



**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020/21
Thursday 25 November 2021 on Zoom**

Attendees

Willow Winston, Patron
Councillor Eileen Pallen
Mike Ellsmore, Chair of Trustees and Finance Director
Geoff Norris, Project Co-ordinator
Karen Larkin, Assistant Project Co-ordinator
Rosie Eaglen, Trustee
Merissa Hamilton, prospective Trustee
Fiona Miller, Trustee
Stefano Nocerino, Trustee
Guy Tarrant, Trustee
Britta von Zweigbergk, Trustee
Jenny Watson, Trustee
Marion Murphy, BVSC

16 Centrepieces artists and volunteers (Full list held by Centrepieces)

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Welcome by Councillor Eileen Pallen

Mike Ellsmore welcomed Councillor Eileen Pallen again to this year's AGM. She is the Ward Councillor for Bexleyheath, Vice Chair of the Children's and Adults' Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee. She is a really keen volunteer for the children's summer reading programme, appreciated by Mike for his young grandchildren.

Councillor Pallen thanked Mike for his fantastic introduction. She had been a supporter of Centrepieces for over 11 years and was delighted to be asked once again to say a few words of welcome. She expressed her admiration at how everyone involved with Centrepieces in all sorts of capacities had managed to overcome the challenges of the pandemic. They had risen to the challenge with Zoom meetings and Whatsapp groups and kept things going. The Pop Up gallery was very successful, with great engagement with the public and a lot of artwork sold. Also, involvement with Bexley Youth Council added another dimension to Centrepieces' work and she had really liked the launch of our great new T shirt.

Councillor Pallen thought that last year's virtual AGM had been very successful and we also managed to present certificates online. She welcomed the new patron, Willow Winston, who we would hear from later. Today's agenda was full and exciting but she was looking forward to when we could meet again in person.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the last AGM on 25 November 2020 were agreed, and there were no matters arising. Acceptance was proposed and seconded.

4. Chair of Trustees report

The Chair's Annual Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Mike said Geoff Norris and Eileen were covering some of the same points, but wanted to add his own perspective and thanks. We were meeting virtually again after some discussion, but this was felt on balance to be the least risky option. Mike hoped the next meeting would be even further back to normality. He gave his personal thanks to volunteers and Trustees for the amount of effort that has gone in this year and applauded the stunning amount of innovation for a small charity. The development of the Pop Up facility and the online workshops incredibly impressive. Mike was very grateful to those in the 'engine room' who have worked so hard. There are however challenges ahead, particularly around accommodation as we haven't been successful yet in finding a replacement for the Pop Up. The Trustees will keep trying.

5. Finance Report

The Finance Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Unrestricted cash reserves are still strong at just under £20k, and we have some restricted funds. A significant feature during the year was our ability to raise funding and Mike gave particular thanks to the National Lottery, the Baring Foundation, the Winners Chapel and Bexley Council for their great support. We had invested around £15k in vital Covid safety measures. Mike thanked Jean Lyons and Annie Greywoode again for their hard work behind the scenes

6. Co-ordinator's Report

The Project Co-ordinator's report had been circulated before the meeting. Geoff explained that it had been an up and down year with the pandemic and getting back to doing things in the normal way. He gave big thanks to Assistant Co-ordinator Karen Larkin for overseeing Operation Lockdown, our online programme, and for everything that has happened in Pop Up studios and gallery. It has been a massive team effort with up to 40 volunteers helping out with the programme and with the enforced moves. It has been stressful for everyone, and a lot of hard work. Despite this, artists have produced wonderful artwork and amazing exhibitions stimulated by the lockdown workshops. There are too many members and volunteers to name everyone but particular thanks go to Jean for holding everything together with so much dedication, and to Sue, Lucy, Jo, Joshna, Rosie, Liam, Neil, Sally, Nikki, Mala, Annie; the list goes on and on and new people are joining all the time. Geoff thanked the Trustees for their support, new ideas, fundraising and searches for premises.

