

LANDMARK ARTS CENTRE LIMITED

MINUTES of Virtual Annual General Meeting held by Zoom on Thursday 24th September 2020 at 6.30pm at The Landmark Arts Centre, Ferry Road, Teddington, TW11 9NN

Note to Minutes

In view of the COVID19 pandemic, special arrangements have been made to hold the AGM in 2020 in accordance with Charity Commission Guidelines.

A total of 22 members attended electronically or sent in forms naming the Chair of the meeting as their proxy.

The meeting was chaired by Martin Nicholds (Chair), the following Trustees were present by Zoom:

John Perry - Company Secretary
Joan Child - Trustee
Nicholas del Rio - Trustee
Julie Evans - Trustee
Donna McDonald – Trustee
Sian Morgan – Trustee
Edward Kershaw – Trustee

In Attendance

Lesley Bossine - Arts Centre Manager

1. Approval of Minutes of 2019 AGM

These had been circulated in advance and after a proposal by Nick del Rio and seconding by Ann Faulkner these were signed as a true record.

2. Chair's Report

Martin Nicholds presented his report. At last year's AGM we were all looking forward to our 25th Anniversary in 2020. Many plans had been made for the year, including special events, plans for the improvement of the building and many other celebratory occasions. We had even got to the point of printing all the brochures at the beginning of this year for the 25th Anniversary year. Sadly, immediately that had been done the COVID-19 pandemic occurred and therefore none of what was planned proved to be possible.

With regard to the building, we were looking at using our very large space more efficiently to improve income. To this end we had commissioned architects, originally to look at the space above the Bell Room and then propose plans for the hall and the space above it. A number of designs were prepared by the architects. Martin Nicholds screen shared these suggestions for development. The plans were exciting and would have been transformational but were also expensive, potentially running into several million pounds. We had hoped that the Heritage Lottery Fund could be approached for a major grant but unfortunately at a relatively early stage it became apparent that they would reject the idea as our proposals did not meet their definition of a 'heritage' project.

We therefore decided to focus on what we could do to increase attendance and to appeal to a broader audience locally. A separate slide showed current usage. We had welcomed over 5,000 visitors to the building for live events. A third choir, Mansong, had been started and soon grew to a membership of 40 or more meeting on a regular basis.

Some very good community events had been hosted. Our new MP and Councillors came to the Holocaust Memorial Day which had proved to be extremely successful and very moving. The chair pointed out that we are really the only facility locally that can host a very large event. In addition, some 1,100 people had attended our very varied classes.

Thanks to the good offices of Trustee, Siân Morgan and a large team of volunteers, great progress had been made in tackling the grounds which had been converted, not only into a pleasant green space, but an exhibition facility in itself.

Thus at the beginning of the year we had high hopes.

Sadly, COVID had put paid to all those events almost overnight. The net result was that the actual income for the year was slightly down. The outturn was badly affected by the cancellation of a fair, which had cost us £20,000 in refunds for pre-paid stalls, but the expenses were slightly down as well, so the end result was a slight loss on the year. This was mitigated by generous donations from the Gosling Foundation and Palmers Solicitors and he wished to thank them for their kind support.

Our stated objective was to increase the capital reserve to give us six months' funding to bring the project to an end if it had to be closed down. This would mean holding a reserves fund of approximately £134,000 to give us the financial security so to do.

Immediately COVID struck the trustees swung into action and very soon came to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the pandemic, we were still very much a viable business and we set about planning to survive the crisis and to look forward to the day when the Landmark could re-open.

Income was bolstered by three things.

1. Our fundraising appeal which had proved very successful in raising nearly £70,000;
2. The Government Furlough Scheme which meant that all the staff, bar one, were furloughed; we could not use the building but that did mean that haemorrhaging of further funds was mitigated; and
3. Income was bolstered by events that we have been able to run.

The chair particularly thanked the Trustees for all their hard work in so many emergency meetings, often 2 or 3 a week, to plan our survival programme and recovery ready for re-opening. He wanted to thank our Arts Centre Manager, Lesley Bossine, and her team which he described as small but wonderful, and of course our exceptional volunteers who have given freely of so much of their time in so many ways to support the centre.

He mentioned particularly Heather Tomlinson, who was not a member of our staff but had helped us with our PR and marketing on a pro-bono basis and had managed to make the name of the Landmark far more visible locally through press and radio stations and indeed nationally.

