Minutes of the Evolve Counselling AGM

held on 24 January 2026 at 10.00am

via Teams

Attendees

Trustees	Staff	Counselling Members
Matt Ward (Hon. Treasurer) (Chair)	Gordon Ackroyd (CEO)	Fiona di Leo
Kat Buniel	Simone Jalabert (CSC)	Elizabeth Head
Richard Brock	Gerard Bouton (BDM)	Carolyn Barber
Newland McKelvey	Margaret Brown (Admin volunteer) (minutes)	
Michelle Munro		
Scott Jones		

1. **Welcome from the Chair**
   1.1. MW welcomed those attending the Evolve AGM, appreciates the time taken.

2. **Apologies for absence**
   2.1. Apologies received from counselling members, Sally-Jane Papworth and Jo Brown.

3. **To approve the minutes of the last AGM held on 11 January 2025**
   3.1. Minutes were circulated prior to the meeting. MW proposed to the meeting to accept the minutes and asked for this to be seconded.
   3.2. This was seconded by MM.
   3.3. **DECISION:** the minutes of the last AGM held on 11 January 2025 are approved.

4. **Matters arising from the last AGM held on 11 January 2025**
   4.1. MW addressed matters arising as follows:
   4.2. Point 1 - CEO initiate an ordered and fair process to specify, seek, and appoint a replacement Chair of the Trustees.
   4.3. Point 2 - CEO advised Trustees, Members and staff of next AGM date.
   4.4. Point 3 - Chair and CEO informed FA of remaining term of office to serve.
   4.5. Point 4 - CEO updated the Charity Commission account and web pages on Trustees elected.
   4.6. MW explained, with reference to point 1, that it was agreed that trustees would rotate the Chair position on a temporary basis. KB has been Chair designate and RB will take over as Chair designate from March 2026.
   4.7. GA confirmed this had been the process and recapped this for the meeting. They will look at the long-term arrangements for the Chair, and this will be discussed in the March Board meeting.

4.8. Referencing point 2 and 3, GA confirmed that Francesca Amor was coming to the end of her 3-year term. New trustees were appointed and the Charity Commission was updated.

5. **To receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements for year ended 31st August 2025**
   5.1. MW noted that the accounts had been independently examined and a new independent examiner was used, who are experienced and the usual process was carried out. The Accounts were circulated and have gone through the FG&R committee. There have been sufficient responses to accept the accounts and lodge these with the Charity Commission.
   5.2. MW highlighted key points from the report and statement. There had been a turnover of staff in the clinical lead role and this had impacted income. £183,000 income generated but costs were above this, so the charity experienced a small loss of £1,500. Evolve is in a robust position with decent cash reserves from previous years. With governance changes throughout the year, the focus had been on stabilising the team rather than driving income.
   5.3. MW propose that Annual Report and Financial Statement should be received.
   5.4. NM seconded this.
   5.5. RB joined the meeting.
   5.6. Approved by vote.
   5.7. **DECISION:** the Annual Report and Financial Statements for y/e 31 August 2025 are received.

6. **To approve continuing trustee appointments**

   6.1. GA explained that Board has many new trustees and none are close to expiry of terms. Existing trustees are continuing in their roles. Trustee terms are 3 years so no need to retire or ratify new trustees, content to approve trustee board as it is.
   6.2. MM seconded this.
   6.3. GA thanked trustees and relatively new trustees for joining. There will be new opportunities and challenges ahead, but the board has a good skill set and the level of commitment will help to propel Evolve forward.
   6.4. MW expressed his appreciation to counsellors and staff for delivering the service going forward and for their work over the past year. Requested that Carolyn pass thanks on to the other counsellors. Trustees feel some distance from counsellors but do appreciate all their work.
   6.5. Carolyn has been with Evolve for some time but this is her first AGM, expressed her happiness to meet everyone and put names to faces.
   6.6. GA commented that counsellors should not feel isolated and would like them to join in. There are opportunities to join committee meetings, attend the Away Day and be involved via the newsletter. Expressed his wish that Evolve should get back to being a community, albeit online rather than face-to-face.
   6.7. MW commented that trustees are keen to have more counsellor involvement in committee meetings every 3 month, they would welcome input and involvement from counsellors, it would improve and enhance what the committees do.
   6.8. **DECISION:** Continuing trustee board approved by the meeting.

7. **Any resolutions notified to Chair in advance**

   7.1. No resolutions had been notified by the posted deadline. KB did not receive any resolutions.

8. Any other business notified to Chair in advance

8.1. No AOB had been notified by the posted deadline.

8.2. MW wanted to flag, from a financial perspective, the amount of revenue that is being generated. Caution about this, there are good cash reserves, no concern about viability of Evolve but there is a need to get the number of sessions up and increase revenue. Evolve is not about making big profits but it is not ideal to be continually dipping into reserves. This has and will be discussed in FG&R committees, flagging this as an area of focus. Asked if there were any other issues to be raised.

8.3. FDL commented that she is aware that some client services are not as subscribed as previously. Evolve had a social media presence previously, is anything now in place to improve its profile.

8.4. GA responded that there had been a social media push in the previous year that had mixed results and came at a cost and was a drag on time. It delivered no revenue improvements. Pivoted activity to improve business systems, including website navigation and a design refresh, which should help. Improvements to the website need to be capitalised on, need to be on the radar.

8.5. MW proposed to take this as a standing point at committee level, in order to make progress.

8.6. GA agreed, very good point. Focus has been on supporting GB and new business development, which is a relatively new role which had previously been vacant. GA aims to support new business development over the next 4 months, so long as there are no further HR issues. Super board of trustees who have contacts and abilities to help new business, work through committees to seek new business. Evolve went from crisis of deficit then back to profit and now has a small deficit. Big effort needs to be made in the next 12 months.

8.7. GB commented that Evolve has now taken on a marketing volunteer, Danielle, who will be managing the social media; currently having issues with access/ logins to social media sites. Danielle will help to find opportunities.

8.8. FDL commented that social media provides good word of mouth and is glad to know there is now a marketing volunteer.

9. **Date of next AGM**

9.1. MW commented that the exact date will be confirmed in due course and is likely to be in January 2027. Thanked MB for taking minutes and arranging meetings. Thanked everyone for their attendance.

9.2. RB thanked MW for his work and commitment.

9.3. Carolyn thanked everyone for their support, particularly HBA and the new CSC, she could not do her job without this support.

9.4. GA commented that HBA made significant improvements to the service and is confident SJ will continue this. Vast demand for counselling and Evolve well placed to meet this demand.

9.5. MW closed the meeting.

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS:

DECISION: the minutes of the last AGM held on 11 January 2025 are approved.

DECISION: the Annual Report and Financial Statements for y/e 31 August 2025 are received.

DECISION: Continuing trustee board approved by the meeting.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

Long-term arrangements for the Chair position will be discussed at the March Board meeting.

CEO to advise Trustees, Members, and staff of next AGM date.

MW flagged revenue generation as an area of focus, to be further discussed at committee level.

MW proposed to take capitalising on website improvements and social media activity as a standing point at committee level, to make progress.