

WEST AREA PROJECT

For adults with learning difficulties

Lenton Centre
Willoughby Street
Lenton
Nottingham
NG7 1RQ

Tel: 0115 9056060

Email: wapnottm@hotmail.co.uk



Charity Number: 701055

The West Area Project Annual General Meeting 2021

Starting at 5pm Thursday 16th September 2021,

at the Lenton Centre, Willoughby Street, Lenton NG7 1RQ

Agenda

5.00 Registration and refreshments

5.15 Welcome by the Member Representative:

5.30 Managers Report.

6.00 Chairperson's Report by Alf Stiegler: Chair of Trustees

- Apologies
- Declarations of interest
- Minutes of last AGM
- Treasurers Report and Review of our annual accounts
- Appointment of Auditor
- Resignation of Trustees
- Nominations for election of new Trustees and Board

7.00 Any other AGM Business.

Welcome to the WAP 2021 Annual Report:

We would like to cheer up this report by sharing some photos of Zoe and John's magical wedding!



Everyone at WAP and WAPACTIV2 took full advantage of the forthcoming celebration to arrange wedding themed exercises, celebratory parties and a lot of bad dancing!!! We all enjoyed choosing Zoe's 'Alice in Wonderland' themed presents and some members actually managed not to tell Zoe about her presents which included teapots and cake stands!!!

As a staff group; Yvonne, Tez and Kyle happily immersed ourselves in the occasion and showed people in Heanor how to party! I don't think they will forget us!

As Trustees, members and colleagues we are all united in wishing Zoe and John a very long and happy marriage!



Introducing again the member representatives Martin supported by Rachel:

Welcome to the WAP Annual General Meeting 2021

1. Introduction by Martin Stiegler, member representative:



2. Manager's Report by Yvonne Pearson

Where do I start! It's always so difficult writing a Managers Report later in the year to report on events from over a year ago. With Covid that is an especially difficult task.

On the 18th March 2020 we decided to close the day centre part of WAP down due to the threat of Covid. As a project we immediately started a rota to provide home based support to our most vulnerable members which we continued to provide 7 days a week throughout the Covid period. Many of our members were not confident with computers so providing a video based service was not an option. I well remember at that time that I was angry and appalled at how much social care was being ignored nationally. It was equally hard at that time to know what the future held for WAP. There was no one at the Nottingham City Council who was leading on the Covid response so we had no idea whether we were going to have to give our workers redundancy notices. As usual the only person available to respond to any queries was John Burgin from Direct Payments who literally held the voluntary sector together. He was the only person who responded to emails and worked to try to answer all our queries when the world was so scary and uncertain.

Equally, I would like to thank David Bingham of Space Inclusive who immediately set up a voluntary sector forum to pass on information to organisations. He offered my second lifeline as information at that time was so scarce. It didn't matter that this group was mostly made up of County agencies, it gave me a valuable steer and offered a comparison with what was not happening with the City Council, it meant a lot.

WAP is a small organisation which has always prided itself on having close relationships with the families who use the service. Over the COVID period we were in constant touch with these families and indeed Yvonne still managed to conduct home visits to sort out various benefit queries.

It soon became clear through John that the City Council were prepared to support us in continuing with our service for at least 6 months during the lockdown period. This was welcome news and we thank the City Council for this.

WAP returned on 17th August 2020 to the day centre although many of our members were unsure about returning. We had a new volunteer called Romani Kakad who we were hoping to take on as part of the Kick start scheme announced by the Government in the summer of 2020. Although I was aware that most of our members were exempt from wearing masks I was determined that we would do all we could to protect our members and this meant getting everyone into the habit of wearing masks/shields. To achieve this I bought about £600 of masks and shields so they could be provided free and members could choose different protective wear for each day. I also bought an electronic temperature gauge and spent a fortune on individual sanitizers and anti-bacterial cleaner. I was a woman on a mission!

I am proud to say that having established the importance of mask wearing, it is something we all do. Frankly, I was shocked that some of our peer organisations did not adopt the same policy and it was also noticeable that there were times when they had to close due to Covid infection amongst staff or members.

WAP arrived at the New Year 2021 having run the centred based project successfully since it reopened in August 2020 with no cases of infection. Then the delta virus struck. I was nervous about re-opening but having talked to the Trustees we decided to go ahead. At this time the vaccines were coming on line which meant that I also ended up arguing with the Nottingham Commissioning Group to prove that our staff qualified for the vaccine. It seemed that they did not recognise that our service qualified in the social care category because we were a charity. When I threatened to go to the press the workers were finally allowed to get vaccinated. I then had an equal struggle to get our members vaccinated as a priority group. By this stage research had emerged that people with Down's Syndrome were 8 times more likely to die than their age equivalent peers and disabled people were 50% more likely to die. Again, social care was being ignored.

WAP returned but it soon became apparent that with the increased infectiousness of the Delta variant I could not keep everyone safe. Also one WAP worker, who was isolating

anyway due to a family contact testing positive, became positive herself. So the day centre part of WAP shut down again on 13th January 2021. However, this time we were prepared and were able to introduce a combination of zoom sessions along with a 1 to 1 home based walking time with members.

