

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROTTINGDEAN WHITEWAY CENTRE  
HELD ON THURSDAY 25th MARCH 2021 at 7.00 pm on Zoom**

**Present:**

*Committee:* Lynn Hutchinson (Chair), Stephanie Sheppard (Vice-chair & Secretary), George Bradbury, Nikki Cameron, Peter Hewetson Brown, Stewart Hutchinson, Brian Knight, Gersha Newnham, Jo Newman, Joy Rogers, David Wilson.

*Others:* Robbie Beard-Wilson, Veronica Carter, Crista Cook, Mike Gregory, Margaret Hewetson-Brown, Brian Hunt, Janet Nicholls, Graham Sheppard, Derrick Sterling, Andy Wilson.

*Committee member not in attendance:* Laura Rodriguez

The Chair opened the AGM by welcoming everyone and explaining that all attendees had previously received the evening's agenda, minutes from last year and the 2020 accounts.

1. Apologies for Absence – none

2. Minutes of AGM 2020 from User Group and Full AGM

Minutes of the virtual AGM meetings of 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020, have been displayed on the Centre's Notice Board, in the Window at the Whiteway Centre and on our website for the past 21 days. It was agreed that these be taken as read.

A typing error and the omission of the number of years previous committee members had served on the full AGM minutes were raised.

The approval of the full AGM minutes was proposed by Peter Hewetson-Brown and seconded by Jo Newman once the above errors have been rectified. The minutes were approved on this basis.

The approval of the User Group AGM minutes was proposed by Peter Hewetson-Brown and seconded by Jo Newman. The minutes were approved.

3. Election of User Group Representatives

Under the constitution up to 5 User Group representatives may be elected to the Management committee of the Rottingdean Whiteway Centre.

The following four members were proposed for election and re-election to the Management Committee.

Brian Knight	Camera Club
Joy Rogers	Pre-School
David Wilson	Wine Club
Andy Wilson	Round Room Ramblers

These nominations were proposed by Peter Hewetson-Brown and seconded by Jo Newman. All those in attendance were in agreement.

4. User Groups

Andy Wilson, on behalf of the Round Room Ramblers, expressed his appreciation for the Management Committee of RWC and said how much they appreciate the amount of work that goes into the smooth running of the centre.

Reports were presented by the Officers. The reports can be found in the Appendix to these minutes.

5. The Chair read her report

6. The Treasurer read her report, including Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020  
The Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020 were proposed subject to external examination. These accounts were proposed by Peter Hewetson-Brown and seconded by Jo Newman. All those in attendance were in agreement.

7. Reports from other Committee Officers were presented:
  - Secretary's report
  - Lettings report
  - Education Officer's report
  - Building report
  - Bursar's report
  - Website Administration report

George Bradbury raised issue with the heating system, requesting that it should be reviewed with urgency. He was assured that this was under discussion and that a review was planned for the summer.

Jo Newman emphasised the amount of time and effort that Stewart Hutchinson has devoted to ensuring the Centre is as risk-free of COVID-19 as possible. Stewart acknowledged that a lot of additional planning and purchasing has been necessary but that he chose not to detail everything in his report.

These reports as read were proposed by Peter Hewetson-Brown and seconded by Jo Newman. All those in attendance were in agreement that the reports be adopted.

8. Appointment of an Independent Examiner  
The reappointment of John Bryant as Independent Examiner was proposed by Peter Hewetson-Brown and seconded by Jo Newman and approved.
9. To elect the Management Committee for 2021/22 (up to 11 elected members and up to five further Representative members)

The existing members of the Management Committee were eligible to stand again for election. The election of the officers was proposed by Derrick Sterling and seconded by Graham Sheppard. The election was agreed unanimously by a show of hands.

#### 10. Any Other Business

- a) George Bradbury enquired if the enrolments and course organiser reports should be separated? The Chair responded that this could be considered for next year's AGM as the roles are indeed reported separately at Management Committee meetings. Jo Newman, the Enrolments Co-ordinator explained that refunds due to lockdowns, bounced cheques and incorrect payments were a challenge during the year and that although all have been processed about 30% of those receiving refunds haven't yet confirmed they have received their refunds.
- b) Crista Cook thanked the Management Committee for keeping RWC open despite the challenges presented.
- c) Veronica Carter expressed how difficult it must have been to negotiate this difficult year. She said that during her years on the Management Committee she didn't have to face anything so difficult and that she is very impressed by how we did it.
- d) Graham Sheppard expressed his thanks to the Management Committee on behalf of Rottingdean Parish Council, the Rottingdean community and all those joining in the classes. He said that although using zoom has been OK, face to face is so much better, and he is sure that folk will be looking forward to returning to the centre when this is possible.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

Appendix: Reports for Rottingdean Whiteway Centre AGM, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

### **CHAIR'S REPORT – LYNN HUTCHINSON**

This is our first AGM held on zoom, and I thank those of you who have joined us.

