

Milton Keynes Reader Service

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held on Saturday 29 July 2017 at 10am
at The Peartree Centre,
Peartree Bridge, Milton Keynes**

1. Chair's opening remarks

Caroline Pearson, Chairman, welcomed everyone and introduced the committee members and other colleagues sitting at the top table. She added thanks to all who supported in setting up the room, the ladies in the kitchen, Martin for the PA system, Veronica and Marilyn for the raffle and Jenny and Liz for their signing in duties. Karen was also thanked for her hard work in arranging the AGM.

2. Roll call of those present

Karen Preece, Service Co-ordinator, read out the list of attendees, which is attached as Appendix A.

3. Apologies

Karen Preece, Service Co-ordinator, advised the meeting there will be a list of apologies, which is attached as Appendix B. It was noted that Jeff Bashton was unable to attend as his wife had sadly passed away this week.

Karen then read out the relevant clause in the Constitution which states that for an AGM there needs to be at least 5% of members present which was the

case for this meeting. She also explained that, given we had more than the minimum number of member present, any resolution which amended the Constitution required the support of 75% of those present, other resolutions required a simple majority.

4. Minutes of the Previous AGM

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 2 July 2016 were read out by Alison Statham. There were no matters arising from these Minutes.

Acceptance of 2016 AGM Minutes

Proposed by Alison Statham, seconded by Alan Smith, carried unanimously.

5. Amendments to the Constitution

Caroline Pearson confirmed that this item would be deferred until after the Election of the Management Committee.

6. Trustees Annual Report July 2017

Karen Preece confirmed that the Trustees Annual Report had been issued and further copies were available should anyone require one.

Karen then gave details of the main highlights and developments during the past year.

The MK Reader Service moved earlier this year to Margaret Powell House in Central Milton Keynes. This followed on from notification from Woughton Community Council of a significant increase in rent for the Meeting Place in Tinkers Bridge which was not open to negotiation.

The move went very well and Karen thanked all those who helped with the move, packing and unpacking. She also thanked Martin Lycett for setting up the IT systems to ensure the smooth running of the office.

Thanks were extended to Jenny and Phil, (Phil was not able to attend today), for their hard work manning the door at our events.

Milton Keynes Council continued to award us a grant for 2016-17, but there is of course no guarantee that our grant will continue in future years. Walnut Tree Community Shop provides our second largest source of income and in 2016-17 gave us its highest contribution yet of £9,000. Karen thanked everyone

who donates unwanted items and the staff and volunteers who work there.

Thanks also to the Stony Stratford and Bletchley Lions Clubs who provided us with donations for banners for our Talks Project and chairs for our new office space.

In addition the service was Charity of the Year for the Dawson Rental Group who donated £500 and Junction 14 A Capella Group who as well as donating cash provided us with entertainment at a tea party during the year.

We continue to raise the service profile by updating our leaflets and posters and the revival of the Talks Project which has been very successful.

Marilyn Barby was thanked for supporting the fortnightly coffee morning at Lovat Fields Retirement Village.

In addition Karen thanked all those who provide administrative support, Karen Armstrong for recording brochures (raising approximately £2,000), Paula Varey for fundraising at flag days and the car raffle. Paula Suchy for arranging the very successful quiz and auction-of-promises night.

Caroline Pearson was thanked for the support she gives to Karen.

Karen then extended thanks to the Committee and Volunteers without whom the service could not operate.

Acceptance of the Trustees Report

Proposed by Alan Smith, seconded by Derek Child, carried unanimously.

7. Presentation of Accounts

Stephen Harrison confirmed that as the MK Reader Service had become a CIO there were two sets of accounts, one from April to October under the previous arrangements. The other set for the period October to the end of March 2017 under CIO status which were for approval at this meeting.

CIO status means that the service is a legal entity allowing it to own property for example shares in the Walnut Tree Community Shop. It removes individual Trustee liability although we continue to have Trustee liability insurance in place.

Both sets of accounts have been reviewed by the accountants Hills and Burgess, who provide this service at no cost.

The latest set of accounts shows a small deficit which is due to the timing of the receipt of funds and when expenditure is incurred. Overall the charity is healthy

financially with a contingency to cover any issues which might arise.

The rental on our new premises is heavily subsidised by funding from the Community Foundation. However, service charges for the premises are higher and will in the future need to be covered by extra fund raising or new grant applications.

It was noted that we had refused to pay Woughton Community Council the additional £1,000 for rental for the previous year at Tinkers Bridge. This has been strongly contested and it appears that they are no longer seeking this money.

Overall income appears higher than in previous years but is due to grants for one-off costs for purchasing a new braille machine and for the recording room.

As previously stated the Walnut Tree Community Shop is our second largest source of income and gave us a record £9,000 in this financial year. The shop is however not trading as profitably as in the past so everyone is encouraged to donate unwanted items to the shop, including items which might not be sold in the shop but provide income as rags.

There were no questions from the floor.

Acceptance of Accounts

Proposed by Paula Suchy, seconded by Alan Smith, carried unanimously

Acceptance of Hills and Burgess to review the 2017-17 accounts

Proposed by Alison Statham, seconded by Elaine Maries, carried unanimously

8. Election of Trustees

Caroline Pearson confirmed that three Trustees/Committee members were standing down this year.

James Clifton stood down earlier this year after 2 to 3 years on the committee due to work commitments. However he is still volunteering for us. He was thanked for his help and support. A small gift would be sent to him.

