



DRAFT MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING for the financial year 2023/24
Wednesday 5th February 2025 at Hall Place

Attendees

Willow Winston, Patron
Mike Ellsmore, Chair of Trustees and Finance Director
Geoff Norris, Project Co-ordinator
Karen Larkin, Assistant Project Co-ordinator
Freddie Clough, Trustee
Sally McGregor, Trustee
Sujatha Thaladi, Trustee
Jenny Watson, Vice Chair of Trustees

17 Centrepieces CIO members, artists and volunteers, 1 guest (Full list held by Centrepieces)

1. Apologies for absence

Trustees Georgina Lonergan, Eileen Pallen, Sharan Sangar, Rashikkha Ra Iyer, Britta von Zweigbergk and a number of other invitees

2. Welcome by Mike Ellsmore, Chair of Trustees

Our patron Willow Winston had been due to speak at this point but her arrival was unavoidably delayed.

Mike welcomed everyone to the meeting. 2023 and 2024 had been fantastic years for Centrepieces. We were selected as one of the Mayor of Bexley's charities and were awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service. The reports and presentations at this AGM will highlight how much is contributed by our volunteers and how our programme of events benefits our members and the community.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the last AGM on 31st January 2024 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 and Mike highlighted the main achievements during the year and some of the challenges faced by Centrepieces. He also thanked the volunteers for their continued hard work.

5. Finance Report

The Finance Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Cash reserves and unrestricted funds have decreased slightly over the year. We continue to keep a tight control of the finances and look for ways of raising income. Mike thanked Jean Lyons and Annie Greywoode for their continued work on the accounts.

6. Co-ordinator's Report

The Project Co-ordinator's report had been circulated before the meeting.

Geoff introduced himself to the meeting and said that this year was the 25th anniversary of Centrepieces and it is also 10 years since we became a charity and moved to Hall Place.

We started off in 2000 with some exhibitions and National Mental Art conferences in the old Historic House here at Hall Place and have never really looked back since.

Geoff said it felt like a long journey, but in many ways the balance has always been there in keeping what we value the most, our exhibitions, workshops and work in schools and the community. In the last 10 years we've seen the development our Artist Members and a fantastic team of over 30 volunteers and our Art Tutors and Trustees and of course our highly supportive Patron Willow Winston.

He said that that we all hope we can build on the success and recognition of last year in achieving the Kings Award for Voluntary Service, to help with future funding, exhibitions, events and activities in 2025 and beyond.

He also noted the sad loss last Autumn of one our key founder members Alex Spendley, with examples of Alex's work on display here today. Alex was a great sculptor, photographer and writer who quietly supported the project through thick and thin over the last 20 years and more. In recent times Alex had helped to lead Sculpture workshops and the creative writing group. He is very much missed.

Acceptance of the 3 formal reports was proposed and seconded.

7. Appointment of trustees

Details of former and current Trustees had been circulated before the meeting.

Trustees Rosie Eaglen and Guy Tarrant had resigned during the year. Sharan Sanger, Sujatha Thaladi and Freddie Clough had been co-opted as new Trustees and are now standing for formal election.

All the current Trustees were re-elected en bloc.

8. Any other formal business

None. The formal part of the meeting closed at 12.30pm

9. Talk by our Patron, Willow Winston

Willow spoke with enthusiasm about how members of Centrepieces had collaborated in a project at Monkton Nature Reserve near Ramsgate that resulted in a Sculpture Trail for visitors to the reserve. She praised the ethos of Centrepieces and the way that all the volunteers and artists produce fantastic work and projects.

10. Short talks about Centrepieces

Lilani Dilrukshan, Michael Armstrong, Wendy Clay, Annie Greywoode, Sally McGregor and Ann Cronin gave short talks about their experiences at Centrepieces and how their mental health had been positively impacted.

11. Presentation by Karen Larkin

Karen showed a presentation on the achievements of Centrepieces over the last 25 years.

12. Inspire Award presentations

The Inspire Awards were established in 2016 to recognise outstanding contributions to Centrepieces.

This year's winners:

Lilani Dilrukshan

For exceptional artwork leading to sales, awards and fundraising for international charities.

Andrea Mountaine

For artistic development and confidence to take part in supporting exhibitions and events.

Wendy Clay

For enthusiastic drive and support to artists in their development in workshops, projects and exhibitions.

Michael Armstrong

For great effort in keeping the Creative Writing group productive and for general help to Centrepieces over the years and more recently at the Pop Up in Sidcup.

Carla Diniz

For work in consolidating our social media and website in addition to help with exhibitions and just about everything else in the office.

The certificates were presented by Willow Winston.

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