

IP Inclusive Management Quarterly Meeting 24 September 2019 Minutes



IP INCLUSIVE

Working for diversity and inclusion in IP

11 South Square, Gray's Inn, London WC1R 5EY: 12.00 – 14:00

Attendees: Chair: Richard Goddard (CITMA); Michael Silverleaf (The IP Bar Association);
Julia Florence (CIPA); Andrea Brewster (LEO); Keven Bader (CITMA); Lee
Davies (CIPA); Julie Dunnett (IP Federation); Ben Buchanan (IPO)

Apologies: Liz Dawson (FICPI-UK); Carol Arnold (IP Federation)

Background

This meeting was the first quarterly meeting of IPIM following the appointment of Andrea as Lead Executive Officer (LEO) of IP Inclusive.

Summary

Richard thanked everybody for coming and explained that he considered the purpose of the meeting to be an informal review of IP Inclusive's operation over the last three months; an opportunity to confirm alignment with objectives and a discussion of how to evolve IP Inclusive including ensuring the right support is forthcoming.

Andrea reported that the summer had been relatively quiet and that activities were now ramping up. She noted in particular that Women in IP had gone from strength to strength and all agreed the "Connected Bubbles" event was a great initiative. A number of observations concurred that IP Inclusive communities making the business case for inclusion was helpful and that opportunities for IPIM members to facilitate speaking and other engagements should be acted upon.

An upcoming theme, following the AGM outcome, was social mobility and all agreed that this was a big challenge for the Profession and a priority for IP Inclusive. Keven queried whether mental health and wellbeing was within the remit of diversity and inclusion. All agreed it was, with the proviso that IP Inclusive celebrate its achievements in that sphere while IPIM will seek assurance that sufficient resources are able to also progress others. Andrea confirmed that the model for supporting mental health and wellbeing was through partnerships and events with organisations like Jonathan's Voice and Law Care.

The interface between mental health and neurodiversity was briefly discussed, with acknowledgement that they interact but are not the same thing. The important thing is that awareness and support ensures neither get in the way of merit. The new IP Inclusive community IP Ability will cover neurological and physical ability but not mental health and wellbeing per se. IP Ability will soft launch in IP Inclusive week with a formal launch shortly afterwards.

Richard asked Andrea what she needed from IPIM and the clear response was for people to get involved. IPIM, charter signatories and members have a part to play in ensuring opportunities are visible and accessible and that people who are willing and able can take part. Specific support for the LEO would be helpful in supporting the administration of new signatories and managing the Twitter account. Each of these were discussed as opportunities for staff in member firms – not necessarily admin or comms professionals – to contribute and diversify their interests. It was also noted that the Charter Group and initiatives around data collection; and the Careers in Ideas working group had a number of ongoing actions and opportunities that would benefit from more people joining in.

On future structure and funding, Andrea set out a clear vision to enable IP Inclusive to grow in independence as a Community Interest Company. Advantages would include clarity for some organisations over the understanding and basis for funding and distancing the perception of IP Inclusive being a function of any one or more founding organisations. Some discussion considered the potential administrative overhead and the timing and process for organisational change, as well as member consultation and engagement.

All agreed that the benefit of IP Inclusive was providing tools, support and resources for inclusion in one place. Professional associations and member organisations would have to acquire or access these anyway, so there was unanimous support for IP Inclusive to continue to meet demand and to grow to reach new audiences, build new partnerships and develop new resources. The question was whether there was the appetite to do this via a company structure and how the benefits versus potential overheads would balance out.

It was noted that as agreed in the previous meeting, an independent IP Inclusive was very much on the table, and that the founding organisations wanted the assurance of good governance. It was clarified that this did not mean exclusive control but that representation on the managing committee, which could include other members from the wider IP community, would work well. Questions were asked about membership and liability but it was recognised that these are details that would have to be clarified in any proposal. Michael explained that one of the benefits of working with an organisation with a clear focus on the IP sector was the unique offering and a clear focus on the sector-specific challenges. These in turn would draw other IP associations in.

It was agreed that there is no objection to independence per se, but that the means by which it is achieved would need to be clear for the founding organisations to have confidence in the governance and assurance. To this end, with a clear focus on the future, it was proposed to commission a small working group to outline the business case for IP Inclusive becoming an independent entity and invite IPIM to endorse the proposal. Andrea asked IPIM members to seek the views of their Councils on independence, to inform the discussion.

Richard summed up as follows:

- Q3 has seen successful delivery of planned initiatives and Q4 is shaping up well, with some key deliverables ready to go

- The next piece of work for IPIM is to endorse the future for funding and structure of IP Inclusive. The destination – independence – is not in dispute but some clarity over the process to arrive at it would be welcome
- Action on Andrea to form a focus group to present an outline business case setting out the journey as well as the destination for independence; focus group members may be invited to join IPIM
- Action on IPIM members to consult councils for views on structure and funding

In other matters it was noted that the AGM and a mini-conference will be held on 21st January 2020. It was generally agreed that IPIM should next meet prior to that during w/c 6th or 13th January.

Ben Buchanan 25th September 2019