W’EYES

MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on

Saturday 4th March 2023

10.00am

at

The Table, Lower Hall Lane,

Walsall WS1 1RR

Present :-

Steve Mellor, Dee Dewhurst, Mojo, John Davis, Andy Dewhurst, Anita Warrender, James Warrender, Grace Warrender, Kanu Patel, Craig Bates, Yoda, Christine Barkley, Martha Barkley,

Apologies :-

Harj Hayer, Jan Farrow, Reg Cole, Ann Cole, Stella Bates.

Welcome by Directors

Steve opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to our first W’EYES meeting and AGM since the Pandemic. All members introduced themselves and the meeting commenced.

AGM and Election of New Officers

The election of Officers

Steve Mellor Chairperson

Proposed by Dee Dewhurst

Seconded by Craig Bates

Dee Dewhurst Secretary

Proposed by Steve Mellor

Seconded by John Davis

Harjit Hayer Treasurer

Proposed by Anita Warrender Seconded by John Davis

(In Harjit's absence, she has agreed to stand as Treasurer for another year.)

John Davis Events Officer

Proposed by Steve Mellor

Seconded by Dee Dewhurst

Craig Bates Public Relations

Officer

Proposed by Dee Dewhurst

Seconded by Andy Dewhurst

Dee welcomed Craig on board and all other Officers now standing for 2023.

Treasurer Report

Harjit, in her absence had forwarded the current bank financial update to Dee who informed the meeting that as at 8th February 2023, the balance for the W’EYES account was as follows:- £4,840.34 and petty cash £257.15.

Matters Arising

The future of W’EYES

Dee spoke on the future of W’EYES following the Pandemic and said that the Directors had been looking at many different types of rooms since contacting our former venue, The Hub in Lichfield Street who informed us that they would now be closing their doors each evening at 6pm. This was not suitable for our Directors nor Members who work and we felt we had no alternative but to look for a new location. Although other venues were considered, costings, accessibility and distance was proving to be a problem, and many had closed altogether following the pandemic. It was Gemma and Steve who suggested that it might be worth contacting The Table and Dee and Andy dropped in and spoke with James, The Table Manager and Rabbi, Assistant Manager and felt this would be a perfect venue for both meetings and future events. We are raring to go, once more and hoping to introduce new members, promote the work of W'EYES, plan and put forward ideas such as open days, workshops, quiz nights, Christmas get together with music, buffet etc. Dee also added that although the meetings were scheduled for 10.00am (mainly due to considering the ladies and those who like to grab a bargain & shop in town straight after the meeting. Not forgetting our sports fans, who can still enjoy their Saturday afternoon sport and following feedback from members, having a daytime meeting would also mean members would not have to come out at night in the cold and dark.) Dee asked if everyone was happy with the room and our new venue, The Table. A question was raised from the floor, regarding the cost of the room and Dee informed everyone that the smaller area at the rear of the cafe is £10.00 per hour, though not private and the Community room that we are using today is £20 per hour, although James had mentioned that there may be a possible increase this year, due to the current cost of living situation. Tea, Coffee & biscuits would be charged at £3 per head but unlimited during our meeting. Steve said that accessibility was good and the venue was in very good condition which included the ladies, gents and disabled facilities which has a radar key access. Steve also said that many other venues were considerably more expensive in their hire charges and the following item on the agenda, will explain our proposal for funding to include room hire, promotional literature, refreshments, transport (with taxi receipts) and related costings. As for the time of the meeting, Anita and other members felt that 11.00am would be more convenient and this was agreed by all and Dee will request an 11.00am start for future meetings. Anita also asked regarding parking. Steve suggested that there is parking at Asda, where you can park for 2 hours although their upper levels are owned by a private company who are quick at issuing tickets. Dee also mentioned that there is space for approximately 5 cars and 2 disabled bays on Lower Hall Lane, further down from The Table.There is also double yellow lines where anyone with a blue badge can park for up to 3 hours.

Meeting for Funding.

