

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROTTINGDEAN WHITEWAY CENTRE  
HELD ON THURSDAY 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2022 at 7.30 pm in the Whiteway Centre**

**Present:**

*Committee:* Stephanie Sheppard (Vice-chair & Secretary), Peter Hewetson Brown, Claire Johnson, Brian Knight, Jo Newman, Mike Pocock, Andy Wilson.

*Non-attendee:* Joy Rogers

*Others:*

Andrew Clark (Whiteway Book Group), Julie Lawrence (RPC), Andrew Carson (new volunteer), Amy Barker (new volunteer), Jeff Rodriguez

The Vice-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 2021 accounts. She expressed Lynn's disappointment that she was unable to attend due to Stewart having Covid-19 and they were both sent our good wishes.

1. Apologies for Absence – Lynn Hutchinson (Chair), Stewart Hutchinson (Bursar), Laura Rodriguez (Education Finance), John Bryant, Brian Hunt, Veronica Carter, Steve Tedman (C-siders), Colin Campbell (Rottingdean Bridge club), Jenny Marshall (Wednesday evening bridge & new volunteer), Angela Hoole (new volunteer), Crista Cook (Saturday Quilters)

1. Minutes of full AGM 2021 which incorporated the User Group AGM

The minutes of the virtual AGM meetings of 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 have been displayed on the Centre's Notice Boards in Whiteway Lane and in the Whiteway Centre and on our website for the past 21 days. It was agreed that these be taken as read.

The approval of the full AGM minutes was proposed by Peter Hewetson-Brown and seconded by Andy Wilson. The minutes were approved.

1. 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.

Joy and Andy were proposed for re-election to the Management Committee and Jo, who has been on the Management Committee for several years put herself forward to represent the Drama Society.

Joy Rogers	Pre-School
Andy Wilson	Round Room Ramblers
Jo Newman	Rottingdean Drama Society

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

1. User Groups

Andy Wilson expressed his thanks to the committee for how things have been organised during the past year, expressing that it is not evident to the wider community just how much goes on behind the scenes to make the centre run as smoothly as it does.

1. Peter Hewetson-Brown read the Chair's report, adding his personal thanks to Brian who has decided that it is time to step away from the Management Committee after 13 years.

1. The Treasurer Claire Johnson read her report, including Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021.

The Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021 were proposed.

Andrew Clark asked for clarification about where the money for the decoration had come from as the reserves had not been touched. Claire explained that there was enough money in the current account to cover the costs and so this had been used.

These accounts were proposed by Andy Wilson and seconded by Jo Newman. All those in attendance were in agreement.

1. Reports from other Committee Officers were presented:

- Secretary's report - Stephanie
- Lettings report – Jo
- Education Officer's report – Stephanie - Andrew Clark asked for clarification on the student numbers and it was confirmed that the total given for the year included some students more than once if they enrolled for more than one course.
- Building report – this was written by our previous buildings manager David Wilson and was read by Mike Pocock our new buildings manager, who we welcome to the Management Committee
- Bursar's report – This was written by our bursar Stewart Hutchinson and read by Peter
- Website Administration report – Brian – Peter thanked Brian for all his fantastic work on the new website and reiterated that he and others were sad to see Brian leaving. Brian said that the changes imposed by the website from the flexibility of time-consuming paperwork to the speed of more rigid ways of working had been challenging but that we got there in the end and generally the systems were working far better. Brian said that he is looking forward to coming to the centre for courses and special events and that he has actually missed the fun times he spent pre-covid washing up and generally 'hanging around' in the kitchen.

These reports as read were proposed by Andy Wilson and seconded by Brian Knight. All those in attendance were in agreement that the reports be adopted.

1. Appointment of an Independent Examiner

The reappointment of John Bryant as Independent Examiner was proposed by Peter Hewetson-Brown and seconded by Mike Pocock and approved.

1. To elect the Management Committee for 2022/23 (up to 11 elected members and up to five further Representative members)

The existing 9 members of the Management Committee and 1 new volunteer were eligible to stand again for election:

Peter Hewetson-Brown

Lynn Hutchinson

Stewart Hutchinson

Claire Johnson

Jo Newman

Mike Pocock

Laura Rodriguez

Joy Rogers

Stephanie Sheppard

Andy Wilson

The election of the officers en-bloc was proposed by Andrew Clark and seconded by Julie Lawrence. Their election was agreed unanimously.

