



Working Together Ludlow

to include people with learning difficulties

Annual General Meeting - Tuesday 24th November 2020 - Via Zoom

Nicola welcomed everyone to the AGM and shared her thoughts on the past 12 months:

Picking up from the previous year, the waves of change just kept on coming. Many changes involved difficult decisions and hard choices. Other changes have been forced upon us.

*Looking back one word springs out at me that sums up what was needed from everyone, but particularly from our members and their parents, carers and supporters. **RESILIENCE**. So, I thought I had better check the meaning of this word seeing as how the Writers' club are in tonight.*

- 1. The ability to spring back into shape "elasticity" – not really.*
- 2. The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties – toughness – Meh.*
- 3. **The quality that allows some people to be knocked down by the adversities of life and come back at least as strong as before.** – Yes*

For me this epitomises this year and the ability of the WT family to plough on into the future.

This resilience, I believe, has come from the principles embedded within the philosophy behind WT, the legacy of Richard Geuter, taken too soon and much missed by so many.

People matter, our members matter, our staff, volunteers, trustees and supporters all matter - all behind a common goal of kindness and the aspiration that our members should lead fulfilling and purposeful lives.

Resilience has meant that the ability to cope with the change of base location from Fish Street to Rockspring and the opportunities for growth have proved to be extremely fortuitous, particularly in the current situation.

WT is sustainable at the Rockspring and we owe a great deal to James Cooper of the Furniture Scheme for bravely agreeing to our occupation. We would not have been able to survive at the Fish Street building with this pandemic.

We can look forward to a post COVID-19 World and the potential for new challenges, opportunities and adventures. In the meantime, we all need to dig deep and continue to be resilient. Help each other to get through these next few months and move on stronger in the knowledge that together we can ensure a brighter future.

So, to all the members and supporters of Working Together, past and present, THANK YOU for enabling us to get HERE.

To those who have recently joined or are about to, strap on your safety belts, fix on those masks, remotely hold sanitised hands with the current fabulous team led by the marvellous Nigel and join us on a path of resilience to a better, stronger way of Working Together.

To approve the minutes from last year's AGM

The notes were agreed subject to an amendment: Nicola said she **could not** have done it without help and support....

Looking back at Working Together 2019 – 2020

The AGM enjoyed seeing a slide show of the past 12 months.

Working Together Youth Club 2019 – 2020

Youth Club had joined in the Zoom, Sammy shared her thoughts on the smooth transition from the Youth Centre to Rockspring and how the staff had re-skilled following lockdown in March to ensure we kept contact with our members in other ways. Youth Club is now back meeting weekly, Covid safe with 6 members each week, rotating.

The AGM enjoyed a film produced by Youth Club and Diversity – “Our Lockdown News”.

To receive the Annual Accounts 2019/20 – Mike and Jane Jenner

Mike, our new Treasurer, introduced the annual accounts. Mike proposed that Jane Jenner be appointed as the independent examiner for 2020/21 – seconded by Susanna. Jane accepted the role.

Jane confirmed that the accounts show a surplus of £25,042 and a carry forward of £64,456. This means the charity is currently in a good position following careful financial management. Sam explained that this year’s surplus relates mainly to the grant from the National Lottery Community Fund. The grant is for 3 years and will reduce this year and next so we need to continue to be vigilant in order to be sustainable into the future.

Mike thanked Jane, Helen and Sam for their work on the finances and accounts. Jane thanked Helen for her hard work and tenacity. Nicola thanked Mike for stepping into the Treasurer role.

The AGM agreed to accept the Annual Accounts – proposed by Sarah J; seconded by Julian.

What 2020 has been like for us

The AGM enjoyed a film produced by the daytime members, Writers’ and Makers’ Clubs, parents and carers, sharing their 2020 news and views.

All agreed the films were great and anyone that had been filmed had been very brave. The films would be made available to members and supporters to enjoy again at their leisure.

Looking Forwards 2021 - Nigel

Nigel shared his thoughts on Working Together:

Firstly, I'd like to say thank you to the members, families, carers, volunteers, staff, trustees, funders and supporters for all your support as we've navigated the uncharted waters of Covid-19.

And thank you to our landlords, the Furniture Scheme, especially to James Cooper and to Rob for being the best and most supportive landlords we could have had during this time.

Also, I would also like to say a special thank you to Nicola, as Chair of Trustees, for her support and advice during what has been a challenging start to my role as interim manager and subsequently as Chief Officer.

Going forward...

We continue to operate as effectively as we can within a Covid Safe environment, adapting our programme of activities and clubs – Writers' and sewing bee (now Makers') and our business plan in order to support members in the best way we can.

Both operationally and financially challenges still lay ahead, but our successful return to face-to-face services at Rockspring, including Youth Club and a more limited version of Diversity, has been a huge step in a positive direction and we look to build on the solid foundations of what we have already achieved.

We are keen to forge new relationships and partnerships within the local community. The Rockspring community garden and our work supporting the Ludlow Food Bank has already established a clear sense of purpose for us and raised our profile, as well as providing members with lots of opportunities to be involved with new activities and the chance to learn new skills, skills that fit snugly alongside our existing work and the ethos of Working Together.

Through the winter we will continue to provide support to the food bank - as it delivers food parcels to those in need. In the spring we will, Covid permitting, look to reopen our cafe to the public and to work with the Rockspring volunteers to grow food in the community garden - food that we can cook in the cafe, sharing any surpluses that are produced with the local community.

The open space and community garden, including the pizza oven, offer exciting opportunities for Youth Club and Diversity social events - when the weather and the Covid situation permits - and developing a relationship with the Forestry Commission Ludlow offers an opportunity for visits and a range of local outdoor activities.

Also, in the Spring, we hope to be able to look at how we can develop Diversity and relaunch our Sports Club in a Covid Safe way, incorporating what has worked well during the restrictions – like Zoom get togethers and the Wednesday's yoga sessions.

But, of course, all of this is very much dependent on the course of the Coronavirus and the restrictions that we may have to operate under – the wellbeing of our members, our volunteers and our staff remains our top priority.

I would like to finish by saying thank you to the staff team – to Fee, James, Jan, Helen, Nicola, Jan B, Sammy, Diana and Sophie for their ongoing dedication, support, hard work and commitment, to Lisa that left us earlier in the year due to her other work commitments - and to our current, regular volunteers, Sarah, Louise and Neil. I know it's not always been easy, but they've all been brilliant.

Thank you to our retiring Trustees and Board Secretary – Roma, Susanna and Clare

Flowers had been sent to Roma, Susanna and Clare, who have been involved with Working Together for many years. Although they are stepping down as Trustees they will continue to be big supporters of Working Together and are looking forward to the day the café can reopen and they can visit everyone at Rockspring again.

Any other business

Congratulations to James Cooper and Keris on the birth of their son, Felix Roland Delafield Cooper, born last week.

Thomas thanked everyone for being supporters of Working Together.

The meeting ended with a virtual round of applause for everyone.