W’EYES

MINUTES OF A MEETING

 Held on

Saturday 8th July 2023

at

11.00am

held at

The Table, Lower Hall Lane,

Walsall WS1 1RR

Present

 Steve Mellor, Dee Dewhurst,

 John Davis, Harjit Hayer,

 Julie McFall (Minutes Scribe)

 Talia Treen (Guest Speaker)

 Esmay Treen (Junior)

 Andy Dewhurst, Kim Bate, Jan Farrow,

 Kanu Patel, Christine Barkley,

 Claire Evans, Richard Evans,

 Paul Evans

Apologies

 Anita Warrender, Cliff Warrender,

 Craig Bates, Stella Bates, Gemma Allen

Steve opened the meeting and welcomed all Members and everyone introduced themselves. He also welcomed and introduced Julie McFall, as Minutes Scribe for W’EYES, as of this month.

Apologies were given on behalf of non-attendees.

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate copy.

Dee introduced her Daughter, Talia Treen, this month’s Guest Speaker - who has been the ECLO (Eye Clinic Liaison Officer) at the QE Hospital in Birmingham for many years and since moved on to Childrens Services and currently the ECLO at the Birmingham Children’s Hospital. The ECLO post was created by RNIB, one of the first National Organisations for people with sight loss and

their aim is to have an ECLO in every Hospital. The ECLO can be partly funded by other organisations or by the NHS Trust, Talia has a non-medical but vital role as she can support newly registered patients in the eye clinic to obtain a sight loss/visual impairment certificate, following registration. and provide emotional support to patients and their families. The ECLO also supports patients in many other ways which she went on to mention. Talia explained that the criteria has been updated recently and offered the RNIB helpline number, which is 0303 123 9999 for anyone that would like to find out more details about RNIB or the ECLO Officer An ECLO can assist with all areas of social and domestic needs as she liaises with services, families and the individual. run by individual. Living with Sight loss courses can be offered to help maintain quality of life and aids and equipiment are also available and some products will be showcased at Sight

Village later this month. Talia then covered what is classed as partially sighted and severely sight impaired and what concessions and reductions are available for those eligible. She also covered what other types of support are available, eg Educational, Emotional etc. Talia went on to say, the ECLO can also make various referrals for Patients such as, a patient may need accommodation due to safeguarding.

At the moment, there are only 108 ECLO's in England and again mentioned how they are funded and that Walsall doesn't have one at the moment. Jan asked about Wolverhampton Hospital and Steve asked about Walsall Manor Hospital and Talia explained that the RNIB have plans to have an ECLO in many areas by 2025 and that consultants really need to be onboard for this to take place as well as backing funding which again, as many ECLO's are partially funded by other organisations or by the NHS. Talia also pointed out that advice can be given regarding benefits such as ESA, Job seekers Allowance, PIP and Attendance Allowance. Some members asked about Attendance Allowance and

Steve explained that from the age of 64 onwards, Attendance Allowance was available but not Disability Living Allowance or PIP and some grants are also available for older people, if eligible. Dee asked, that if someone in receipt of PIP reached the age of 64 and transferred to Attendance Allowance, if that person had a Motability car, would they be allowed to remain on the Motability Scheme? With many changes over recent years, Talia said she was unsure as she had not come across this area but Andy said he was sure you could still have the use of the car for the remaining term of the Lease but would find out the outcome for the next meeting.

Dee said the services of the ECLO on offer today are well advanced now, since the role was put in place and the ECLO is certainly a much needed and vital role for every Eye Clinic.

Steve asked if she could let us have any details on her talk and Talia said she would forward her notes on what she had discussed for Julie to include in the Minutes which would have saved her writing it all down.

Jan said she had learnt an awful lot from W'eyes and their Guest Speakers and had found today's meeting very interesting and learned a lot as she had not heard of, nor knew about the role of the ECLO.

Steve thanked Talia for taking the time to come to the meeting and said he was sure everyone would have learned something.

Chair's Report

 Steve said he would like to let Members know that today is Anita's birthday, who is our longest serving member. Everyone sends Anita their best wishes too and hopes she has a lovely day.

 The recent Beer and skittles evening took place 6 weeks ago and was a great success and enjoyed by all. The raffle raised £160 then the Co-op raised this to £175. Dee added that she felt Steve deserved a huge thank you as he had approached A.F. Blakemores, the cash and carry wholesalers and they had made a donation of £200 which covered the cost of the skittles evening/buffet. The raffle monies raised that night, would help with room hire for our meetings at The Table and refreshments. Dee also confirmed that she had emailed Kate Senter at Blakemores, sending photos of the evening together with a huge thank you but had not received a reply to date.