1. Any Other Business – none.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

After a short break for refreshments and a visual reminder about special events and courses, the meeting was followed by a presentation by Stephanie Sheppard on 'Deaf Awareness' and finished at 9.00pm.

**Reports for Rottingdean Whiteway Centre AGM to be held at Rottingdean Whiteway Centre on Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.**

**CHAIR'S REPORT – LYNN HUTCHINSON**

Thank you all for coming along this evening. After two years of virtual AGM's, it's good to be back in the Centre again.

I'd like to start by thanking everyone who has been involved in the running of Rottingdean Whiteway Centre during the last year, the Committee Members, and our hardworking Caretakers and Tutors. You have all helped the Centre to continue to fulfil its charitable purpose, albeit recently in a wider way from that envisaged by the charity founders. As we respond to challenges as a charity, I'm pleased that we have a strong management committee and potential new members that, we hope, will join and help us to continue to grow. I'd like to also thank the groups that use our facilities, and the students who return on a regular basis and continue to support us.

As always, the AGM is our opportunity look back on last year and towards the future.

2020 had ended with a glimmer of hope, we had Tier 2, a reopened building and plans for in-centre classes for spring 2021.

January 2021, however, brought lockdown 3, the Centre closed for all but the preschool, courses moved onto zoom, and two of our caretakers were furloughed. From March to May we went through the Government's Steps 1, 2, and 3, from 'stay at home' to the 'rule of six' Spring term gave way to summer term, still on zoom.

Step 4, in July, lifted the lockdown and we were open for business again, although face coverings were still required in centre. By autumn term face coverings could be removed whilst seated, and by December they were compulsory again. Our RA has had to be amended with each and every change in government legislation and I'd like to give a special thank you to Stephanie for her attention to detail and dedication in ensuring that we complied with government requirements throughout.

The traditionally quieter summer months gave us the opportunity to have the Centre redecorated and a major improvement last year was the resurfacing of the courtyard. August also saw the launch of a new website. You will hear further details from the committee members involved in these improvements shortly.

2021, saw some further changes to our MC:-

1. Our treasurer, Gersha Newnham, felt that she needed to focus on her business and family and was replaced by Claire Johnson in April 2021.
1. George Bradbury, our Course Coordinator, decided it was time to leave in October 2021.
1. Our building officer, David Wilson, after many years in the role, decided to retire at the end of 2021 and he has subsequently been replaced by Mike Pocock.
1. Our publicity officer, Nikki Cameron has moved on in February this year.
1. Brian Knight is not putting his name forward for re-election tonight and will be leaving after more than 10 years on the committee.

As previously, people move on for various reasons and I'd like to thank all these volunteers for their support on the Committee. Brian Knight, who is finishing tonight, deserves a special mention for his willingness to take on any extra roles that came up. He will be missed.

These changes have created vacancies but luckily, we have had recently a number of responses to our advertising, and we are in the process of filling our vacancies with several volunteers, some of whom are in the audience tonight.

Next on the Agenda is to receive and adopt our annual accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021, and so I'll now hand you over to our Treasurer, Claire, to present these to you with her report.

## **TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT - CLAIRE JOHNSON**

### **YEAR END 2021**

#### **Expenditure**

Running costs for 2021 totalled £97,145 this figure was under budget by only £184.

Planned modernisation costs was only slightly over the budget of £25,000, at £25,180.

The biggest expenses were the resurfacing of the patio, painting and decorating the entire Centre, new blinds and a new fence.

Having lost one of the caretakers, we used an external company for the last 4 months of the year which, reduced the Staff wages, but put the cleaning budget over by £838

The gas company, CNG went under in December and was taken over by Pozitive Energy. This led to a larger than normal gas bill for 3 weeks until we managed to sign a new 2-year contract with British Gas

Business rates lower than normal because of a discount by Brighton & Hove Council due to Covid19. This is likely to go back to normal in April.

The new website was over budget by £1477 at £8377 but we saved on printing & advertising as we chose not to pay for the door-to-door leaflets.

