**WALSALL EYES**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING**

**Held on**

**Saturday 11th May 2024**

**11am - 1pm**

**Walsall Society for the Blind**

**Hawley House, 11 Hatherton Road, Walsall, WS1 1XS**

**PRESENT**

**Steve Mellor, Dee Dewhurst, Harjit Hayer, Claire Evans, Paul Evans, Andy Dewhurst, Richard Evans, Julie McFall, Gemma Allen, Kanu Patel, Tim Clift, Christine Barkley.**

**APOLOGIES**

**Craig Bates, Stella Bates, Denise Evans, Anita Warrender, Cliff Warrender.**

**Steve welcomed all Members to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.**

**Treasurer’s Report**

**Harjit confirmed that she had updated Companies House in April with the new Directors being added and John Davis, former Director, being removed. Harjit had also paid the £13 annual fee. Current balance stands at ...**

**Petty cash - £536.79p Bank account - £4,935.94**

**Harj also confirmed, we had received 2 lots of £200 in March from Blakemores and donations from our website, these will be shown in future quarterly updates. She confirmed we now have a bank card for Directors to use and Harj has the card. There was nothing else to report, other than Dee will have the final count of the Membership monies to be handed over to Harj at the close of the Subscription period.**

**Harj said goodbye and apologised as she then needed to leave the meeting at 11.30am.**

**Minutes of our AGM and Last Meeting**

**Dee read out the Minutes of the last Meeting and apologised as they hadn’t been sent out to members due to personal issues. Dee asked everyone present if they believed the Minutes to be a true and accurate copy. Claire proposed this motion and Richard seconded. Dee mentioned that one concern, following our day at 10 Pin Bowling was the feedback relating to training and Sight Loss Awareness for the staff and said that the Directors are considering a letter to the Venue.**

**Chair’s Report**

**Steve let everyone know that following the last event, the Quiz night, was most successful, made around £15 after paying out expenses. This brought good feedback and everyone enjoyed the buffet too.**

**Steve let Members know, he had been talking to Blakemores about funding, We was recently graanted the first £200 towards the cost of the BCM trip and a further donation towards the cost of a Printer. Moving forwards, If we are seen to be promoting the charity, we can approach them again and use further donations towards the cost of printing/promotional goods perhaps.**

**An Eco tank printer has now been purchased and is working well, ink should last a year or so, in these new type of printers and many thanks goes to Blakemores for their kind donation towards the cost in getting this.**

**Steve informed everyone that two of our older Directors, Anita Warrender and Pat Pilbeam are currently in times of ill health and it would be nice for Walsall Eyes to send some flowers. Steve went on to say that the group had been set up as a ‘Voice’ for Blind and partially sighted people of Walsall, with W'EYES having done a lot of campaigning with Anita over many years.**

**SECRETARY’s REPORT**

**Dee introduced Tim Clift, who has recently joined Walsall Eyes, attending recent events and said, Tim has recently joined her and Andy supporting members both in the Tech Suite and Tea & Tech as he is quite a wizard with computers and is a very talented young man when it comes to 3D printing (Lithographs), Tim has been a member of WSB for almost 9 years,creating many wonderful projects. He has made items for Claire, Dee and members at WSB for example internal maze games, coasters, lampshades, Canvasses etc. He s made some sample business cards and bought them to the meeting today. These are on aluminium sheet and can be scanned onto your phone and cost approx 20p each to produce. Steve said they were easy to view and the contrast made them easily visible but felt it was more cost effective to print on card, a basic card would be needed for everyone to hand out and maybe the recent £100 donation can be used for this. Steve thanked Tim and Dee said Tim would be happy to take on any projects in the future for Walsall Eyes.**

**Dee then went on to discuss membership. There are around 27 people on the Membership list, with around 20 emails sent out and the remaining members receiving phone calls as we still have members that do not use computers and therefore have no email address. there are quite a few members that are unable to attend meetings due to their health and unable to leave their home. The recent £10 per year membership has been welcomed by 16 active members, approximately 60% of all members and Dee feels this is a good result considering we have only introduced this in recent months. We do need to be aware that not all members will be able to afford this fee but then those members who have paid should receive a subsidy on future events where possible.**

**Andy suggested that those members who have contributed towards the membership fee should if possible, attend at least 2 meetings and not just events. This was agreed by everyone at the meeting.**

**Steve said we can approach Boost again later in the year for funding to help with reduction for tickets and events etc., Steve felt that all members be included in events and meetings but those with paid membership would receive a reduction on events throughout the year.**

**Claire added that there does need to be a difference between members and non-members to make it attractive with regards to paying membership. Everyone agreed.**

**Dee suggested a meeting is called for all Directors to discuss Policies, Membership and free incentive when considering the advantages of taking membership. Maybe Tim would be able to design something to offer with membership and reminded everyone that she will be taking any final membership payments today if required by anyone.**