On 1st March, Dee and Steve met with Amanda Spratt and Sarah Timperley from the Council Crowdfunding Dpt. Sarah had been in contact with Steve and Dee and passed on several contact details in the hope that these would be possible fundraising applications and contributors to W’EYES. Amanda, Sarah’s Manager was pleased to support W’EYES with possible funding opportunities and said that she very much liked what W’EYES stood for and what they had put in place to help those with sight loss. Some companies will want to know every little detail within the application while others, Steve explained, would just simply accept your application over the phone. When applying for Crowdfunding, they would look at W’EYES to match funding at 20%, so if the maximum you can apply for is £10,000, we would have to match fund £2,000. Steve also mentioned that Sarah advised us that within the funding, we can include costings for a Minutes Secretary/taker, paid transport and possible grants for one trip a year and activities/outings such as bowling, skittles, theatre, etc., but just need a rough guide, providing ideas, dates of events and costings. We explained to Sarah and Amanda that in the past we had planned events such as a yearly market stall, trips to Black Country Museum, the Potteries and the National Space Centre Museum in Leicester and hoped to return or plan similar events for the future.

Tea and Tech

John gave feedback on Tea and Tech’s meetings which take place every fortnight on Wednesdays at Walsall Society for the Blind (WSB) and said that the group is still going strong although numbers have dropped a little due to a member moving, another on long term holiday. We also find that once a member has developed basic skills for their device and feel that is where they want to be, they no longer attend the group but this can be rewarding to see someone, who could not use a phone very well to using it with great confidence and also gives someone else the opportunity of joining the group. Tea and Tech are often promoted on the weekly, Walsall Talking Newspaper memory stick and are also creating flyers to be displayed locally. Unfortunately it has been over 5 years since the group last obtained funding for new equipment as the existing equipment is outdated, cannot be repaired, as well as being well-used and in view of our recent meeting with Sarah and Amanda, they are also pointing us in the direction of possible funding for technology equipment. John also mentioned that Simon Bacon and Rachel from Walsall Sensory Team, popped in to one of our meetings recently as Dee often supports the Sensory Team when needed and again she has been asked to help plan an offline route for a lady with sight loss. Tea and Tech is in its 9th year and everyone still enjoys their technology, phone tips, tablet tricks, not to mention their tea and biscuits. WSB have, since the Pandemic, employed a Technology Advisor - Dan, who works each day helping with all types of gadgets, aids, magnification, computers etc., often sitting in on our meetings. At the beginning of last year, Amanda, CEO at WSB informed Dee that WSB had been fortunate in receiving funding for technology and asked if Dee could advise on what up to date products might be useful for those attending day groups at the centre and those unable to leave their homes as Dan attends home visits also. Mobile phones, mini keyboard, tablets and a computer software package - Dolphin’s Guide Connect are just some of the products purchased. John explained that he had enjoyed using the software. While chatting with Amanda, one day, Dee had suggested a possible Introduction to Computers with sight loss course, using the new software. Steve said perhaps Dee could demo Guide Connect for W’EYES and Dee was happy to speak to Amanda and ask if we could book a morning or afternoon session for those who would like to trial the new software.