Michael Baldry has been on the Committee since 2001 taking on various roles. He was thanked for all his help and support. He too would continue to help at special events. A small gift would be sent to Michael.

Paula Varey has been on the Committee since around 1996, again taking on various roles including being the Chairman for 12 years. She too would continue to

support the service, particularly with fundraising. Paula was presented with a lovely hydrangea plant for her garden. Thank you Paula for all your support over many years, you will be greatly missed. Paula also expressed her thanks to those present.

Caroline passed the meeting to Stephen Harrison for the election of the Trustees.

Stephen confirmed that the Constitution we were now operating under as a CIO requires us to elect Trustees who then decide who should be Chairman, Vice-Chairman etc. As this was the first AGM since our conversion to a CIO, all Trustees had been required to stand down.

The following trustees had submitted themselves for re-election:

Caroline Pearson
Jeff Bashton
Paula Suchy MBE
Stephen Harrison
Lynn Bovis
Terry Calvert

The following co-opted Trustees had submitted themselves as Trustees for election:

Elaine Maries
Judy Smith

There were no objections from the floor to voting for a slate of candidates rather than on an individual basis. The resolution electing the Trustees was proposed by Jean Thomas, seconded by Paula Varey, carried unanimously.

9. Amendments to the Constitution (moved from Item 5)

Stephen Harrison then advised that there were 4 issues which needed to be changed in the MK Reader Service constitution:

- (i) to include our new address in Margaret Powell House
 - (ii) to ensure that any other person who may be employed by the MK Reader Service in addition to the Service Co-ordinator can attend Committee meetings of the Trustees on the same basis as the Service Co-ordinator
 - (iii) to correct the text governing the retirement or removal of a Trustee because of medical or mental incapacity. The original text referred erroneously to a Director of a Company rather than a Trustee of a Charity
 - (iv) to allow Trustees to be re-appointed for multiple, indefinite terms. The original Constitution required a Trustee to step down for a year after serving two three-year terms. Given the continued challenge of finding suitable Trustees,
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the Committee was concerned that the original clause might cause problems in the future where we might be at risk of falling below the minimum number of trustees.

Questions in response to these proposals.

- a. Derek Child asked whether there are provisions for removal of Trustees. It was confirmed there are. It was also confirmed that Trustees would still be required to submit themselves for re-election at least every three years.
 - b. Alan Smith asked whether employees could sit on the Committee. It was confirmed that employees cannot be Committee members. They are entitled to attend Committee meetings by invitation but are not allowed to vote.
 - c. Angela Turner asked whether there would always be voting for the election of trustees and how can new people be elected. It was confirmed that voting takes place every year at the AGM. Any member can put themselves forward to join the committee. When the AGM papers are issued there is the opportunity for people to express an interest.
 - d. Judy Smith advised that we can have co-opted members of the Management Committee but they have no voting rights on the Committee
 - e. John Andrews asked how often meetings are held where service users can ask questions. It was
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confirmed that this is normally at the AGM. However any issues can be raised through the Service Co-ordinator who can refer them onto the Committee. If necessary an Extraordinary General Meeting can be arranged.

Acceptance of proposed amendments

Proposed by Derek Child, seconded by Alan Smith, carried unanimously.

Caroline thanked Stephen for all his hard work in managing the accounts and dealing with the constitution amendments.

10. Questions and Suggestions

Caroline asked if anyone had any questions or suggestions. No questions were forthcoming. Caroline invited Veronica Dry from Eye for Art to address the meeting. Veronica Dry, Paula Suchy and Robin Patching, on behalf of the BucksVision Eye For Art Group, presented the Reader Service with a triptych picture map of Milton Keynes which they had made from lino offcuts. This had been entered in the BucksVision de Fraine competition a few years ago where it won 3rd prize. The triptych was accompanied by a poem written by Rachel Day which was read out by Alison Statham.

Caroline Pearson and Karen Preece gave their thanks and accepted this gift which would adorn the walls of the MK Reader Service's new offices.

Caroline also thanked the Eye for Art Group for a recent donation of £90.

Caroline then asked Paula Suchy to address the meeting.

Paula Suchy advised that hand-made cards would be on sale at the end of the meeting.

Paula also confirmed that she would be doing a sponsored climb of Snowdon in September and invited those present to sponsor her, forms are available for completion. The proceeds would be split between the MK Reader Service and the Audio Description Association of which Paula is also a Committee member.

Paula is also planning a cabaret style afternoon and table top quiz in November and invited anyone wishing to show off their skills/talents to let her know. It is hoped this will also raise funds for the MK Reader Service.

Further information about this event will be sent out nearer the time.

Caroline advised everyone that raffle tickets were still on sale and the raffle would be held in shortly along with an auction of 4 gardening sessions and a box of home grown vegetables.

11. Chairman's closing remarks

Caroline thanked everyone for coming to the AGM, she also thanked the Committee Members and Volunteers. Caroline thanked Karen for all her hard work and support, stating as a small Charity she achieved so much, which our Service Users appreciate.

Caroline advised refreshments were now available and the meeting was now closed.

The meeting closed at 11.35am.

PS. Before the auction and raffle Alison Statham read out a notice from Padma Cheriyan concerning a ballroom dancing session which had been arranged in September. Anyone interested in attending should contact Padma. If the taster session goes well then it will become a regular event.
