



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 11th September 2021 at 10.15 am
Held at the Birmingham National Conference and online via Zoom**

1. Welcome and Introductions

All present were welcomed to the AGM by Chairperson, Josephine Burt. The last face to face AGM was held in 2019 as last year's AGM took place by Zoom. A warm welcome was given to those in the room and those joining by Zoom.

Josephine explained that this is the formal part of the day, we are obliged to hold this meeting once a year to comply with charity legislation. She trusts that all present in the room are members of NWR.

Josephine introduced the rest of the trustees – Jan Fuller, Jennifer Johnson, Gill Wignall (Honorary Treasurer) and Ann Fox. Josephine also introduced Natalie Punter, the National Organiser, Chris Allison the Finance Manager, Helen Page the Communications Coordinator, Cath Heslop and Toni Steward, Regional Membership Officers and Membership Administrators - Samantha Bushell and Sharon Gibson.

Josephine explained that all AGM papers had been circulated to Local Organisers via email, were available on the website and have been posted to those without an email address in accordance with the required time frames. The papers gave members an opportunity to submit questions for the AGM and consequently, the agenda does not include Any Other Questions.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Valerie Dallinger (Luton & S.Beds), Monica Peel (Ruislip) and Judy Brass (Rugeley)

3. Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting

- a. The Minutes of the last AGM had been circulated previously to all Groups and were available to view and download from the website.
- b. The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 2020 were accepted as a true record.

Proposed: June Nash (Knowle)

Seconded: Jill Lucas (Crewe and District)

4. Matters Arising - none.

5. Report from the Board of Trustees presented by Josephine Burt.

Josephine advised that the Trustees Report was contained within the AGM papers circulated to members. A short slide show was shown to illustrate the main points of the text.

- a) A reminder of our charitable purpose

- b) Josephine talked about the Charity Commission requirements and the need for NWR to be able to show a public benefit. We fulfil the requirements in the following CC categories: education, citizenship or community development, arts, culture and heritage, and human rights and also promote equality and diversity and religious and racial harmony
- c) Josephine reported on the activities of NWR in 2020, which was our 60th anniversary, and those activities that were not possible due to COVID restrictions. The theme was 2020 vision. The scrap book did go ahead but was paused. 815 trees were purchased but planting was delayed. The National Conference did not go ahead but we did publish an additional magazine and obtain publicity with an article in the Guardian and an interview on Women's Hour.
- d) The anniversary lunch took place on 26 February with 12 regional events taking place across the country with 1105 members in attendance.
- e) NWR members responded to the pandemic restrictions by meeting via Zoom. NWR purchased a Digital Theatre database for 6 months, offered 24 talks and quizzes and some talks were recorded for members to access.
- f) The annual conference moved online.
- g) The office relocated from Norwich to Buntingford.
- h) Marian Molteno remains our Patron.
- i) The Telephone Treasure Trail was again very popular with 203 groups participating and most finishing. The theme was "Baking".
- j) Independent members, who are co-ordinated by Trustee Gill Wignall, increased to 70
- k) No resignations were received from Area Organisers, but NWR has lost members and groups over the last year.
- l) For much of 2020, NWR only had three permanent members of staff.
- m) We welcomed new Trustee Jan Fuller, who replaced Jo Thomson
- n) A governance review based on the points of the Charity Governance Code, was undertaken by the trustees. It raised a few points for improvement, but found that NWR is a sound organisation.
- o) Next year NWR is looking forward to a new strategic plan and website.

The attendees were shown the new website. A member asked: it is a new logo? Answer: Yes, but it has been used a number of times over the past few years and will gradually replace the old one.

6. Finance Report

- a) Josephine invited Gill Wignall to present the Financial Statements for 2020 which had been circulated in the Trustees' Report and Financial Statement. The accounts had been prepared by Chris Allison, our Finance Manager, using Sage 50 accounting software. They were inspected by MHA Larking Gowen, Accountants and Business Advisors in Norwich and East Anglia, who are contracted until 2022.

Gill noted that there has been a reduction in NWR's income, largely due to the impact of COVID, there has also been a reduction in expenditure due to the cancellation of events.

Our net assets at the end of 2020 were: £217,305.

Gill asked if anyone had any points of clarification relating to the Financial Statements. There were none.

- b) Acceptance of Accounts

Proposed: Catharine Woodliffe (Boston)

Seconded: Josephine Thomson (Leighton Buzzard)

7. Special Resolution

To amend Article 24

From 'The number of Trustees shall not be less than three, nor, until otherwise determined by a general Meeting, more than five.'

To 'The number of Trustees shall not be less than three, nor, until otherwise determined by a general Meeting, more than seven. Of these trustees, five will be drawn from the membership and two will be external trustees.'

Josephine said that the Trustees would like the option to recruit additional, and potentially external, Trustees, to enable NWR to grow and move forward. They may not recruit them immediately but would like the flexibility to do this. Josephine invited questions from the members on this.

Q. What sort of background would you be looking for?

A. An individual who could assist us with becoming more diverse, someone with a background in finance, legal or communications. We may not recruit immediately but would like the flexibility.

Q. Could the Trustee be a man?

A. Yes

Q. Could it then be two men (external) and one woman making the decisions at Trustee Meetings?

A. Unlikely, as it is rare for Trustees to send their apologies to Trustee Meetings.

A member commented that the Trustees would still be accountable to the membership. Josephine advised that the M&A sets out Trustee responsibilities and how their behaviour is monitored.

Q. Will we advertise?

A. Yes, we are looking at routes for recruiting. Trustees will put in place a procedure for advertising and interviewing candidates.

Q. Concern was raised about having a man represent us as a women's organisation.

A. The Trustees will choose the best person for the role.

The members in the room and those online were invited to cast their vote. This was done as a show of hands in the room and using the voting buttons on Zoom.

The majority of members in the room and online voted in favour of the resolution. **The resolution was duly passed.**

8. Trustee Elections

No trustees have come to the end of their term this year so no elections were necessary.

9. Questions to Trustees

No questions have been submitted in advance.

10. Vote of thanks

Josephine expressed her thanks to her fellow Trustees and to Josephine Thomson, who had stepped

down as Trustee in 2020. Thanks to all the staff led by Natalie for their hard work this year.

Josephine also thanked all the volunteers who lead local groups, support areas, administer and moderate the Facebook groups and run the special interest groups.

A special award was presented to Sam Bushell, who, this month, will have worked at NWR for 20 years. Josephine commented on the calm and measured way Sam deals with member issues and thanked her for her hard work. Sam was invited to come to the stage and was presented with a card and bouquet of flowers.

Josephine closed the AGM with thanks to all who attended.

DRAFT