



Working Together Ludlow

to include people with learning difficulties

General Meeting - Tuesday 28th November 2023 - Rockspring

Trustees Present: Nicola North; Mike Beazley; Alison Holman; Emily Mosley; Julian Crombleholme; Louise Anton

Others present: Nigel Bishop; Jane Jenner; Helen Crombleholme; Jan Amphlett; Thomas Geuter; Fran and Juliet Best; Simon North; Sarah Edwards; Andrew Norton; David Sargeant; John Emerson; Dan Wall; Alan Hooper; Roma Jackson; Clare Curren; David Curren; John Jervis; Jean Price; Julia Radburn; Helen Hughes; Sam Hine

Apologies: Simon Lambourn; Susan and Daniel Geuter

Nicola welcomed everyone to the AGM and shared her thoughts on the past 12-18 months:

Let's go off on a bit of time travel, just to set the scene for this evening. We are here to mark the year July 2022 to June 2023, a period when politics should have settled down and Covid faded away. But no!

In July 2022 the Russian/Ukraine war entered its 5th month, much to Putin's chagrin. More than 40 government ministers and aides resigned, forcing Boris Johnson to step down as PM. Government stood still as the summer roared to a record breaking 40 degrees in the UK. Heatwaves engulfed many parts of the world with record wild fires.

The Commonwealth Games in Birmingham featured a fire breathing Bull. Rebecca Vardy lost the Wagatha Christie case while the FBI raided Mar a Lago amid tales of Donald Trump showing off classified documents at parties. Liz Truss was chosen by the Conservative party members to be their leader and our Prime Minister. Beckham was praised for queuing and Holly and Philip didn't at the Queen's lying in state. Roger Federer retired.

An iceberg lettuce lasted longer than Liz after her mini budget spawned the phrase "cost of living crisis". The Conservative party chose the previous runner up as the next PM. Trump announces he will run again and Biden celebrates his 80th birthday to become the first octogenarian US President.

The AI Chatbot is released and so is Harry and Megan's documentaries. Hamza wins Strictly; Lionel Messi wins the World Cup and Harry publishes Spare. Sweden wins Eurovision and the UK returns to low scoring ways. Philip Schofield resigns. There is a mutiny in Russia as tanks move towards Moscow – the world holds its breath.

Meanwhile, back in the real world, everyone at Working Together was preparing, and none more so than Thomas, to celebrate our 20th year, with a very special garden party in September and the weather was glorious.

The Working Together family were finding ways to re-engage with the post Covid world and in a way that suited us.

We have had successes at the Spring, Food and Winter Festivals, promoting ourselves and our bookshop offerings; a film premier at the Assembly Rooms starring our very own Chloe; shopping trips to supermarkets; fabric shops for our sewing and crafty members; adventures at Berrington Hall and on the Gloucester Canal inspired creativity for both writing and art works.

Tim and I were thrilled to show off our flag waving, whistle blowing and ticket clipping skills on the Welshpool to Llanfair Railway when we all took over the station. The Railway Manager was even more pleased to see everyone polishing one of the dirtiest steam locos for free.

Under Nigel's quiet and understated leadership, Working Together has gradually and steadily breathed outwards and is finding its own way forward.

We keep referring to Working Together as a family and as a family we have our trials and tribulations but underneath it all is love and respect. Some members of the family naturally drift away, many return and all are always welcome.

Sadly we do lose people, most recently former Trustee Roy Johnson and his wife Joyce passed away as did former Trustee and treasurer Richard Stayner. Our hearts go out to their families and we thank them for all they did for Working Together over the years.

I would like to thank the funders during this financial time period which include: Children in Need; Millichope Foundation; Ludlow School; Ludlow Golf Club; Shropshire Council; Connexus and Humphrey Salwey. Marathon and long distance runners Sarah Edwards; Emily Moseley and Alastair North; the Friends of Working Together; the Charity bookshop.

Many, many thanks to our dedicated and hugely talented staff and volunteers and Trustees. To all of our parents, carers, support workers and to our members, from whom I learn so much. Thank you all for being you.