3. Acceptance of Annual Report and Accounts for 2019/20

With the above as the background the Chair commended the Annual Report and Accounts, which had been posted on the website and available for all members, as a fair appraisal of all that had happened in the past year. After a proposal by Peter Denton, seconded by Siân Morgan, the Annual Report and Accounts for 2019/20 were duly adopted by the meeting.

4. Election or Re-election of Trustees

The Chair pointed out that Siân Morgan had been trying to move away from the area for some time and we wished her well. She has readily agreed to keep in touch with us but she will no longer be able to function as a Trustee. He thanked her for all the special skills that she brought, not only to the gardening team (mentioned above) but also with her very large number of contacts within the Council and local organisations with which she had been able to put us in touch.

By rotation the Company Secretary, John Perry, was available for re-election and had expressed his willingness to stand.

During the year Edward Kershaw had been recruited to assist with our future plans. His professional skills made him eminently suitable to become a Trustee of the Landmark and he had already expressed his willingness to stand.

In addition, Alareen Farrell, an existing volunteer and director of the trading company, had expressed her willingness to stand as a Trustee. She had extensive experience in retail buying and her particular skills had already been very valuable when considering such items as the Landmark shop.

Following a proposal from Nick del Rio and seconded by Donna McDonald, John Perry was re-elected as Trustee and Edward Kershaw and Alareen Farrell were elected to be Trustees.

5. COVID Update

This item should be read in conjunction with the Chair's comments above.

The Chair said that having been told to close in March the first calculation was to see how long our funds would last, including repaying those who had made pre-payments for shows, etc. The original calculation showed we had only 6 or 7 weeks' financial viability left at that point, so fundraising started immediately and grant applications were put into effect and continue to be submitted.

The furloughing of staff is mentioned above but the fundraising appeal, backed up by posters in windows all round Teddington, demonstrated just what strong affection the community had for the Landmark. We were pleasantly surprised at the amazing response that was achieved by our 'Save the Landmark' fund raising appeal, backed by media articles, radio appearances and individual leaflet drops in the surrounding roads.

Some 800 people contributed and to date the amount raised from the appeal is over £67,000 which is a magnificent sum in itself, although only goes a certain way towards financial security for the Centre. As well as the appeal, the 'Rockin the Lock-In' event, led by Teddington Together's Lisa Wyborn, had raised about £3,000 and the recent 'Playing Jane' theatrical event led by Amanda Root a further £8,000.

The Trustees assimilated this information and came to the conclusion that we could now plan for the period to take us through to Christmas 2020. It was recognised that there

was huge competition for grant funding and other sources of direct income, as has been publicised nationally. The arts generally are not necessarily top of the list when it comes to Government assistance. The Cultural Recovery Fund is one that we have been able to apply for and we expect a decision on that in early October. If successful, this would be a tremendous boost to our efforts as it would take us through financially until March 2021, by which time we would have been able to prepare a much better road plan for our future.

The Trustees had decided that we must maximise our income and use the spaces that we do have more effectively and more financially productively in order to rebuild the reserves again. The Trustees are also looking at ways of programming to appeal broadly to the local population.

The Chair wished to reiterate his thanks to the Trustees who both collectively and with their individual skills had managed to keep the Centre going during the unprecedented months of the pandemic with no immediate clue as to what is likely to happen in the next few months.

The furlough scheme ends at the end of October and we want to get all the staff back. On the same day as this AGM, the Government had announced a further work support scheme to take over from the furlough scheme and members could be reassured that the Trustees would be looking at this in fine detail to make the most use of any available resources.

It is not good for any organisation of our nature to rest on its laurels and assume that what we have always done can just be repeated and we were already looking at new and exciting ways of utilising the building to its most effective financial and community benefit.

6. Appointment of Independent Examiner

The existing examiner, Amy Healey, had expressed a willingness to stand for a further year and was therefore re-appointed as the Independent Examiner.

7. Art Centre Manager's Report

Lesley Bossine's report to the AGM is attached to these Minutes but with the 2020 events almost all being deferred to 2021 and a delay in the 25th Anniversary celebrations, as well as all the exciting projects that are also being planned, we can look forward to the successful future of the Landmark Arts Centre.

The meeting finished at 19.34pm