

Shire Training Workshops t/a OPENhouse

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5.00pm, Monday 25th September 2017

The Hall, The British School, Stroud

1. Welcome and Introductions by the Chair

The Chairman, Richard Brinton welcomed Members, Trustees and Service Users to the meeting. He introduced the new CEO, David McAuley and the Service Delivery Director, Emma Poole who had acted as interim CEO until David's recent appointment.

Richard said that as the AGM followed so soon after the Autumn Equinox he felt it would be appropriate to begin the meeting with a short poem from Steiner's Calendar of the Soul which he then read out. Richard went on to describe the autumn as a time when Nature and wildlife start to prepare for the longer and darker nights which lie ahead. He gave examples of how that preparation is often carried through as a matter of resolve and determination and is not necessarily driven by speed. He concluded by saying that applying the same principles should also help humans to become better prepared for the seasons ahead.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Rob Mehta.

3. Approval of 2016 AGM Minutes

It was proposed that the Minutes of the 2016 AGM be approved and signed by the Chairman.

- Proposed: Nicky Severs
- Seconded: James Slater

The proposal was agreed unanimously by those members present.

4. Presentation of Trustees' Reports for 2016/17

Structure, Governance and Management

Richard Brinton said the Trustees continued to take their governance role very seriously, in line with the Charity Commission's guidelines and the complexity of the charity's activities. The Trustees had met on a monthly basis during the year. In particular, he paid tribute to Claire Mould who had stood down in August after 6 years as CEO.

He said that throughout the year each Trustee had a relevant area of responsibility in line with the skills and expertise with which they had been recruited to the Board. Each Trustee supports an appropriate department/staff member between the monthly Trustees' meetings. This can take the form of a formal meeting to provide specialist information or a more informal information-gathering discussion.

Richard said OPENhouse provided housing, education and complex needs support to young homeless and vulnerable individuals. The underpinning aim was to effectively facilitate the transition of individuals from a position of vulnerability and dependency to living as fully functioning lives as they have the capacity to lead. He gave details of the three ways in which this is carried out:

Accredited educational opportunities for young people (from 14 years old) who for a variety of reasons have “fallen out” of statutory education. ☐ Housing and support for 16-25 year old homeless young people and under 18 year olds who are still “in care” or care leavers. ☐ Housing and complex mental health support for individuals who have lifelong complex conditions.

Richard said OPENhouse had set 10 main objectives for the year ending 31 March 2017. Of these 8 had been achieved, 1 was a work in progress while the remaining objective was proving more challenging. Full details can be found on page 5 of the Annual Report.

Organisational Review

Nicki Severs gave a presentation on the organisational review accompanied by Dannielle. Nicki displayed the current staff chart which showed the structure of the organisation following a recent review process. She said the review had been carried out to address the challenges of fully meeting the organisation’s charitable objectives while still presenting an attractive and cost-effective resource which enables service commissioners to meet their community based objectives.

Nicki said the most significant change had been the introduction of cross departmental working. This better enabled provision of the needs of service users who required support from all three OPENhouse specialist departments. She said 7 principles had been established for staff enabling them to work across the whole organisation and more details of these could be found on page 7 of the Annual Report.

Education Strategic Overview

Deborah Leah presented a report giving an overview of education at OPENhouse. She said education and training was provided for young people from 14 years of age who had not participated in or succeeded in a statutory educational environment.

A range of creative skills and crafts are covered with qualified teaching staff in small groups, ideally no more than 1:4. Each tutor works with the students to design their own learning journey plan. Students are supported in order to progress positively at their own pace and are not forced to move on within an external time frame.

More details are to be found on pages 11-14 of the Annual Report.

Housing and Support Strategic Overview

James Slater presented the report on housing and support with the assistance of Toby who is one of the service users.

James said the strategic aim of this service was to transition young people to a point where they can live independently in the community to the fullest extent that they are able. However the whole process is handled with extreme sensitivity and with the full engagement of service users and their support workers.

Toby said OPENhouse was a very good organisation to be with and, coming from the background he had, it helped to be able to talk to a lot of people. He said there are some good days and some bad days but the staff at OPENhouse are always there to help.

A fuller description of the service can be found on pages 15-17 of the Annual Report.

Enhanced Support Department

Jem Sweet gave a presentation on Enhanced Support with David, a service user.

Jem said, enhanced support was about fostering independence and not dependence by providing a staged process for service users to gradually move towards independent living in the community, but still with a support services in the background. More details of the service are found on pages 15-17 of the Annual Report.

David said being at OPENhouse had enabled him to develop a skill of working with leather and he passed around some of the leather bags he had made. He said the work wasn't easy but he found it very rewarding. He hoped at some point to try his hand at blacksmithing.

The Going the Extra Mile (GEM) Project

Andy Warner introduced the GEM Project, a new service managed by Gloucestershire Gateway Trust. The service is delivered by a Navigator Developer, Anna Reeves.