To approve the minutes from last year's AGM

The notes were agreed and approved.

Certificate Presentations

All daytime members have been awarded certificates and those attending the AGM had them presented by Nicola. These include Certificates of Achievement in Food Safety (awarded by an accredited food safety trainer) and Fire Safety Certificates that recognise members understanding of the procedures that should be followed in the event of emergency evacuation. Two members have been awarded their Level 2 Awards in Food Safety for Catering – which is a brilliant achievement!

To receive the Annual Accounts 2022/23 – Mike Beazley and Jane Jenner

Mike presented the annual accounts and explained the income and expenditure for the year. The accounts show Working Together continues to be in a strong financial position. Copies of the accounts can be found on the website and made available on request.

The Fee Star Award – Louise Anton

What a treat it is to be here tonight celebrating all that is done at Working Together. Nothing would be possible, of course, without the unstinting dedication, commitment and love of our fabulous team of staff.

So it is my absolute pleasure, and honour, to present this year's Fee Star Award.

This year's winner started off being our Star Baker, a few hours a week, and has graduated to lead and manage all our day time activities, while continuing to bake!

Calm, compassionate, thoughtful, considerate, reliable and dedicated she "rises" to all challenges. Come rain or shine she is always smiling and ensures that all our members can engage in what we have to offer and most importantly, achieve the very best that they can.

Without wishing to "flour" her with too many compliments she is a real team player and epitomises all that Working Together stands for and is a positive force for good for members, staff and volunteers..

Over a decade on from her first involvement, it is a big thank you and many congratulations to the 2023 Fee Star Award winner - **Jan Amphlett Whyley**.

Looking Forwards to 2024 – Nigel

A few weeks ago I was driving back from Shrewsbury and listening to an interview with a Scottish whiskey producer on the radio. He was saying it was the peaty water they used in the distilling process that made their whisky taste wonderful.

The interviewer was giving him a hard time... Surely, they said, you must know that, scientifically, the water makes no difference to the taste of the whisky. Ah, he said, that may be the case, but we like to think it makes our whisky taste wonderful!

Well, I know scientifically, that Working Together is just a group of people, but I also know that this particular group of people is what makes Working Together such a wonderful organisation!

Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to our members, families and carers for your continued support of Working Together - it is very much appreciated. Also, thank you to our fantastic volunteers, our Rockspring volunteers, community gardeners and the bookshop volunteers and to our trustees for all their hard work behind the scenes ensuring the charity continues to go forward on a firm footing, especially thank you to our Chair of Trustees, Nicola, for all her support to me as Chief Officer.

Thank you to the more than fantastic staff team we have here at Working Together, their hard work, commitment and dedication to making everything work so brilliantly is hugely appreciated. And to our funders, fundraisers and donors for their generous support too.

Looking forward... we're already almost halfway through our next financial year and things are going well. I'm pleased to say that we have welcomed some new members and new volunteers to the Working Together family.

The summer has been filled with fantastic trips and days out - we had, as they say there, a 'bostin' day out at the Black Country Museum recently! We visited Sidney Nolan Trust and have lots of activities and more days out planned for 2024.

Our involvement in the local festivals continues to grow - the Spring festival, Food festival, Carnival and the new Winter Festival provide fundraising opportunities but, more importantly, they help raise awareness of Working Together as a charity and absolutely reinforce the positive contribution people with learning difficulties and learning disabilities make in the local community.

Going forward, we will continue to re-evolve and develop in order to offer the best services and support we can for our members, families and carers. We will build on our involvement with the Foodbank, the community lunches and open table events, grow more in the community garden, and ensure WT and its members are at the heart of the community both here at Rockspring and in the wider area.

You can see more of what we've been up to in our Annual Report. Copies are available on request and can be found on the website.

Any other business

David Sargeant addressed the meeting. He said everyone at Youth Club and Diversity deserved a round of applause. He was proud of everyone involved, including himself.

On that positive note the AGM ended and everyone was invited to enjoy refreshments, see the Sewing Bee and Writers Club displays and the artwork from the Sidney Nolan visit and to say hello to Youth Club members.