Tour of the new ED at Walsall Manor

Steve, John, Dee & Andy had been asked to be part of the Community group involved in giving feedback from an accessible point of view, having sight loss. Steve, Dee and Andy attended the 10.00am tour and John joined the 12.00 noon tour of the new build. Miss Joshi, a Paediatric Consultant guided the group which consisted of 2 local Councillors, representatives from WSB, W’EYES, Scope, Deafblind to mention a few. Steve began by saying that we were all very impressed as the cubicles were very large compared to the existing ones, they had virus containment where in cases of Covid for instance there was sliding doors separating the departments and to contain contagious viruses. They had a separate childrens department again, with virus control and separate cubicles for those who are vulnerable and two cubicles for patients suffering mental ill health. Each cubicle had its own integrated heart monitor, blood pressure and other sats equipment, all connected to every Doctor’s station and four very large screens displaying the sats monitoring of each patient and cubicle rather than having shared equipment for everyone. and having to wait for equipment to become available. The department also had its own scan, x-ray and CT scanner room. The ED also has a new phone system where an interpreter can be contacted if needed, with over 40 languages which can be accessed easily and quickly for patients. The participants had lots of questions. Miss Joshi also advised us of many other advantages to patients with the new build and mentioned everything from the Patients Charter to the complaints procedures but also stressed that it is just as important for patients to give their positive feedback to the department as well as receiving negative feedback also. Steve asked what the Patients Charter included. Miss Joshi said she would look into this. Dee asked if anything had been put in place for those with sensory loss, learning difficulties etc., when arriving at the hospital as most patients would not know where to go arriving for the first time and also how would they know when they are being called or the Doctor is ready to see them. Miss Joshi said this would be flagged up on their system, once the patient had registered their illness/disability with reception as the system is logged into every Doctors surgery in the area and will be on hand for the ED department. Also this information is linked straight through to the ED's Doctors screens and immediately available. Miss Joshi also said that there are also volunteers that are able to help patients although not many volunteer for the late shifts. Everyone that attended the ED new build was very impressed with just a few minor concerns. Dee suggested to all members that if they do need to attend the new ED, to give them as much information as you can, not only when giving your reason for attending but in relation to any disability/sight loss and other health details, as this will be the only time you will need to do this as Miss Joshi confirmed to Dee that this remains on the system.

Anita mentioned her experience when attending the original A & E Dpt whilst awaiting treatment for her back pain and problems. She was delayed most of the day from 6am until 6pm and eventually opted to return home as they had not managed to secure a bed for her. Anita did want everyone to know that although this was more than likely an isolated issue, she could not speak highly enough of the staff who did try to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

Change to Number 36 Bus

Steve informed the meeting that the number 36 bus which travels from Walsall Town Centre to Walsall Manor Hospital, has now moved from Bradford Place and is now at Stand F in St. Paul’s bus station and runs every half hour at 23 and 53 minutes past the hour and stops running at 6pm. Steve also added that there seemed to be no information rolled out on this and no-one has really been informed.

Pat Pilbeam

Steve let all members know that since Pat last attended the Christmas meal with W’EYES she had now moved into Willow Rose Nursing Home as she has in recent years been diagnosed with Dementia. Steve had recently been to visit Pat, with her son Robin. Pat seemed well and remembered Steve and everyone at W'EYES and Steve said he would keep in touch. Willow Rose has 24 hour Doctors and nurses on hand, is a good secure unit, right down to the lifts which can only be accessed if a staff member swipes their card. There are many activities to keep patients occupied and Steve said the nursing home is marvellous and that Pat is ‘chipper’.

AOB

Dee asked once again, if all members were happy with the venue, so that future meetings can be confirmed for the rest of this year. All members were very happy to attend meetings but members said they would prefer an 11.00am start which was good for all.

Steve mentioned the current website which was now down and out of use and asked Craig if he would be happy to set one up again as this is his niche. Any costs incurred in the setup will be covered by W'EYES/future funding that we are hoping to secure as mentioned earlier. Sarah had also advised us that any costs for such items as website, media, printing etc could be included in our application for crowdfunding/grants. Craig said he was happy to create a new website for W’EYES and hoped to receieve plenty of content to put on our page in the future.

Andy said he had a flyer almost finished but believed W’EYES had its own logo and asked if anyone was able to provide him with the original logo for W’EYES which we believe is an owl. Craig said he would have a look and this would also be good if it could be added to the Website, emails and stationery.

Family Support

On behalf of the Directors may we thank James and Grace Warrender for their help in setting up the room and serving tea and coffee. Thanks also to Andy Dewhurst for stepping in and taking the minutes for this evening's meeting. Your help and support was very much appreciated.

Date of next meeting

Dee confirmed that the next meeting was booked for Saturday 8th July and she would confirm the new time of 11.00am, once James has confirmed this with Dee.

Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 11.24am