Our new patron Willow Winston has made a tremendous impact in short space of time. She has been directly involved with helping artists with exhibitions and has shared her innovative ideas. Geoff thanked and welcomed her. He was also pleased that Centrepieces is successfully continuing activities in the community, with art projects in four local schools that are raising awareness of mental health and helping to ameliorate the current prevalence of mental ill health among young people. Our Inclusiveness Programme promotes good access to mental health provision like Centrepieces regardless of race, ethnicity etc. We ran some great Carnival workshops at Erith Festival in August.

Geoff conceded that the next few months would be challenging. We have lost premises and are looking for new space. However, Geoff has seen that things always work out well for Centrepieces. There is so much positive energy and care for each other that Centrepieces will survive and flourish.

Acceptance of the 3 formal reports was proposed by Fiona Miller and seconded by Rosie Eaglen

7. Appointment of trustees

Rosie Eaglen, Fiona Miller and Stefan Nocerino stood down from the Board of Trustees in accordance with the constitution and all were willing to stand for re-election. Merissa Hamilton was standing for election as a new Trustee. The remaining Trustees Mike Ellsmore, Jenny Watson, Guy Tarrant and Britta von Zweigbergk were all willing continue serving on the Board. The election of all was proposed by Jenny Watson and seconded by Rosie Eaglen.

Mike pointed out that we can have a maximum of twelve Trustees on the Board and that we are always keen to recruit new members. They are not operational roles but very important to the success of Centrepieces.

8. Any other formal business

None

9. Presentations about Centrepieces

Karen Larkin gave a visual presentation of events of the last year.

Jo Bowes gave a presentation on the social media strategy.

Rosie Pinsent spoke about how volunteering at Centrepieces had helped her mental health and well being

Nadia Halliday spoke about how Centrepieces is a community that supports the needs of members and volunteers

Dorota Chioma explained that she was part of the Time to Change London network group. They are keen to link mental health and art and deliver workshops in East London. Working jointly with them would spread knowledge of our work to wider audiences. They will invite artists to participate in their activities. Dorota is facilitating this in return for the support and love she has received at Centrepieces.

10. Presentation by our Patron Willow Winston

Mike welcomed our new patron. Willow is an internationally recognised artist based in the UK and has exhibited widely on both sides of the Atlantic. She was involved in the Millwall redevelopment at a local level has been parliamentary candidate. She has brought tremendous enthusiasm and passion to Centrepieces in the short time she has worked with us.

Willow has found joining Centrepieces an extraordinary experience, and she is filled with admiration and love for what we do and who we are as people. It took her a while to accept the position, which she is honoured to have, because she wanted to know that she could add something to the life of Centrepieces. She has started to join in workshops run by Lucy, and originally wanted to add something through her own work as an artist and teacher. She apologised that she hadn't yet been able to do that because of her other commitments around using art in education and for health. She thought the Pop Up gallery was a great facility to showcase our work and in a fantastic position, allowing people to drop in who don't normally see art. She was pleased that Nadia and Abdul are award winners this year as they have put on wonderful shows of beautiful stimulating work, as has Dorota. She is full of admiration for Jo and Rosie's support for Centrepieces. Karen is amazing and Geoff is the steady support for the whole organisation. She sees so much enthusiasm and a family like atmosphere. Lucy is brilliant and inventive, Karen is so creative and an inventor of ways to share experiences. She is working now with Nadia, who is a marvellous ceramicist. She was sorry if she had missed anyone out, but they were not forgotten, she remembers people by the art they create. Bringing art to the world is for health and to enhance lives. Winston finished by explaining how grateful she was to Sue Turner for persisting in inviting her to get involved and she hoped to be able to contribute more very soon.

11. Jackie Grieve Inspire Award presentations

The Jackie Grieve Inspire Awards were established in 2016 to recognise outstanding contributions to Centrepieces and as a lasting memorial to Jackie, a Centrepieces artist, who died of cancer.

This year's winners:

Jo Bowes For a huge contribution to Centrepieces in Arts admin support and lightening the burden on many others.

Andrea Montague For artistic development and perseverance in the face of personal adversity.

Nadia Halliday For artistic and personal development over the past year, and support to fellow artists at Centrepieces.

Rosie Pinsent For exceptional enthusiasm and contributions in diverse areas of volunteering with Centrepieces.

Abdul Adeniran For artistic development and exhibitions over the past year, including having work shown in the Royal Academy Summer Show