Minutes of a Meeting

Saturday 7th June 2025

Walsall Society for the Blind

Hatherton Road, Walsall, WS1 1XS

11.00am

Notices and Commencement

Attendees Present -

Steve Mellor, Dee Dewhurst, Harjit Hayer, Craig Bates, Claire Evans, Paul Evans, Andy Dewhurst, Richard Evans, Kim Bates, Tim Clifft, Adrian Griffiths, Talia Treen, Bickram Ram, Christine Barkley.

Apologies -

Paige Edwards, Denise Evans, Anita Warrender, Cliff Warrender, Stella Bates, Gemma Allen, Claudia Marks.

Dee Dewhurst opened the meeting, advising all members of the following notices; beginning with the presence of the decorators and the availability of toilet facilities. She said that following the notice at the last meeting regarding the men’s toilet, the urinal has now been removed so there are just the 2 standard cubicles now.

Dee introduced Talia Treen as the new Minutes Secretary, highlighting her experience in the sight loss field.

Dee then informed the meeting that our Treasurer, Harjit had celebrated her 40th birthday earlier in the week and wished her a Happy Birthday, presenting her with a gift from the Directors and all Members e of Walsall Eyes.

New members were introduced, including Bickram Ram, who shared his background and interests. Dee provided an overview of our meetings and what they entail.

Minutes of the last meeting.

It appeared that the Minutes had not been electronically received by all members. Dee said she would resend the attachment.

Chairs Report

Steve thanked all members that attended his Mother’s Internment and confirmed that £500 was raised for Walsall Eyes.

Steve expressed his views regarding the potential formation of a Disability Forum. The Council aren't responding to any contact that is trying to be made. Steve is still awaiting an update and will keep attempting to make contact with them.

Steve also informed the meeting of the new leader of the Council, Mike Bird, who was recently voted in.

Steve then provided a final reminder on the upcoming Skittles night booked for Saturday 21st June at the Walsall Arms, Bank Street, Walsall, £10 per person and includes a Buffet. Confirmation and payment is needed a week before by Saturday 14th June.

Steve informed everyone of the funding bids for the next 12 months, which he has recently submitted through Sarah at Boost but they won’t be put forward till August when the funding reopens. The funding is required to be used for well being events/activities, so Steve will be including another Skittles night, later in the year and a Ten pin bowling activity. He said, £650 has been applied for, for the skittles night to cover food costs and taxis and £950 for bowling covering the activity, food and taxis. A Total for both events' bids approx £1600. Steve will update members if the funding has been successful when he is notified, possibly the end of August, beginning of September.

Secretary's Report

Dee advised the meeting of the difficulties she was met with over the last 12 months with Andy’s health and the need to cut back on responsibilities and her Volunteer work. She therefore informed everyone that as at today, she will step down as Director but will still attend meetings, remain as a General Committee Member (if everyone is still happy for her to do so) and help out in the background as she has, since she joined W'EYES, some 21 years ago. Dee explained this wasn’t just stepping down from Walsall Eyes which she loves being a part of but in recent months, she had also stepped down from her volunteering role as Co-Ordinator at Guide Dogs too.

Insurance update & Action taken

Dee reminded everyone that following the last meeting, the Directors had been obtaining insurance advice and quotes but it was Claire who had kindly put it all together and asked Claire to relay the outcome to the meeting.

Claire informed everyone of the new insurance policy, which covers everything at a cheaper rate than expected, which was £166.21.

Claire explained the details of the insurance policy, including Public Liability, Indemnity/Trustee insurance.

Dee and Claire then discussed the importance of having the insurance in place and there are just a couple of amendments, then we can process the payment.

Treasurer's Report

Harjit provided an update on the financial status, including membership fees currently at £190 with payments being made from Gemma £10 and Rueben and Chris Denny £20 which will take the total to £220.

Donations of £500 kindly collected from Steve’s Mum (Joyce’s) funeral and £285 from Paige’s raffle collection. Totalling £975 and with Petty Cash and expenses paid out is £948.71p. Money in the account, £5734.84p plus monies to pay in, will total £6683.55, which is the highest balance in a long time.

PR/IT & Website Report

Craig updated the meeting on the Easy Fundraising partnership, which allows members to donate a percentage of their online purchases to the group.

Craig will support anyone who needs support in setting this up and encouraged members to inform friends and family. £11 had been raised so far.

Craig then provided updates on the development of an Alexa skill for the website he is working on and

mentioned the issues with accessing the current website and plans to move it to a WordPress platform for better usability. Craig asked if anyone was interested in testing the development when it’s ready he would welcome any members to provide or suggest any ideas and trial this for Craig.

Craig discussed the potential link Paul and Steve had been trying to get with the Saddlers Medical Practice next door and the primary care network for Walsall, to increase visibility and support. Craig has managed to get Information on the Saddlers Practice website after linking with a practice manager there.

Craig gave an update on an article regarding a food waste service soon to be provided by Walsall Council for their residents that you can opt in to. This will be a weekly collection but is still to be confirmed and will be in place by March 2026.

Craig and Steve discussed the importance of having council representatives at meetings to provide updates and address concerns as all information is heard first by journalists sharing the updates when it should come from the council.

Events/Planning Report

Claire informed everyone that Richard is taking part in a sky dive to fundraise for Walsall Eyes and is just waiting for a date to be provided.

Harjit let all members know that, she is taking part in a Hyrox later in the year and will speak to her doubles partner to ask about fundraising for Walsall Eyes.

Claire discussed the upcoming trip to Southport and the options for transportation and cost. £45 per seat is currently the quote.

Claire mentioned the possibility of merging the trip with another group to reduce costs.

Clare informed on the logistics of the trip, including the need for a self-drive minibus, which holds 16 people. £100 for hire, pence per mile and comes with a full tank of fuel, but will have to calculate the cost per person after finding a driver.

Claire has an application form to complete for potential funding through the Community Impact Fund. Up to £2000 can be applied for but it has to be used towards a specific project. Claire asked for ideas that can be put forward towards a project.

Claire suggested setting an exact date for the fun day that they have been trying to plan and advertise, but there has been little interest with not having a date in place.

Claire and Dee expressed the need to set a new date for the fun day and Saturday 27th September was put forward. Dee asked if any members would be interested in joining a subcommittee to help the Event Planning team.

Media and Resources Update

Paul informed everyone that he is waiting for the delivery of the following branded resources. Table cloth, runner, and leaflets in A3, A4 and A5. Paul will be distributing the leaflets around Walsall. He is also going to set up a table in hospitals, surgeries etc, which will help with promoting Walsall Eyes.

AOB

No other business to report at today's meeting.

Date of next meeting

Dee confirmed the date of the next meeting as Saturday 19th July with all in agreement.

Meeting Conclusion

Dee will circulate the previous minutes as not all members received them.

Dee reminded the members that Richard would pop round for any donations for refreshments as WSB kindly allow us to use their refreshments and room facilities, only asking a small donation towards our refreshments. Dee thanked members for their support.

The meeting concluded at 1.17pm with a positive note, and members expressed their appreciation for the efforts and updates shared during the meeting.

Action Items

Provide details on the Skittles event to new members

Ensure all members are added to the email distribution list for meeting minutes

Provide instructions on setting up the Easy Fundraising program to new members