Anna spoke about the service along with one of her participants, Susanna. Anna said she works with people aged between 16 and 59 to try to get them back into work. Many lacked experience, had debts or had suffered ill health or other problems such as substance abuse. She was currently working with a total of 29 people, 5 from OPENhouse. Overall, 9 were in the process of getting interviews for jobs and a further 12 were working in the voluntary sector.

Susanna spoke about her experiences. She said Anna had made her feel very welcome. Previously she had viewed authority as a frightening thing and had found academic work very hard. However she was now doing an NVQ and wanted to engage with the community again.

A Service User's Journey

Chloe introduced herself as a 29 year old service user who had been living at Delmont's Lot for 4 years. She said that for many years she has suffered from Asperger's Syndrome and an eating disorder. She said the last year had been a tough one for her but also a year of hope.

She said her support workers had told her that if she could stand and talk about her experiences to a room full of people then she could do anything. She hoped that this would be so. Chloe said that being at OPENhouse was enabling her to join the dots in life.

At the end of the session, Richard thanked Trustees and service users for their inspiring presentations.

5. Presentation of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017

The Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017 were presented by the Finance Officer, Robyn Calloway. She gave a summary of the main points in the accounts for the year.

Robyn said income for the year had been £781,931 against expenditure of £800,344 which left a deficit of £18,413. This was against a background of substantial funding cuts from commissioners and £70K setup costs at St. Marks in Gloucester. However, on the advice of the Auditors and a property re-evaluation, an additional £480,000 had been added to the accounts as investment property. OPENhouse now had total assets valued at just under £1.2m of which £14,990 were restricted funds.

Robyn completed her presentation by providing a breakdown of costs and income across the various service areas.

Questions were invited from the audience and Lucas Schoemaker asked if OPENhouse had any plans for the sale of the British School building following the valuation. Richard said there were no plans at all to sell and the valuation had been carried out following the recommendations of the auditors simply to recognise the value of the asset.

John Marjoram asked if OPENhouse received rent from Star Anise for the use of adjoining property as a café. Richard said a full agreement was in place and rent was paid.

The Chairman then put forward the following Resolution:

To adopt the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2017.

- Proposed: Jem Sweet
- Seconded: Andy Warner

On being put to the vote, the Resolution was passed unanimously.

6. Submitted Questions and Answers

Members had been invited to submit questions which would be answered at the AGM. No written questions had been received.

7. Appointment to the Board of Trustees

The Chairman said James Slater had been co-opted to the Board following the last AGM and was now standing for election to the Board. James introduced himself to the AGM and described his background and reasons for wanting to be a Trustee. He said he was also the father of Chloe who had spoken earlier at the AGM.

The Chairman then put forward the following Resolution:

To appoint James Slater to the Board of Trustees of OPENhouse.

Proposed: Andy Warner Seconded: Crockett Cresswell

On being put to the vote, the Resolution was passed unanimously.

8. Resignation from the Board of Trustees

The Chairman said that during the year Marie Waring had resigned from the Board in order to concentrate on her other commitments. He thanked Marie for the work she put in while serving as a Trustee.

9. Appointment of Auditors

David McAuley, CEO, said he had read the Audit report from Crow Clark Whitehill and he said he felt it was excellent in its detail. He said OPENhouse had now had the same Auditors for three years and he was in the process of setting up a meeting with them. He asked that a decision to re-appoint be held over until after that meeting. He also proposed that the AGM delegate appointment to the Trustees and said, following his meeting, he would put one of two proposals to the Trustees: Either automatic re-appointment of the Auditors or put the audit out to tender. Resolution:

To delay appointment of auditors as per conditions noted above.

These recommendations were agreed unanimously by those at the AGM.

10. CEO's Report

David McAuley, as incoming CEO, gave a presentation to the AGM about his background and experience and the reasons why he had decided to take on the challenge at OPENhouse.

He said OPENhouse was an excellent organisation but his philosophy was to see how we can do better. He said this process should start with the service users. David then set out a revised structure for the organisation along with plans and targets for the first 6 months and then the following 6.

6 months:

☑ Steady the ship following restructuring. ☑ Fill vacant rooms at OPENhouse, develop education and the GEM Programme. ☑ Secure income and chase debts. Pay off long-term debt by 31st March 2018. ☑ Build strong relationships with Trustees. ☑ Complete the purchase of Delmont's Lot. ☑ Secure the lease of 3 new properties from Stroud District Council. – Two properties are now on Hold, we have agreed to take on Willow Road. ☑ Introduce new user-led HR Management and IT systems.

12 months:

☑ Develop mission vision, values and core principles. ☑ Re-brand OPENhouse and develop new website. ☑ Recruit a Fundraiser. ☑ Select Auditors.

David concluded his presentation by saying that Claire Mould had got the organisation to this point by doing an amazing job. It was now his role to move on to the next stage. There was money available to assist OPENhouse, but you have to go out and ask for it.

11. Any Other Business

There was no further business for discussion.

12. Close of AGM

Richard Brinton brought the AGM to a close by thanking everyone for their contributions to the meeting and inviting them to stay on for refreshments. He thanked those who had helped to prepare the food and drinks.

The AGM closed at 6.20pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Richard Brinton (Chair of Trustees)