

LANDMARK ARTS CENTRE LIMITED

MINUTES of Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 11th October 2018 in The Landmark Arts Centre, Ferry Road, Teddington, TW11 9NN at 6.30pm

Present

Barbara Shorter-Beckwith (BS-B) – Chair)
John Perry (JP) – Company Secretary)
Julie Evans (JE))
Donna McDonald (DM)) Trustees
Siân Morgan (SM))
Martin Nicholds (MN))
Jeremy Stubbs (JS))

In Attendance

Lesley Bossine (LB) – Arts Centre Manager
David Polya (DP) – Building Manager

Plus 12 members (list attached)

15 proxies had been received, all in favour of the Chairman.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed all those present and explained that there were operational reasons why the AGM had been delayed to the autumn. She would explain later. Next year it is hoped to revert to the usual practice of holding the AGM in the summer.

Apologies had been received from 6 members including Joan Child, one of the Trustees, who is undergoing hospital treatment.

She then moved on to the Agenda

2. APPROVAL OF 2017 AGM MINUTES

Proposed by Donna McDonald, seconded by Martin Nicholds. These were agreed unanimously to be a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Barbara Shorter-Beckwith elaborated on her earlier comments about operational difficulties.

In recent years we have not been registered for VAT, primarily because our activities were not deemed to be liable to the tax. Nevertheless over the last 8 years we have commissioned expert advice on 3 separate occasions to ensure we were keeping up with any changes that might occur.

Late in 2017 we discovered that income from our four art fairs had now become standard VAT rated and that our income from these fairs had passed the current VAT threshold, back in May 2017.

This was not a pleasant piece of news. We had little choice but to begin preparations for a backdated VAT registration. Almost 300 exhibitors a year take a stand at our art fairs and many had already paid their stand fees for 2018 before the problem was realised. We have honoured our contracts with these, mainly one person businesses, and absorbed their VAT obligation, however, VAT is of course being charged on future stand hire and up to now this does not seem to have discouraged future exhibitors. All in all we owed the VAT man over £8,500 and we have had to draw on our reserves to pay his bill. These reserves were also called on in two other ways:-

- a) We suffered a cyber attack. Thankfully no data was compromised but we had to spend to reconstitute our systems and purchase more equipment.
- b) We had to replace our main hall carpet rather earlier than budgeted as the old one had become damaged with the damp that at times assails us and its blackened appearance and musty smell was putting off hirers and damaging our popular wedding reception business run by our trading company for the benefit of the Trust.

Thus our unrestricted reserves in the short term will be significantly reduced. This year they are running at £64,000 against £88,000 for last year. Our aim has always been to hold £100,000 in reserve, enough to run the Centre for six months if, for any reason, we had to close down the building temporarily. We have got very close to that goal in some years, but not this one. Our urgent priority will be to rebuild those reserves as soon as we possibly can. We have already begun to look at other fund raising events, including the wine evening last week and additionally, some of our regular artists who love working here, are helping us out by allowing us to add a mandatory donation to ticket prices. Paul Jones and Dave Kelly helped us in this way, and Stacey Kent, who is coming back for the third time next year, is going to do the same.

In many respects it was a difficult year for an organisation like ours that receives no regular public funding locally or nationally, with just the rare and welcome grant from a few generous funders for a particular project and, of course, much valued donations from our supporters. So, given that the year has not been easy we are proud to have got through it with a deficit of just over £18,000 offset by depreciation of tangible fixed assets of just over £14,000. Here we owe a real debt of gratitude to our Arts Centre Manager Lesley Bossine and her team. Lesley runs this place very tightly and watches unnecessary expenditure like a hawk. Sorting out the VAT issue caused a great deal of extra work for her, for our bookkeeper and, to a certain extent, other members of the team. It would have been all too easy to become distracted but the team refused to let this happen and have, this year, made real progress.

An example of this is that after 4 years of dedicated fund raising we managed to buy a magnificent grand piano, a previously used but meticulously cared for Yamaha C7 Concert Grand. We no longer have to hire a piano every time we need one, and at a stroke it has been able to create a new event, Classics in the Afternoon, taking place on Sunday afternoons with tea and cake in the interval. The piano will, over the years,

support a number of artists who perform here, and it will reduce our costs and increase our profit each time. Those using it have confirmed it is a fine instrument.

There have been some interesting staged events, none more so than a free one-day event called 'Embrace Tango' designed both to raise awareness of tango and of its associated health benefits. No fewer than 400 people were busy tangoing around the hall.