As always, the AGM is our opportunity to review the last year and share the management committee's hopes as we look forward to the future.

2020 has been an eventful year for many, and at Rottingdean Whiteway Centre this has been no exception. Along with other organisations we closed in March when the first lockdown was announced. As restrictions eased, responding to government guidelines brought many challenges for everyone involved with RWC. Our COVID risk assessment was amended with each government announcement. At the Centre we introduced numerous changes to make it COVID secure. Because of these measures the preschool could return, we had some room bookings and the return of a few regular groups, and we were able to hold classes in the Autumn term. Until lockdown 2... All was not lost, however, we held, and continue to hold, many successful courses on zoom as our Education Officer will tell you in his report later.

I would like, at this point, to thank everyone involved in ensuring that the Centre was able to continue, albeit in a unique way. The management committee for adapting to the challenges the year presented; our three hard working caretakers, Terry Woodley, Richard Haynes and Anthony Stunt, all of whom took onboard the changes in the Centre and everything that was asked of them, and the tutors who continued their classes and where necessary onto zoom. It's been an amazing effort and I'm proud to be a part of it.

At last year's AGM you were told that new to the roles were Gersha Newnham as Treasurer, George Bradbury as Education Course Organiser and Jo Newman added Enrolments to her other responsibilities. I don't think that they, or any of us, realised the extra work that each of those roles would face under COVID and I'd like to pass on extra thanks to them all.

As in previous years, we have seen changes to the Management Committee. In July, Peter Hewetson-Brown stepped down after 4 years as Chair. Peter has agreed to stay on, and continues to provide wise counsel to us all.

Other trustee changes have been: -

1. Colin Campbell, Mike Gregory and Philip Sugg, all of whom planned to finish at last year's AGM, kindly stayed on to help out during the early days of COVID. They have now all left, Colin as recently as this month.
2. We have been joined by Stephanie Shephard who, since starting as secretary in May, has taken on the roles of Deputy Chair, COVID risk Assessor, and Safeguarding officer.
3. Nikki Cameron, has taken over the role of publicity officer from Philip Sugg.

Financially we ended the year with a small profit, but more on that from our treasurer, Gersha who will start with her report, and then you will hear from the individual committee members as they tell you about their areas of responsibility.

### **TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT - GERSHA NEWNHAM**

#### **YEAR END 2020**

#### **Expenditure**

Running costs for 2020 totalled £63,865 this figure was under budget by £13,165.

The difference against budget reflects reduced staff, operating, service and Centre upkeep costs resulting from periods of closure during lockdowns. No major improvement projects were undertaken in the year and none budgeted for. Expenditure on repairs and maintenance was higher than budgeted as external redecoration works were carried out in November 2020 which totalled £2,969

Costs for PAYE tax and NIC were lower than budget for both Tutors and Caretakers but a payment was made in the following year of £1326 which related to 2020. As in 2019 the Centre continued to benefit from an agreed lower rate for gas and electricity. Budgeted Health and Safety checks were undertaken in December 2020 but invoiced early 2021 so appear to be under budget.

## **Income**

Total income was down at £64,777, approximately 74% of budget, under by £22,923. All aspects of income from Education, to Room hire, to refreshments were affected by closures of the Centre during lockdowns. Additionally, this year there was no income from events, either educational or non-educational, or from the Village Fair. We did receive donations of £1750, and COVID 19 Grants of £11,334 which along with Furlough payments of £7042 helped keep us in profit.

## **Surplus**

Despite circumstances we finished 2020 with an overall surplus of £912 and reserves totalling £109,434 (please see the note below)

## **Workplace Pensions**

RWC offer a basic low-cost pension scheme to caretakers and tutors through The People's Pension. Currently, RWC is not required to auto enrol nor contribute to the pension of any member of our payroll. To date none of our employees has joined the pension scheme.

