follow up.

Kathy Evans reflected on what an important year this is as it marks 50 years since the charity began. She gave her thanks to supporters, researchers, volunteers and staff and stated the last 12 months have been full of progress. We've continued to fund groundbreaking research that brings us ever closer to treatment and cures. We've expanded our information and support services, helping individuals and families navigate the challenges of living with inherited sight loss and we've continued to raise our collective voice, calling for better accessibility, better understanding and better futures for all affected. Of course, none of this is possible without you, our community. So, whether you're a person living with inherited sight loss, a family member, a researcher, a fundraiser, a volunteer or a supporter, you are Retina UK and your energy, insight, and resilience shape what we do. Going back to 1975, a small but determined group of individuals, many of whom were living with inherited sight loss themselves came together to provide mutual support and to fund research into rare

conditions. At the time, they were very misunderstood and there was very little going on in terms of research but they had a vision for a better future. I'd like to pay particular tribute to who we might think of as the parents of Retina UK, Lynda Cantor, who is now president of Retina UK and Professor John Marshall who remains a trustee of our board.

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies from Roger Backhouse, Vanessa Foster, Professor John Marshall, Luce Withington, Colin McArthur and Martin Kirkup were given.

## **3. Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM (result of online voting)**

The approval of the minutes of the previous AGM was an online vote and received 47 yes votes and 1 abstention. 48 votes cast in total.

## **4. Presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024**

Kathy Evans handed over to Retina UK's Treasurer, Ashley Grist to present the Annual Report & Accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

The backdrop for fundraising in 2024 continued to be a tough economic climate due to cost of living and the challenges for individual households. We were pleased, therefore, that total income closed at £2,170,849, which was 69% more than the previous year, due in large part to generous trust income and one grant in particular of £720,000 for medical research. Legacy income was £367,947, broadly in line with the average amount received over the past 5 years. Much of our income is usually from voluntary sources, the key elements of which are the donations and fundraising efforts of individuals and groups across the UK. In addition to this, we receive vital funds from corporate and trust donors and are also privileged to receive a number of legacies. The trustees are very much aware of the unpredictability of all these sources of income and the need to continue to develop all

the income channels. As always we very much appreciate the efforts of all of those who give us support. We continue to provide information and other support activities for our community, spending £575,474 on these activities in 2024, which is a 2% reduction versus the prior year. We approved grants of £343,526 for medical research which was half that of the prior year, as the trustees take care to invest behind quality research projects. Retina UK now has an active portfolio of 10 research grants and if these progress to plan, then a further £1m will be required to fund them through to completion. As a result of the income received and activities undertaken in 2024 there was a net increase in funds of £514,505 driven primarily by the increased income and at 31st December 2024, our total funds were £2,042,464. The charity's investment policy remains unchanged. For any funds surplus to short-term requirements we consider using secure deposits on fixed terms of up to 1 year and the charity holds sufficient assets on our balance sheet to cover future potential grant commitments. Finally, you will see in the annual report document that the financial statements have been audited by Azets Audit Services who confirm they give a true and fair view of the charity's affairs. They have been properly prepared in accordance with the UK accounting standards and with the requirements of the Charities Act. 2011. So, I'm pleased to be able to recommend the annual report and accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024 to the members for adoption. And with that, I'll hand back to Kathy.

## **5. Adoption of the annual report and accounts for 2024**

The Annual report and Accounts for 2024 were approved with 48 votes in total, there were no abstentions and no votes against.

## **6. Appointment of the Auditors (result of online voting)**

The audit committee's recommendation for the appointment of Azets Audit Services Ltd was approved with a total of 47 votes, 1 abstention and no votes against.

## **7. Presentation of Retina UK activity in 2024/2025**

Kathy Evans handed over to Tina Garvey and took the opportunity to thank Tina for the work that her and her staff do. Tina gave a brief overview of Retina UK's activity and plans for the future. Following on from a very successful year last year, we have continued to build momentum in information and support, and we continue to build our professionals project to over 3,500 professionals now engaged with Retina UK. We continue to be committed to funding the very best research and advancing research and this year we are looking at new ways of funding research through different types of methodology. We are in the process of looking at small grants, which means that we can do much more fluid and quicker reports, so that we can move the advancement of science forward. We are looking at larger, more substantial projects as well. As we move into 2026 we will be looking to keep this going along with our growth, and of course, celebrating our 50th anniversary year. We will be looking forward to meeting many of you at our Conference, which is in September this year. Please go online to register at [www.RetinaUK.org.uk](http://www.RetinaUK.org.uk). We are also looking at a range of activities throughout the year and into 2026 to celebrate this absolute fantastic milestone for the organisation.

## **8. The appointment of trustees (result of online voting)**

There are a number of trustees who are standing again, and they are; Roger Backhouse, who is serving another term, and that was endorsed by the membership with 48 votes, no abstentions, and no negative votes. Simon Keighley with again, 48 votes in favour, no abstentions, and no negative votes. Ashley Grist similarly has been voted back by the membership, 48 votes, no abstentions, and no negative votes. Vanessa Forster has also been voted back in with 46 votes in favour and 2 abstentions. I look forward to continue working with all of them in the future. Unfortunately, we are losing Luce Withington who has been a fantastic trustee and I would like to thank her very much for her very thoughtful contributions.

## **9. Any other business**

There was one question;

Given that bungee jumping carries a risk of retinal detachment and other health risks can we stop promoting it on the website?

Kathy Evans responded as follows;

Thank you to the questioner. I think you raise an interesting matter but as an organisation, we recognise that some adults do enjoy taking part in extreme sports whilst raising money for their chosen charity. The view of Retina UK is that a doctor should be consulted before an individual takes part in such activities but it is not the role of Retina UK to determine which activities are suitable and that the decision does rest with the individual concerned. I hope that answers the question that this is something we've worked on over a while and whilst we understand the concern this is the position that Retina UK takes.

Kathy Evans thanked everybody for joining the AGM this evening.