Paying online by credit/debit card has led to a new expense in fees by Stripe, which takes a commission for every card payment. This was £726 in 2021

#### **Income**

Total income was budgeted to be low in line with 2020 but total income exceeding expectations. Total income was £89,713 exceeding the budget by £39,813. In particular, education course income was at £46,689, well above the target of £35,000. This was despite having cancelled courses at the start of 2021 and a lot of courses remaining online. Usergroup and Single let room hire were both above budget despite the Centre openings being restricted.

Covid grants and furlough gave us an extra £28,000, well above what was expected.

#### **Workplace Pensions**

As no employees have joined a pension scheme and RWC are not required to auto-enrol any member of the payroll as yet, People's Pension is no longer our pension scheme of choice. We are looking at Smart Pension scheme as an alternative

#### **Surplus**

We were budgeted to have a deficit of £47,430 but ended 2021 with a deficit of only £7,433.

We have reserves of £112,032.47, of which the £25,000 spent in modernisation is being kept.

### **Financial Stability and Reserves**

Despite the loss in 2021, RWC is financially stable with a healthy surplus in reserves. We have reserves of £112,032.47 and an agreed policy that we should keep reserves at a level of approximately 9 months expenditure of £65,000.

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

Most of the Management Committee meetings in 2021 took place on Zoom, a platform which allowed all of us to participate from our own homes.

We have continued to build our social media presence, using Facebook, Nextdoor and Twitter to promote our courses and Special Events and to send out appeals for new trustees and a caretaker.

The safeguarding training has been delivered to new Trustees and the Caretakers.

The risk assessment that aims to reduce the likelihood of transmission of COVID-19 on the Centre premises has been regularly updated in line with Government advice.

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

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

As 2021 started with a lockdown, out of 18 regular users, only the preschool was able to meet in Centre. Restrictions eased, but with COVID infections still high, many groups were hesitant to return, and by July, just 8 of the regulars were back.

As in 2020, we lost some regular User Groups, Safety Net lost funding, Three Pillars of Fitness stayed on zoom, and Rottingdean Art Club have only restarted this month. We did, however, have some new regulars join us, C-Side Cancer Support group moved from St Margaret's cottage in July, a new yoga group started in the Youth Hall on Thursday evenings, and from April last year, the Theatre Workshop rented the whole Centre on Saturdays for 4 months as they couldn't use Roedean School.

Since the launch of our new website in August, regular users are now charged with making their own room bookings and reserving their slots on the calendar. Not every regular has found it easy and we have given and continue to give support with these bookings.

The total income for 2021 from User Group booking was £11,546. An improvement on 2020 but less than we had in pre-COVID times.

Charges for Room hire and setting up were not increased in 2021 and remained at 2020 rates.

##### **SINGLE LETTINGS REPORT – Jo Newman**

Starting with a lockdown followed by limited association has meant that bookings for the first half of the year were low: two meetings, two AGMs, a children's party and a wedding.

One meeting and one AGM were postponed to later in the year.

Bookings increased during the second half of the year and total bookings for 2021 were: 7 AGMs, 1 class, 6 meetings, 9 parties, 3 rehearsals, 1 training, 1 wedding and 4 other events. 1 further booking was postponed to 2022.

The total income was £3,819.50.

## **EDUCATION REPORT – Lynn Hutchinson, Jo Newman and Stephanie Sheppard**

### **Course organisation**

2021 was another challenging year as the country grappled with further restrictions due to Covid-19. Throughout the year we offered a wide variety of courses both face-to-face when this was possible and on Zoom.

In the spring term fourteen courses ran covering subjects including art, history, geography and languages. All of these courses took place on Zoom due to the national lockdown at the start of the year.

The summer term usually sees a reduction in the number of courses but in 2021 fourteen courses ran, again all on Zoom. Some tutors suggested offering 10-week courses instead of the traditional 5 weeks in the summer term and we were happy to accommodate this. Take-up and feedback were so positive we have decided to extend this, and more courses will last 10 weeks in future summer terms. We were sorry that we were unable to offer the usual full range of drawing and painting courses, but their practical nature was not possible virtually. We were grateful that we could give furlough support to those tutors affected.

By the autumn term we were able to offer courses in-centre and a total of twenty-nine ran, mostly face-to-face and for various reasons a few remaining on zoom. To keep everybody safe we limited the permitted numbers in each room, allowing tutors and students enough space to feel comfortable as they returned to the centre.