## **Financial Stability and Reserves**

RWC is financially stable and again finished the year within overall budget and with a small surplus. We have reserves of around £109,434 (£32,218 of this reserve amount was held in the bank account while waiting for the bank to open a new savings account) and an agreed policy that we should keep reserves at a level of approximately 6 months expenditure (in a normal year equal to around £50,000) As we continue in lockdown in early 2021 and our income stream is still affected we have budgeted £25,000 to spend on modernisation and will retain the balance in our reserve funds for next year.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT - STEPHANIE SHEPPARD**

This year RWC have increased their presence on social media with regular postings about forthcoming education courses on their new Twitter and Facebook pages, the latter of which have been shared on community pages in Saltdean, Woodingdean, Peacehaven and Seaford. Postings have also been made on Nextdoor on behalf of RWC using a personal account.

Two Trustees attended a full day's training on safeguarding. This informed a new Safeguarding Policy and dissemination of information to other Trustees at a formal training session. There are plans to present this training to the Caretakers and to offer it to our tutors once face-to face meetings are allowed.

A risk assessment was written and regularly updated in line with Government advice to reduce the likelihood of transmission of COVID-19 on the Centre premises. This will be amended further as the Centre reopens. Another risk assessment was written to reduce the likelihood and impact of fire.

## **LETTINGS REPORT – LYNN HUTCHINSON AND JO NEWMAN**

### **USER GROUP REPORT – LYNN HUTCHINSON**

The centre is used on a regular basis by a Preschool, by some commercial users and by local societies.

2020 saw two regular groups close down. After many years Rottingdean and Windmill WI held their last meeting December 2019. The Dean's Orchestra also struggled with membership and announced plans to close March 2020. Of the remaining eighteen regulars, only the preschool was able to continue for most of the year. Some groups met between lockdowns but most have not returned since March.

Total User Group income for 2020 was £11,298. Just over half of the usual income, it reflects the sporadic usage of the Centre in 2020, and that some groups paid in advance for the full year. Whilst most have been refunded, others requested credit against future invoices.

Room hire and setting up charges increased slightly in January 2020, the first increase since September 2017.

### **ONE OFF LETTINGS – JO NEWMAN**

Altogether there were 42 bookings. Only 15 of these went ahead.

There were a large number of enquiries about bookings for parties, weddings, funerals, training etc; all of these had the proviso of 'if it is possible' and none of them have been able to happen.

Income this year was £777.00, compared to last year's total of £3,482.00

On the plus side, and weirdly, the midwife training with the Ecuadorian Doula finally happened. This has been cancelled 3 times in the past as the Doula has been unable to get here from Ecuador. We have also acquired a new residents' group from Saltdean who I think will come back to us a few more times.

There were 24 bookings cancelled due to COVID and 3 other bookings cancelled. It is likely that at least one of these cancellations was COVID related.

We still owe £137. £100 of this to a man stuck in Australia who wanted to do a drop in antiques valuation and did not believe that it would not all be over soon.

The other is from Highcliffe Court: Although they have used us for years and years, this year it has been impossible to find out who is running the show. I am happy to carry out their credit to next year when I finally find out who wants to organise their AGM.

As usual, here is the breakdown of what happened, but it doesn't really seem relevant this year. We could not use the Round Room or the GB Room from March 24<sup>th</sup>.

Summary		££	MH	YH	GB	RR	Whole Centre/2 rooms
Covid	24 Bookings	2470	13	5	1	4	1
Cancelled	3 Bookings	407	2				1
Happened	15 Bookings	777	7	8	0	0	
TOTALS		3654	22	13	1	4	2

Summary	Meeting	Party	Workshop	Commercial	AGM	Event	Class	Other
Covid	3	3	7	4	1	2	4	
Cancelled		2				1		
Happened	4	2	2		3	2	1	1
TOTALS	7	7	9	4	4	5	5	1

The amount of money taken is never going to be the same as the amount of money banked. People pay for bookings in advance so some of the money for this year's bookings will have been banked last year.

### **EDUCATION OFFICER'S REPORT - GEORGE BRADBURY**

2020 was a varied year for enrolments, with the dominating factor being the COVID-19 virus.

Spring term 2020 started very well with-378 enrolments for 35 courses-but unfortunately, they had to finish two weeks early due to the first lockdown.

