

# IOCN All Members Meeting

# MINUTES

## Date: 12th October 2020

## Time: 7pm – 8.30 pm

## Location: Online Zoom

**Meeting Facilitator:** Chair (Jacqui Beckford)

**Minutes:** Grace Peddie

**Interpreter(s):** Audrey Simmons, Suzy Evans

**Chair’s call to order**

**Attendees:** Jacqui Beckford; Grace Peddie; Audrey Simmons; Suzy Evans; Nikki Harris;LornaPatterson; Yasmin Jacobson; Loquessa Smart; Omotayo Igbintade; Lisa Li; Haley Brown; Deborah McLeod; Akbar Sikder; Charles Hampton III; Grace Buckle; Hyacinth Powel; Shaunett Harris; Sharon Goldson; Ali Gordon; Nez Parr; Nakisayi Laursen; Diane Jarrett; Sandra Pratt; Dionne Thomas, Azaria Francis.

**Apologies**: Selina Jacques; Yasmeen Floodgate; Rani Ashton-Smith; Siddika Kargi; Younee Kim.

1. **Approval of the minutes from previous meeting**

None presented**.**

1. **Chair’s Opening Comments** (Jacqui)

Welcome to the 4th IOCN all members meeting. Welcome also to our new recently joined members. It has been a busy month, but we recognize that some of our members are having difficulty finding work currently.

1. **Items carried over from previous meeting**

3.1 **Website update (Akbar)**

The IOCN website was launched last week. Feedback on the website is useful and welcomed. If members spot anything that needs changing please send an email to Akbar and he will update the site.

Dionne created the video banner on the homepage. If you would like to have a photo added to the banner, please send it to Dionne. Only 23 out of more than 100 members from the WhatsApp group have uploaded their profile to the website so far. We would like to see more. A guide on how to upload member profiles to the website was emailed out prior to the launch.

3.2 **IOCN Bank Account** (Nikki)

The Steering Group is still in the process of setting up a dedicated Business Account for IOCN funds. We could not really complete on this task until IOCN has been formally set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC). The Steering Group would like members to discuss what we think a fair fee would be for membership of IOCN.

3.3 **Training** (Jacqui/Nikki)

The training that has been offered is postponed until we have the bank account set up in which to deposit funds.

1. **New business**

**4.1 ASLI conference and IOCN representation** (Azaria)

Time to celebrate success of IOCN involvement at the recent ASLI online conference. Sandra Pratt was a panel member in the Welcome and Opening Session. Benjamin Gorman interpreted Stream 2, Session 1 entitled, “Working Conditions”. Meanwhile in Stream 1, we had Dionne Thomas, Azaria Francis, Omoleye Thomas, Ali Gordon and Layne Whittaker leading Session 3, “Equality & Diversity”, with Grace Buckle interpreting. The final panel session, “Women in High Profile Work” included Dionne Thomas. The comment sections also saw active participation by IOCN members. On Sunday morning, Benjamin Gorman interpreted part of the

ASLI AGM and we were proud to hear the announcement that Benjamin had been elected to the ASLI Board. Thanks also to Akbar and Nikki for delivering CDP webinars for ASLI members.

4.2 **Working Group – membership categories and costings (Jacqui)**

We need a working group to work on the IOCN membership categories, what a reasonable fee could be for and what benefits would be included. Anyone interested to work on this can contact the Steering Group.

The Steering Group needs to formalise the structure of the work that still needs to be done so that members know what they can volunteer for.

4.3 **Instagram vision for IOCN** (Nikki/Jacqui)

 Instagram is a valuable and a powerful platform that the signing community has been using for a long time. In terms of sign language content, the ASL signing community (primarily white ASL interpreters who sometimes create black content as well), dominate Instagram. There are Black Deaf influencers, other Deaf influencers using ASL. This is an opportunity to showcase BSL, British Deaf people of colour and IOCN. ASL interpreters also upload content relating to culture and IOCN can also share that space to present the best of ourselves. Recently, Tiktok produced content about the independence of Jamaica. There are many Black Deaf people seeking content and we can get a lot of followers and generate some income off that.

 IOCN is a positive space which is empowering. We can have fun with it and celebrate what we have. An Instagram presence also has the potential to bring funding our way. It is also an opportunity to *own* our own content where we can celebrate and showcase the diversity of our culture. So, what do members think we can do to create an Instagram profile? Would do we want to see in terms of content? We can be creative as we want with the content, while at the same time making it accessible to the Deaf and hard of hearing community with sign language and subtitles. If you want to submit filmed pieces, achieve good video quality for Instagram by checking the equipment you have and what you will need, camera, lighting, etc. Some initial themes to think about are:

* The historical roots of our diverse Deaf and hearing cultures of our members of colour.
* Performative pieces
* Translations of the writings and poems of people like James Baldwin and Maya Angelou
* Other meaningful works

 All members can feed into this and we need to set up a Working Group to get this up and running.

4.4 **Virtual Deaf Club (Nikki)**

 Carry over to the next meeting.

1. **A.O.B**
* **On-going challenges for finding work during Covid-19 restrictions.**

As already mentioned in the Chair’s opening comments, we acknowledge the difficulty in finding work during the pandemic for many of our members. That is why the existence of this forum is something to celebrate.

Our trainee interpreter members are struggling. Other members have little to no experience of remote interpreting and find the prospect of this way of working daunting. Members offered encouragement, advice and practical support to the members affected by these present challenges.