We successfully re-established hosting Special Events in November 2021 and have a varied and exciting programme planned for 2022 and beyond.

We took the decision to continue to promote courses and special events without a prospectus by increasing our presence on social media and advertising in Rottingdean Village News, The Deans Magazine, Peacehaven Directory and Seaford Scene. The launch of our new website gave further opportunities to promote our education programme, providing supporting information about our tutors and more detailed course descriptions.

### **Enrolments**

Given the circumstances, student numbers have been very pleasing. We had 148 students enrolled in the spring term, 119 in the summer term and 267 in the autumn term, giving a total of 534 students across the whole year.

Since the launch of the new website in August, students can now enrol and pay for their courses on-line. We anticipated that this would be difficult for some of our students and we held special 'open days' when individuals could come to the centre and be supported to register on the website and enrol for their chosen courses. We were very pleased that the vast majority of students registered, enrolled and paid for their autumn term courses using the website.

The standard fee for a 10-week course was kept at £84 for another year and the bursary scheme, to help those who might have difficulty paying course fees, is still available.

## **BUILDING REPORT - DAVID WILSON**

A complete internal redecoration of walls, ceilings and all joinery items such as doors has been carried out. All door handles were replaced. Door finger plates and kick plates were installed.

In order to improve the natural ventilation to the Round Room the front window incorporating a single opening fanlight was replaced with another incorporating three opening fanlights.

The patio defective fence was replaced with a timber boarding arrangement to prevent small children from accessing the raised patio.

The patio crazy paving was replaced with a resin surface which has considerably enhanced this external area.

All external rainwater pipes to the patio area have been replaced.

The chain link fence to rear churchyard boundary was replaced with a close boarded fence.

The front gate and adjoining fence has been replaced.

Some of the external lights have been replaced and automatic switching has been provided such that this lighting operates only during the hours of darkness.

All of the portable appliances have been electrically inspected and tested.

Additional wall mounted electrical heaters have been provided within the Youth Hall to supplement the lack of adequate heating.

Investigations have been carried out and quotations obtained for amendments to the central heating system in order to overcome the problems associated with the poor performance of radiators installed within the Main and Youth Halls.

Vertical blinds have been installed to the Main Hall windows and a roller blind to Round Room window.

The heating boiler has been tested and serviced.

The Fire Alarm system was assessed as not being fit-for-purpose and has subsequently been completely replaced at the start of 2022

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

Coronavirus continued to have an effect on the Centre.

Restrictions altered several times throughout the year, and we changed signs and practices so as to comply.

We were able to remove the one-way system and 2 metre distancing, but many things remained in place. Hand sanitising, mask wearing, and sensible social distancing were recommended.

The caretakers were rotated in their duties during the furlough period and came in as required. They are all now back on their normal duties and continue to sanitise between sessions and keep the Centre clean.

In July our early morning caretaker, Anthony, left the Centre. He has been replaced by Katie Bates, who has settled in well to her role.

The Centre continues to operate efficiently, and any issues are dealt with promptly.

Unfortunately during the time the kitchen was closed, our stock of refreshments became out of date. In September when the kitchen reopened this necessitated a complete restock.

Since then to the end of the year we made a profit of £72.00.

We still have stock in hand, and this will be reflected in next year's report.

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

Through spring and summer, work continued apace on the development of our new website. A concern was - would our users accept having to register an account for online booking, on which premise the website was being built? We went live in early August and found out.

Fortunately, the new site worked well, and hundreds of new accounts were registered. Very rarely is software perfect when launched, and we came across a few bugs - quickly fixed by our Developer. Some things we either hadn't thought about, or not thought through. During the autumn the system was further refined in the light of experience. That will continue. Improvements to the site generally, and the complex booking system, which covers courses, User Group bookings, single hires and Special Events, have bedded in.

Changing site content and coping with system complexities ourselves has also been a big learning curve - my personal thanks to my colleagues who have worked so hard at this.

We are very grateful to all users of the Centre who took to the new system as well as we could have hoped for. And who put up with good grace the problems which inevitably arose. A thank you, too, to Ian Green our site Developer, who implemented changes we wanted, and even the reversal of changes we originally wanted.