We were hopeful that some face-to-face teaching could take place during the summer term, but this was not to be and so the teaching of 15 courses was transferred to on-line delivery using Zoom. This was a new venture in the presentation of RWC education courses to which both tutors and students adapted well. -Unfortunately, due to the uncertainty faced regarding whether or not the Centre could open or not, we found ourselves having to cancel some courses that we had either hoped to run face-to face or which were not financially viable when numbers dropped because students were unsure of using Zoom. Hopeful that the Centre would open for the autumn term, significant changes were made internally to make the venue Covid-safe. Rooms were emptied of unnecessary furniture, risk assessments were carried out to ascertain safe numbers and tables were positioned in the Main and Youth Hall to allow for the necessary social distancing. In the autumn term we ran 21 courses,

mostly on Zoom with some face-to-face art courses when these were allowed. The Centre had to close again at the start of December for lockdown 2.

Without public buildings open in which to place prospectuses, adverts were placed in the Rottingdean Village News, Deans Magazine, Peacehaven Directory and Seaford Scene, leaflets were delivered to all households in Saltdean, posters were displayed in our notice board and increased use was made of social media including Facebook, Nextdoor and Twitter.

In past years, paper-based questionnaires have been distributed to students in the spring term. That was not possible this year, so 230 emails were sent out to the current students and, at the time of analysis, we have received 62 responses; this is 26% which is a lower response than in previous years, but we were pleased given the way it had to be distributed. We were delighted that 97% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with both their course's content and the courses mode of delivery.

A very small minority commented on difficulty using Zoom, but others made positive comments for Zoom, for example some —people liked it because they could attend even if not local and also if the time wouldn't suit. We even attracted some £ students based in Southampton, The Canary Islands and Canterbury. The future use of Zoom will be considered where appropriate.

There are many more comments that will be read and taken note of in due course.

The standard fee for a 10-week course was kept at £84, which is still significantly less than most other adult education providers in the area. Paying straight off for a two term course, which some students did, reduces the fees further to £80 per term. A bursary scheme to help those who might have difficulty paying course fees was introduced from September 2019, and is still available. More students made use of the facility to enrol online, a practise that will be encouraged even more post Covid-19 to avoid volunteers needing to handle cheques. Cash is no longer accepted.

Since the last AGM, Jo Newman has taken over the course enrolment role and has managed this exceptionally given the challenges we have faced this year.

Spring term 2021 commenced with 14 courses running, all on Zoom due to Lockdown 3.

### **BUILDING REPORT - DAVID WILSON**

A complete external redecoration was carried out to external weatherboard cladding, windows, doors, fascias and soffits.

Rainwater gutters and drainpipes were cleared of leaves and accumulated debris.

Where necessary gutters have been realigned, joints checked and replacement brackets provided.

Remedial works have been carried out to the pitched roof areas comprising replacement of missing and damaged tiles.

Rooflight over the rear toilet area has been sealed to prevent ingress of rainwater.

Tree pruning was carried out within car park area and to side / rear boundaries.

The heating boiler has been tested and serviced

The centre's fire alarm has been tested and certified safe by our contractors.

Completion of the five yearly electrical test, inspection and certification carried out.

The emergency lighting installation has been tested and certified.

### **BURSAR'S REPORT - STEWART HUTCHINSON**

Coronavirus put restrictions on the Centre and called for the building to be made COVID secure. This was done by installing hand sanitiser wall units, paper towel dispensers, a one way system was introduced incorporating a new disabled ramp. Various signs relating to the virus were placed throughout the building.

The seating in the main hall was socially distanced and the building was sanitised daily by the caretakers.

When the Centre closed the caretakers were placed on furlough, with one caretaker returning to cater for the pre-school when it reopened.

Profit from refreshments was £633.00 for the first three months, after which the kitchen was closed.

## **WEBSITE ADMINISTRATION REPORT - BRIAN KNIGHT**

As a result of the first CV-19 lockdown causing the Centre's closure, the website became a primary source of information. As many courses as possible were converted to Zoom presentations. To aid students unused to Zoom, notes on how to use the system, and a taster Zoom session video prepared by a tutor, became available on the website. A website questionnaire enabled us to collect feedback from students about their Zoom class experiences.

In conjunction with the course organiser we began what became an extensive search to find a developer to replace our existing website with a new modern responsive version. It would also include a booking system. Meetings were arranged with potential providers via Zoom and also face to face when CV restrictions were eased. Eventually the Management Committee chose a preferred developer from a shortlist. Work is now underway and should come to fruition before too long.