Secretary's Report

 Dee referred to W'EYES' previous meeting where it was explained that Steve and some of the Directors had met with the Council's External funding Team, Sarah and Amanda,

 as we are hoping to apply for crowd-funding being looked at for W'EYES. New opportunities for crowd funding is possible but the Directors will meet to go through any policies and guidelines required for applications such as the services we offer as a group, Safeguarding policies. Public Liability Insurance etc. Some of which may not be needed but must be reviewed to meet any necessary criteria. This will be discussed at a Directors meeting and then members will be asked to attend a Special meeting if actions are needed to be taken. Crowd funding can be seen as a fairly new trend and many years ago groups would go to one person/company to apply for a large amount of money, whereas nowadays, with crowdfunding, a charity or group could approach lots of organisations,companies, etc., for smaller amounts to make up the funding being sought. Also, using a QR code as found on many other webpages, which Craig is in the process of having on our webpage, will also help raise funds and receive donations. These are just some of the ways crowdfunding can help us reach our goal, A member asked how the QR Code worked and Dee said that anyone visiting our webpage can scan the code which then takes you to a donations page where you insert the amount you would like to donate and any other details required. Steve explained that with some crowdfunding, like Crowdfunding Walsall,, you are often required to match funds so if (as an example,) we was to apply for £10,000 and the match funds are set at 20%, W'EYES would need to raise £2,000. W'EYES would then put forward our project by way of application for £8,000 crowd funding. Dee went on to say that the application or project we put forward would hopefully be for another Skittles evening, a day trip to the Black Country Living Museum, to include coach fare, entry and lunch (though quotes are proving to be rather high, especially costs for a coach and lunch at the museum.) Dee said that since speaking with Claire, she had given Dee the names of two coach companies that may be more reasonable. Dee said she will review the day trip again with the new info. Also, Our December Christmas get together at The Table, with buffet and entertainment and an Autumn Ten Pin Bowling event are also on our project list. So summing up, we cost and submit our project, apply for funding, where we will be informed of each stage of the process and what match funding will be required by us, await a decision and then we are given a window within which time we need to raise the match funding amount. Amanda and Sarah have informed us that there are no guarantees but the more info and documents we have in place and by showing we are prepared to raise the amount of match funds, we are in with a great chance and many small companies and Charities have already been successful. Steve said Craig was liaising with Harjit and setting up a direct debit Which will cover a small set up fee and put in place our bank details enabling any donations received via the QR Code to reach W'EYES Bank account.

Dee said following on from what has just been discussed, she had received information from Walsall Council external funding dpt that new funding opportunities and the next crowdfunding round will open in the next few months. The Directors are aware that our Constitution and other legal documents and policies need to be reviewed to ensure all documents are put in place and meet the criteria. Dee went on to say that she was hoping that Anita would be at today's meeting as she felt it is only right, (as she is a founder of W'EYES), to inform Anita and all members that, while Craig was researcing domain names to recreate our website, it came to his attention that there is a Band of Musicians with the name W'EYES and this has raised concerns with the Directors. As punctuation or capitals are not allowed when creating a domain/web address, Craig has had to choose something very close in order to get us back up and running as though unlikely, there is always the fear of a potential copyright issue or other misunderstandings. On briefly looking through our Constitution (Memorandum of Association) and reviewing the guidelines, it may be that some require amendment. In the event of any amendment of the Memorandum of Association and in regard to W'EYES looking at a Change of Name, any possible changes will be discussed at a Directors meeting and if it is recommended to make such changes, a Special General Meeting will be called and a vote of Members will take place.

Jan stated that Anita needs consulting as courtesy, as she started the group. Dee agreed and said that she was hoping to have spoken with Anita today but can assure everyone that the Directors will be speaking with Anita and Cliff at the first opportunity.

Members may remember Sight Village, a yearly event where sight loss products are exhibited and can dramatically change and enhance the lives of those with sight loss. Dee talked about this year's exhibition on 17th and 18th July, which has now moved to Eastside Rooms, Woodcock Street, Birmingham. Registration is requested to attend but you can also do this on arrival, Pre-registration just helps keep queuing to a minimum. There sre Guides on hand, who will escort you around the exhibition and volunteers who will take guide dogs to spend. There are usually efreshments

available also but as this is a new venue Dee said she wouldn't like to make any guarantees but refreshments are usually on hand for the exhibitors as well as Visitors although can be a little pricey.

 Jan asked about voice recognition on tablets as she is struggling to use her IPad/ tablet. John and Steve both directed her towards the right place as Steve said that RNIB have a tech dpt who will offer what support they can, while John said that there is a Computer guy in Walsall Wood that should be able to help out. Dee also suggested that Jan has a word with Andy as he may be able to make the tablet more accessible for her without struggling along.

Treasurer's Report

 Harjit confirmed that the £200 donation from A.F. Blakemore had been paid into our account. Petty Cash stands at £200 and the current Bank Account stands at £2,020.34p

PR Report

 Craig has now set up a live Facebook and Twitter account and our website is also live but still under construction and Dee said she is sure Craig will give the details of how to access these media accounts and our Website at the next meeting. As mentioned earlier in today's meeting, Craig is working on a QR Code for future donations and

 is also looking into both Safeguarding Policies and Public Liability Insurance.

A.O.B.

 There has been a suggestion for more guest speakers, following on from Talia's interesting talk and suggestions for a local Historian, or Simon Topman from Acme Whistles, enjoyed by all many years ago and Dee even said with a smile, that the lovely lady who did the Button talk was most enjoyable, The lady was of course Jan who said she may be able to do this again too.

 Jan then asked if she could just mention that as this was her first time at The Table, our new venue, she liked the meeting room very much as it is very accessable and bright. She was also asked that we bear her in mind when organising a trip to the Black Country Living Museum as she would very much like to attend but unable to access a coach. Dee said she would definitely see what she could do.

Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be held on

Saturday 9th September at 11,00am-1pm.

Close of Meeting - 12.38pm