

## **Third Sector Mediation Case Study 3**

### **Challenging membership meeting**

A membership organisation was going through a difficult period of change that had proved to be both tumultuous and confrontational. There was one issue that had been particularly divisive and had been a source of conflict and disagreement for a number of years.

Things came to a head when a group of members called an extraordinary meeting to challenge the board and the executive on the issue. The Chair was concerned that the meeting was going to be very difficult and therefore approached Scottish Mediation for assistance in facilitating the meeting. Strictly speaking this was not a mediation but mediating skills were required.

At the meeting there were over 50 members, staff and board members described by the mediator as “in revolt”. The mediator found the experience very challenging however after several hours there were some healthy outcomes in terms of taking change forward.

The Chair commented that the meeting was very difficult but having a mediator allowed for a more civilised discussion and having his observations afterwards was very helpful. The Chair felt that the mediator had made a good effort at leading the meeting even when it became obvious that a group really wanted to railroad the process and would give no quarter to any other thought. He felt that the mediator kept the process civilised as emotions were riding very high. The board really appreciated and valued the mediator’s presence and quiet but competent interventions. The Chair felt that if it had not been for the mediator’s presence and demeanor the meeting would have degenerated into chaos and would probably have become very personal. The Chair would thoroughly recommend the Third Sector Mediation Project as it made a very difficult morning more bearable.

### **Engaging Positively with Conflict**