**Finally, Dee moved on to our media sites/apps and said that WhatsApp needs to be connected to a device with a SIM card and suggested that one of the obsolete phones she has could be used for this purpose. Dee and Andy will set up a phone, however it will need data and possibly a cheap pay as you go plan for emergency use and trips. Steve suggested EE £9 a month to look at, though Sim cards are £1 and can be topped up as needed from any network. Everyone was in agreement for this to go ahead.**

**Claire added that she posts info about Walsall Eyes on the WSB Facebook page and that it would be good if Walsall Eyes could post information about WSB with regards to information, trips etc. She suggested a talk with Dee meet up and put a plan in place.**

**PLANNING AND EVENTS OFFICER REPORT**

**Claire confirmed that our next event is on Saturday 22nd June to the Black Country Living Museum. We are just awaiting the tour confirmation. A quote had been given for the tunnel barge trip at £12 per person and lasts 45 minutes. All members are welcome to go on the boat trip. Claire said there are still some payments due but will chase these up. The coach will have 3 guide dogs meaning 3 seats will not be available. Claire has used this coach company and very much rates their service. WSB will be open from 9am on the morning of the trip with the coach leaving at 9.30am. The touch tour is 10.30am and the coach will return to WSB at 4.30pm. Dee said she really enjoyed their last trip to BCM, as Andy got into big trouble with the School Teacher, also food was reasonable, nice shops to look around and a great tour. A Radar key is required for disabled toilets and Dee assured everyone it would be a great day out.**

**Finally, Claire let everyone know that WSB have a trip to Weston Super Mare on Saturday 13th July, at £23, if anyone is interested.**

**Research & Media Officer Report**

**Paul said he would like to make contact with various organisations and Companies and let people know who we are. He is going to speak to Walsall Manor Hospital, as he used to work there, to discuss having an information stand in the foyer. Paul will find out the process and see what dates are available to us, whether we can have a bucket for donations and believes it could be advantageous to hold our event when the eye clinic is running. After a short discussion, Dee & Andy said they should be able to help with flyers and business cards printed.**

**Paul said it would be good if members and Volunteers could take a slot on a rota for sitting and chatting at the table Paul has also priced up a banner, and we would also need leaflets and a small amount of merchandise. Paul is to look at getting a banner. and suggested this be carried out before Christmas.**

**PR REPORT**

**In Craig’s absence, Dee relayed a few points that Craig wanted to mention. He had found out this week that any charity by law needs a Privacy Policy in place for holding personal data. Safeguarding Policy is complete, this is to be kept safe by the charity and checked if rules are adhered to. This needs to be put in place by next meeting, it was suggested a Directors meeting be held to go over all Policies.**

**The Gift aid form is to be completed, liaise with Harj. Easy funding website to be discussed with Craig. Donations are coming in but can only be seen on a quarterly statement. Claire will look at Safeguarding Policy and distribute.**

**Dee asked if the QR code is working on our Facebook page. This can be made into a sticker for the donation buckets for tunes when we are out promoting Walsall Eyes at hospitals, supermarkets etc. As we also learned, the QR Code can also be used via a mobile phone and other Smart devices.**

**Walsall Eyes Meetings**

**Dee confirmed that Saturday morning meetings seemed to be working better than weekday evenings and reminded everyone that today is when we take a vote to select the venue for future meetings. The two Venues are Walsall Arms and Walsall Society for the Blind. Members present then voted and Craig, Stella and Harj had also submitted a vote each and therefore with a unanimous show of hands, it was passed that Walsall Society for the Blind would be the regular Venue where we would now hold our meetings, though we would still look forward to using The Walsall Arms for skittles events in the future.**

**Dee thanked Claire for agreeing to open for Walsall Eyes meetings and asked her to thank the CEO Amanda Reed and the Trust also. The room has much to offer for meetings and events and we are asked to make a donation towards drinks at each meeting.**

**Dee asked everyone if they are happy with the frequency of meetings and it was suggested and agreed that they will be bi-monthly from now on with the next meeting taking place in July.**

**A.O.B**

**Dee suggested a guest speaker from The Leather Museum, she will talk to them and asked if anyone had ideas \ guest speakers in the future. She also asked for ideas for trips, as in the past we had visited Some really good locations like National Space Centre, Botanical Gardens, the potteries, Villa Park and many more. Claire has spoken to the driver they use at WSB, from a local Travel company and could do 2 nights in Blackpool at the illuminations in October at £260. There is a current waiting list and anyone interested should let Claire know.**

**Steve said, it is hoped we can get back to doing some more campaigning and awareness in the community and this is something we can discuss in future meetings.**

**Date of next meeting - Saturday 27th July, 11am at WSB.**

**Close of Meeting 12.59pm.**