* Grab opportunities to try or gain experience in a new area of interpreting and get the support to do so.
* More informal workshops to share experience and conduct practice sessions.
* Request more shadowing opportunities in new settings you have a desire to work in, such as theatre or ask to co-work with an experienced interpreter. It is important to co-work until you find your feet and build your confidence. Nominate yourself to co-work.
* Sometimes you do not know that you can do something until you try it. Get co-worker support and do not allow fear to hold you back. We overcome the mind set of thinking we are not good enough to try certain areas of work.
* A mentoring or a buddy system could be set up through a Working Group. Some informal mentoring takes places on a regular basis. However, we need to establish what levels of formal professional support is required by the members and who is qualified to provide this. We have members who are qualified in professional supervision (Om Thomas, Nikki Harris mentioned), mentoring (Grace Peddie), ASLI trained mentor (Charles Hampton III), A1 assessors (Akbar Sikder), Interpreter Training (Sandra Pratt), and few other members with professional skills that were not mentioned. Supervision (360 Supervision by Ali Hetherington?) and other courses are available. Investigate these opportunities online.
* A skills audit of the members was made, however, only a few have done this, and we need more members to complete the audit request.
* Members were encouraged to pursue advanced professional development by becoming IVs, EVs, Supervisors and Mentors. Our skill sets could then be advertised on our website.
* **Client concerns about individual IOCN members**

The WhatsApp moderators received feedback from a client regarding a dispute they had over the Terms and Conditions of one of our members who responded to their job request advertised on the Work WhatsApp Group. At the meeting it was agreed that should feedback of this nature be offered again, the client would be directed to address the issue with the person concerned. They should also consult the NRCDP Complaints Procedure for further guidance.

IOCN does not operate as an Interpreting Agency and this should be made clear to anyone who asks for their request for interpreters be advertised on the Work Group. The Network is not responsible for anyone’s work or their practice. Do we need a prepared statement for this for Deaf and hearing clients? In addition, we currently do not have an internal complaints or grievance procedure for the membership. This point is open to further discussion.

* **Membership Categories and Fees**

To carry forward the discussion about fees, members can send their ideas to the Steering Group at admim@interpretersofcolour.net. Alternatively, a Doodle poll may be sent out for members to vote on a gradient of fees for specific membership categories. If the Steering Group decide to follow this option, the poll will be sent round by email. The Steering Group will also share a list of activities that funding/income currently needs to cover as well as the future ongoing costs of running the Network. In the discussion about membership fees we need to include what membership benefits are available for each category.

* **Funding Streams**

The Steering Group has been in regular discussions with the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (EFSLI) regarding a Memorandum of Understanding. Discussions are around joint training opportunities in delivery and participation. This would be one way for IOCN to generate funding for the Network.

* **The Value of Social Media Platforms to the network**

YouTube has its benefits for education and instruction, but Instagram is an influencer platform where we can upload bite-sized information for educational purposes and build awareness. Whatever we upload to Instagram as IOCN, its good to be clear about our purpose.

The Deaf people of colour are interested in the kind of content we are thinking about, but it must be slick and accessible.

Deaf people of colour are often ignored. This platform is a good way to support and advocate for them. Though popular on social media, music content is not important, and it can be polarising for the Deaf community. We need to upload content with a cultural emphasis.

Anyone can sign a few songs, but we need to see our cultures expressed in BSL and that will present a positive image for our culture – British, Deaf, reflecting the diversity of our “Blackness”

The newsletter is another way that we can celebrate our creativity. We can present our poetry, writing, art etc. We need Selina to get the informal social media workshops going so that we can learn in groups of 6 or 8.

* **CSW membership**

The Working Group has been in discussion about if/how IOCN should open membership to CSWs of colour to grow the Network. Should they be allowed to access the ToC Whatsapp Group? We currently stipulate that only NRCDP registered people or those on an approved interpreter training programme can be members. Furthermore, CSWs are unregistered and do not have the professional accountability as registered interpreters.

A few of us know people who have been working as CSWs for years. Some are content to remain in that role, however, is there anything that IOCN can do to support individuals who would like to progress onto interpreting? We recognise that finances are an issue as some people may not be able to afford the cost of training. Perhaps CSWs could be mentored by IOCN within a professional development action plan that would include budget planning for training?

Could IOCN facilitate a special CSWs of Colour meeting to discuss career progression?

Could IOCN offer income generating workshops for CSWs?

The task of the membership working group will be to develop these discussions.

* **The Importance of having Deaf Translators of colour as members of IOCN**

Special appreciation expressed for the Deaf members of IOCN. We are aware that many of the issues discussed relate to hearing interpreters and may not seem relevant to a Deaf translator. However, each member’s contribution and perspective are valued at our meetings and on the WhatsApp group. We learn from each other and there are principles that we can glean from each other’s knowledge and experience that we can apply to enrich our own. We are role models to each-other and we are determined to keep IOCN as a safe space for our membership. We all know how empowering and encouraging the physical presence of each member is at our meetings. We can be extremely busy, and tired at the end of a long day, but we hope members Deaf and hearing will make the effort to attend as many meeting as they can and bless us with their presence or by a contribution no matter how small.

* **Deaf Interpreter Training Course**

Congratulations to Akbar. First Deaf Interpreters training course will be running in April 2021. The are currently 8 applicants, 3 of whom are Deaf people of colour.

* **Working Group Schedules**

The various Working Group schedules will soon be finalised and shared.

1. **Date of the next meeting:** 7th November 2020