

Minutes of meeting of Charity Subcommittee, 6.30pm 27.4.23

Present: Rochelle, CoDA UK Treasurer; Judith B; Gillian A; Philip; Hil C; Emma W. Judith, Emma and Gillian had to leave before the end of the meeting.

Background: This meeting was to examine the draft charity application prepared by Rochelle, and Judith was invited to give her professional opinion on the desirability of proceeding with it.

Reasons to register as a charity, 1:

Some time ago the Fellowship was strongly **advised to register as a charity and has voted to do so.**

The subcommittee is enacting that decision. (But see below.)

Reasons not to do so; alternatives. 1:

Judith: There is nothing to be gained.

The loss is to incur an **unnecessary layer of regulation and responsibilities.**

Groups usually become charities to a) **Gain status and respectability**

This could benefit CoDA Teen in being accepted into schools, as it is in Argentina...

Judith: b) To **apply for grants**, but that would be contrary to tradition 7, so not applicable

c) **To claim Gift Aid.** Technically possible as the government isn't making a donation to the individual, but returning their own money; but not something we are really seeking to do.

Reason to register 2:

Many other 12-step fellowships are charities: AA, OA, NA; so surely it is a good thing?

Judith: It's unclear what they're gaining from it. In any case, **they are much bigger than us.**

Rochelle: Yes, OA, annual income £60,000; ourselves £7000..

Reasons to register 3:

Emma: East Sussex CA felt that CA nationally **being a limited company was not compatible with the traditions**, and disaffiliated to become a Foundation Charitable Incorporated Organisation, (CIO.) This is preferable because the documentation enables equal **weight to the material and to the spiritual aspects of the fellowship.**

Judith: **Why don't we just be a club or society and report our income to the Tax Office?**

Many organisations with a far higher income than ours do this. It's a simple process by comparison.

Emma: Being a charity means the tax office isn't concerned about income.

Judith: As a charity, the NSC would have to submit accounts to the Charity Commission, and an annual report.

Rochelle: The required form of accounts is quite simple and really no problem at all.

The trustees need to declare that they are not disqualified on the basis of past judgements or offences...

Reasons to register 4:

We have had concerns about individuals possibly seeking to sue for compensation for perceived damage to themselves caused by CoDA. Though we have an insurance policy, and clearly we do not offer advice...

Judith: Limits on liability are provided by becoming a limited company, where liability can be as little as £1, or company limited by guarantee, generally where the directors have made an investment. However, the limits do not apply in cases found by the court to be genuinely fraudulent.

Reasons to register 5:

Hilary: My small OA home group got caught up in US Internal Revenue tax regulations via our bank account, and the only way not to be treated as a trading company was to be a charity, but the only proof was a charity number. It went on for months and was really challenging.

Judith: I can't see why this happened and I have never known of it happening to anyone else. This is not part of normal anti-money laundering processes,

Reasons to register 6:

Rochelle: CoDA was advised years ago to register as a charity once our income exceeded £6000 a year, and now it does. (Rochelle screen-shared the document.)

Maybe this just applies to organisations that set out to be charities, to guide them at what stage to register? CoDA UK didn't set out to be a charity, just a 12-step programme. So do we really need to become a charity purely on income

grounds? Maybe we can just be a club or society or association, and take a different path?

Conclusions: The next NSC meeting is on 13th May, and the charity application is on the agenda.

We will sleep on this for now.

Very big thanks to all participants especially Judith for her input and Rochelle for the draft application,

Is there time to fit in another meeting before then? 4th or 11th May? or...?

All communications are requested to be by email as Philip is not on WhatsApp currently.

Minutes by Hil C.

All corrections gratefully received

29.3.23