

Shire Training Workshops t/a OPENhouse

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5.00pm, Monday 28th September 2015

The Hall, The British School, Stroud

Members Present:

Richard Brinton (Chair, Trustee)

Crockett Cresswell (Trustee)

Alasdair Gordon (Trustee)

Deborah Leah (Trustee)

Nicki Severs (Trustee)

Jem Sweet (Trustee)

Andy Warner (Trustee)

Rachel Boakes (Service User)

Emily Booth (Staff member)

Ryan Bovey (Service User)

Marcus Collins (Service User)

Charlie Crew (Service User)

Isaac Davis (Service User)

James Derieg

Janice Foreman (Staff member)

Jill Hancock (Staff member)

Jeannie Ireland

Rufus Jenson (Service User)

Dan Jones (Staff member)

Laura Manley (Staff member)

Danny McCue (Staff member)

Claire Mould (Staff member)

Tim Mugford

John Marjoram

Josh Osborne

Natalie Pike (Service User)

Lucas Schoemaker

Neil Sharpe (Staff member)

Minute Taker: Alan Clarke

1. Welcome by the Chair

Richard Brinton welcomed Members, Trustees, Service Users and Crow, Clark, Whitehill (CCW) Auditors to the meeting. He offered a message of thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Alasdair Gordon. Alasdair was also standing down at the AGM as a Trustee. He said Alasdair had given 15 years' service to Shire Training, 5 of those as Chairman. Richard said he had recently been appointed by the Board of Trustees as Chairman but he would find it hard to follow in Alasdair's footsteps.

Richard said the first half of the evening would deal with the formal business of the AGM and this would be followed by a celebration as part of looking forward to the year ahead. The date of the AGM had been chosen to coincide with the Festival of Michaelmas which was a wonderful time of year to celebrate nature. He said the Festival was a time to gain strength and hope and we humans can learn from that process. This was the spirit which lives at OPENhouse.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Jo Carrier, Nigel Foreman, Tara Lupton, Jehanne Mehta, George Perry and Marie Waring.

3. Approval of 2014 AGM Minutes

It was proposed that the Minutes of the 2014 AGM be approved and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed: Nicki Severs **Seconded:** Alasdair Gordon

The proposal was agreed unanimously by those members present.

4. Presentation of Trustees' Reports for 2014/15

Structure, Governance and Management

Richard Brinton (Trustee) stated the importance of OPENhouse's Public Benefit Statement:

- OPENhouse welcomes all people regardless of personal background, faith, gender or personal circumstances.
- We believe this philosophy of openness to all enriches everyone through the sharing of the skills, aptitudes and life experiences of young people, vulnerable individuals, users of our community facilities and volunteers.

Richard went on to describe the many and varied support services provided by OPENhouse and the way in which the services are managed by the staff teams. He emphasised the role of governance which he said the Trustees took seriously and ensured the organisation was properly managed in line with the Charity Commission's guidelines. The Board of Trustees met monthly and in addition had regular meetings and discussions with staff.

Education

Deborah Leah (Trustee) introduced the educational services provided at OPENhouse. She said the Education Manager, Jan Foreman, is continuing to develop relationships with other providers which will enhance OPENhouse's opportunities to offer offsite learning opportunities. The OPENhouse

facilities have been visited by Accrediting Bodies who have given very positive feedback on everything they had found.

Deborah explained the many funding streams for providing education which were being proactively explored by OPENhouse. A growth plan has been produced with the aim of expanding meaningful and accredited learning experiences for those at OPENhouse.

Housing and Support

Andy Warner (Trustee) outlined the housing and support service offered at OPENhouse. He said funding for 16 young people came through a contract with Gloucestershire County Council. This enabled the provision of a multiple occupancy house and a range of positive activities for the young people to take part in. This has often led to job opportunities. Health and Wellbeing education figures strongly in the support given. The residents also have opportunities to participate interactively with the service provision at OPENhouse. The staff team plan to increase the provision of accommodation and maintain a high standard of transitional support for the residents.

Enhanced Support Service

Jem Sweet (Trustee) said the service provided enhanced support for 21 clients in Gloucestershire, 7 of whom lived at the Delmont's Lot micro community in Stroud. The service supports those with difficulties such as Asperger's, Autism or self-harm. Regular events take place and clients are encouraged to take part in active roles. With pressure to reduce funding, OPENhouse continues to fight to preserve support contracts. The Enhanced Support team aim to clearly demonstrate the positive progression made by individuals and to establish another micro community at Podsmead in Gloucester.

Collaborative Working Relationships

Crockett Cresswell (Trustee) said Stroud was a remarkable place for collaborative working on a number of levels. He ran through the activities in which OPENhouse was involved with for the benefit of its clients. He said links had been forged with many local groups and organisations. On a National level, a recent link has been made with the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust. The aim was to continue to expand the opportunities for the use of OPENhouse properties.

Fundraising

Nicki Severs (Trustee) explained many of the fundraising schemes set up by OPENhouse and in which service users can be actively involved. Funding has been made available for the provision of office space at 48c High Street to offer startup business opportunities. Funding is also given for floating support to enable residents to move on into the wider community. Nicki said that OPENhouse is also sharing its successful model of learning and development with other organisations engaged in helping young people with challenging difficulties.

Visitors

Alasdair Gordon (Trustee) said OPENhouse had received a number of prominent visitors during the year, all of whom had been impressed by what they had seen. OPENhouse had also received recognition through accolades. One was as a finalist in the National Action to Reduce Poverty Awards

8. CEO's Report

Claire Mould thanked the Trustees for their presentations and also staff and service users for attending the AGM. In looking for a short quote which reflected the world we live in today, Claire referred to a quote from Steiner "We live in testing times for humanity".

Answering a question about OFSTED raised earlier in the meeting by a member, Claire said OPENhouse had stepped back from EFA funding two years ago as the hoops which had to be jumped through were not sympathetic to the OPENhouse aims and objectives. As a consequence OFSTED inspections were no longer required.

Claire said it was not the job of the organisation to take easy options. We have to be creative in the way we raise our funds and want OPENhouse to be the organisation of choice for funders. We pride ourselves on quality. It was good to be recognised for this and the recent Contribution to the Community Award presented at the Stroud Life Business Awards was an acknowledgement of OPENhouses's standing in the community.

In the 37 years since the organisation was first set up there has never been a shortage of young people in need of help. OPENhouse continues to move forward very positively and it is currently full to capacity. It provides a unique service in helping people to 'transition' on in life.

Claire gave a summary of the achievements over the last 12 months and pointed to some of the challenges which still lay ahead. She stressed that it was very often the little things which were the important things.

9. Service Users Report

NP, one of the service users at OPENhouse, gave a short presentation of her personal experiences at OPENhouse, the friends she had made and the help she had received to enable her to move forward in life.

10. Presentation

Richard Brinton gave a presentation to Alasdair Gordon to commemorate his 15 years' service to the organisation. All those present joined in to sing a song about Alasdair especially prepared for the occasion by Danny McCue (a long standing member of staff).

In summarising his time with the organisation, Alasdair said it had been quite a journey through some difficult times. He said he was pleased to see that OPENhouse was now in a very strong position and in safe hands. The time had come for him to move on.

9. 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 and join in the celebration event following after the AGM.

The AGM closed at 7.05pm.