



**DRAFT MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING for the financial year 2022/23  
Wednesday 31 January 2024 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  
Georgina Lonergan, Trustee  
Rashikkha Ra Iyer, Trustee  
Jenny Watson, Vice Chair of Trustees

23 Centrepieces CIO members, artists and volunteers, 2 guests (Full list held by Centrepieces)

**1. Apologies for absence**

Trustees Rosie Eaglen, Sally McGregor, Eileen Pallen, Britta von Zweigbergk and a number of other invitees

**2. Welcome by Willow Winston, Patron**

Willow welcomed everyone to the meeting. She said it has been a stupendous year with a lot going on in the world, but the power of Centrepieces pushes away the external madness. The art and the people make Centrepieces a special organisation. The workshops are collaborative and facilitate relationships. Members can explore themselves and make their own decisions – there are no rules in the art and true openness. There is unity and a shared sense of purpose. All this explains why Willow loves Centrepieces so much.

There have been some great events and projects this year that have enable Centrepieces to engage with the community and promote its art and knowledge of mental health issues. Stewarding the Stables exhibition gives artists confidence about their own abilities and makes them feel valued when works are purchased.

Willow expressed special appreciation to Nadia Halliday and Karen Larkin for their church and school projects.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the last AGM on 15 February 2023 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 again how fantastic it was that Centrepieces had received the Kings Award for Voluntary Service after a lot of preparation and a visit from the assessor. We have received a letter of congratulation from the Mayor and further celebratory events will follow.

The use of Sidcup Manor House as our pop up venue has been very successful thanks to Karen and her team, and it has become a vibrant space.

We were nominated as one of Mayor of Bexley Councillor Andy Dourmouh's charities and we have worked closely with him during his year in office.

It is a constant challenge to find the resources to run Centrepieces and Mike thanked all the volunteers and Trustees who work so hard and give their time freely.

#### **5. Finance Report**

The Finance Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Cash reserves and unrestricted funds have increased slightly over the year. It is very reassuring that we are still breaking even. Mike thanked Jean Lyons and Annie Greywoode for their continued work on the accounts and control of the finances.

#### **6. Co-ordinator's Report**

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

It is now one year since we heard that we had successfully bid for the temporary use of Sidcup Manor House, and it has been an invaluable resource. We are however always looking for future premises.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service is great recognition of the work of Centrepieces during the last 10 years in particular. It has all been achieved with our own resources, and it is special that we are all volunteers.

This year's Stables Exhibition was one of the most successful we have had. There was fantastic engagement with the public and a lot of artworks were sold.

Very sadly, John Exell died unexpectedly in December. He was a founder member of Centrepieces, and he came up with the name of the charity. He was a wonderful artist and supporter, and a great help to others. His greatest talents were in sculpture, creative writing and public art and we all have fond memories of him.

Geoff thanked all the volunteers and artists who make Centrepieces the organisation that it is.

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. Fiona Miller had since resigned.

Guy Tarrant has been unable to attend recent meetings. He has been involved with Centrepieces since 1999 and helped to obtain our first grant. He helped to create the Warrior sculpture and other works of public art. He also managed to get permission to fix the Centrepieces sign outside the Lodge. We wish him well for the future.

It can be a challenge to attract new Trustees and we are grateful to those to give up their time. 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. Short talks about Centrepieces**

Andrea Montague, Azmeena Azim, Paul Ford-Hunt and Natalie Whitten talked about their experiences at Centrepieces and how it had helped them. All spoke of a sense of purpose, community, friendship and creativity.

#### **10. Presentation by Karen Larkin**

Karen showed a presentation A Year in the Life of Centrepieces, featuring charity events, workshops, fundraising efforts, the school project at Bexley Grammar School and John Exell.

## 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:

**Trevor Whiting** For brave re-emergence as a great artist after overcoming formidable life challenges

**Azmeena Azim** For producing innovative and imaginative work in her first steps as a developing artist

**Laura Lindsay** For perseverance in her art as an important part of her mental health recovery

**Natalie Whiten** For quickly stepping in to an important volunteering role in helping to run make the Sidcup Manor House Pop Up a great new working space for Centrepieces

**Andrea Montague** For playing a key role in supporting the Saturday Community Craft Workshops and the Pop Up Shop in Sidcup

The certificates were presented by Willow Winston. Willow also took the opportunity to express appreciation for the work of Sue Turner in keeping Centrepieces going with her constant activity.