Our education programme remains the largest part of our business, having overtaken art fairs some years ago. We continue to develop a great range of visual arts and other classes for adults and children and could do so much more if we had more divided space. We are very pleased with our drop-in classes for families during school holidays, and our choirs are thriving. They sing here every week in term time and we encourage them to get out and about too.

Though our massive space is hard to heat and causes us all manner of headaches, we have continued to benefit from its size by hosting exhibitions for photography, fine art and sculpture.

The building continues to challenge but we have made some improvements. There is a new sprung floor in the bell room, welcomed by the groups who use it, and it is suitable for dance too. During the year the bell room, the kitchen and performers toilets have been painted and improved and for this we need to thank Tim Canning, our technical and operations manager.

We rarely get local funding, but this year we were successful at winning a grant from Richmond Council's village planning fund to improve our woodland and external space. Many more improvements will be visible over the next few months.

One of the most important things we have been able to do over the last couple of years is to strengthen our board with the arrival of four new trustees bringing new views, talents and expertise in different areas. Two of them you have already met as trustees and the other two you will meet later in this meeting.

Finally, and as always, Barbara wanted to express real appreciation for our energetic and creative team. Lesley and Tim have been mentioned above. Between them they are the long serving lynchpins of our operation with Lesley reaching her 10th year with us a few months ago. Tim has served for 17. Wendy Miles, our administrator and private hire officer, Josie Muirhead our talented education officer, Abigail Thomas our visual arts curator, and before her Ben Kidger who left us for another job during the year, and Meg Fisher who organises Sparkle, our popular end of year fair. To those I need to add our thanks to our regular contractors, to our efficient and welcoming front of house staff and, above all, to our committed and energetic volunteers, without whom no events could take place. Thank you to all of them.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2017/18

These have been circulated and on the website. There were no questions on the accounts and after a proposal by Jeremy Stubbs and seconded by Sian Morgan the Annual Report & Accounts for 2017/18 were accepted.

5. **APPOINTMENT AND REAPPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS**

By rotation Donna McDonald has ended a 3 year stint as Trustee but has expressed her willingness to be re-elected for a further term.

We wish to welcome Julie Evans and Martin Nicholds as new Trustees. Brief biographies of both were given to the meeting. Julie's professional background as banker, fundraiser and project manager are just what we need. At present she works for ethical bank Charity Bank which works with charities to raise funds for capital requirements. Martin Nicholds has a background in general management, HR, IT, sales and finance. He has worked across a variety of sectors for some large companies including Prudential, Royal Mail and the BBC.

Both of the proposed new Trustees live in Teddington.

Each of the three above were proposed by Jeremy Stubbs and seconded by George Hunter, and duly elected.

6. **BOARD ROLES**

Barbara Shorter-Beckwith announced her retirement as Chair and Trustee. Donna McDonald was stepping down from her position as co-chair with Barbara which had become necessary after the untimely death of Tony Nieper. Barbara recalled that when she first became connected with the Landmark she had been amazed that there was no funding of any sort. Despite the challenge, it has been a great honour to chair the Trust and usually a pleasure. She would be continuing as a volunteer and would run the annual fund raising quiz. The new Chair of Trustees would be Martin Nicholds and Donna McDonald would continue to chair the Building Committee.

Martin Nicholds then addressed the meeting and thanked Barbara for her wonderful 14 years service. He recognised he had large shoes to fill but he had been attending Trustees meetings and was well aware of the issues. There is a lot to fix but the Centre has been a vibrant part of Teddington for 23 years. This was a testament to the Trustees. His job was to carry on the good work. We had to move with the times and keep up to date by investing in sound systems, heating and lighting. Also we must continue to offer a broad programme for all ages within the building.

The dampness problem was understandable. It is an old building and it is not cheap and we will need to raise several hundred thousand pounds to clear the problem. He was confident that we can do it. In 2020 it will be the 25th anniversary of the Trust and there will be plenty going on. Plans will be released when they are clearer.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

After proposal by Donna McDonald and seconded by Julie Evans, Amy Healey was reappointed with grateful thanks.

8. **ARTS CENTRE MANAGER REPORT**

Lesley Bossine delivered a report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Barbara paid tribute to Lesley who originally came to the Landmark to organise a wedding fair. Barbara invited her to her house and although originally intending to stay a reasonably short period has now completed 10 years at the Centre, and we were all very grateful.

The formal meeting ended at 19:25.

After a short break for wine and nibbles, sponsored by Palmers Solicitors of Kingston, Catherine Parry-Wingfield gave a talk about the restoration of J M W Turner's house in Twickenham.