We continued with this until we returned to the Centre on 1st March 2021. When we returned we decided to add to our existing Covid restrictions, these included:

- Ordinarily, each morning a member would be in the kitchen arranging teas/coffees but we decided to only allow staff in the kitchen.
- Continuing to avoid buses or public transport.
- The Thursday communal meal was again suspended.
- The Friday we pub/meal visit was again suspended.
- We suspended use of the public gym at TLC.

As a project we are proud to say that there has been no known case of Covid amongst any of our staff and members and we have continued to do our best to provide a safe and stimulating service.

On a lighter note I applied for us to join the City Council cleaning team so we got the pick up sticks and Tabards. This is a picture of Lizzie and I rocking it!



3. Chairperson Report by Alf Stiegler

Alf thanked the staff and Trustees for steering WAP through this momentous time and maintaining the WAP service, despite the odds.

4. Minutes of the last AGM meeting

WEST AREA PROJECT AGM MEETING

held on Wednesday 28th October 2020

at 6.30pm at The Lenton Centre

Those present:	In attendance	Apologies
Alfred Stiegler – Chairperson/Trustee Farrah Athar – Secretary/Trustee Russell Jays – Trustee Mary Harrison – Treasurer Ann Stiegler –Trustee	Yvonne Pearson - Project Manager) Martin Stieger – Member Rep Romani Kakad - volunteer	Fay Deller – Trustee Joan West –Trustee Rita Beard Trustee

Agenda Items

1. Apologies: Fay, Joan and Rita sent their apologies.

2. Conflict of interests. None were declared

3. Welcome by the member representative:

Martin welcomed everyone to the meeting which was organised in line with WAP's COVID policy.

4. Manager's Report

Yvonne talked about the difficult climate we continued to operate in as a direct consequence of:

- The **City Council transport policy** which had drastically reduced people's eligibility for transport to the extent that those families suddenly denied transport had found that they could no longer afford for their relatives to attend WAP. Equally, the way the policy had been implemented was concerning because the helpline gave inaccurate information. There also seemed to be no obvious process to explain why those who's transport had been cut had been chosen. The whole policy and its swift implementation caused immense fear, disruption and hardship amongst the members and their families. Yvonne had managed to successfully challenge a decision for a family whose member attended 4 days a week. As the family had other caring responsibilities they could not support the member on public transport. This left them with a transport bill of almost £150 a week which was untenable.
- **Charges for attending the day service.** The number of people being expected to pay towards the cost of their day care had increased across our community. These are people who are entirely dependent on benefits such as ESA and PIP who are being expected to contribute upwards of £60 a week towards their care package. In some cases WAP is being expected to collect these contributions. This has directly led to at least two members leaving WAP as they felt the charges

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were too high for them to be able to afford.

She also mentioned how much additional work she was doing beyond her paid hours to support families with matters including their benefit applications and hospital appointments.

Introduction to AGM business:

Minutes of the last AGM Meeting:

The minutes of the last AGM meeting of Wednesday 2019 were discussed and agreed as accurate and signed by Alf and Mary

Chairperson's Annual Report:

Alf commented on the improvement in WAP's finances over the last year where we had moved from a £6,729 deficit to a £6,444 surplus. He said it was right that WAP should continue to provide extra support to our members and their families in these difficult times.

Alf was pleased that the fundraising for Activ2 had been taken on by the Lenton Centre and commented he could see how important that service had become to its members in terms of supporting healthy living and activity. WAP was now responsible for co-ordinating Activ2.

Alf summarised by thanking the WAP staff for their work and commitment.

Treasurers Report

Appointment of Auditor

Clayton and Brewill were proposed by Alf Stiegler and seconded by Farrah Athar to remain our auditors for next year.

Elections

The whole Board resigned and was re-elected. We all thanked Zenn Athar for his excellent service to WAP and wished him good luck for the future.

Other business

As there was no other business the meeting was declared closed

The Trustees accept these minutes as a true record of the AGM meeting of
Wednesday 28th October 2020:

Signed

Date

5. Treasurers Report April 2020 to March 2021

This year has been challenging for everyone in many ways, members and staff alike.

Yvonne has been proactive in ensuring that the payments received from the Council over the lockdown period have been correct, returning overpayments that we received for members who had left the project some time ago. This has ensured that our financial status is healthy and stable.

The increase in Fairer Charging payments has adversely affected some families and COVID fears are still present. Our financial stability relies on the project having enough members to generate a sufficient level of income to survive and to provide activities that enrich members lives. We all have to hope that Council budget cuts don't make our members financial problems any worse.

The project is extremely lucky to have such excellent staff who are committed to the project and worked hard during lockdown to maintain contact with the members either through zoom or by visits. Thank you to them.

Due to the lockdown and COVID restrictions our bank balance at the end of this financial year was much healthier than previous years which will hopefully see us comfortably through this next year of uncertainty.

Mary Harrison
Treasurer

Donations:

For WAP:

- We had a generous donation of £10,000 from a family who wish to remain anonymous.
- We had a donation from the Quigley family to honour their son Chris who was a much loved member who passed away due to dementia.
- The Magic Little Grants fund which helped to pay for additional dancing/movement sessions.
- The Jessie Spencer Trust.

For WAPACTIV2

- The Edward Gosling Foundation
- Barchester Charitable Foundation
- The Gray Trust
- The Charles Littlewood Trust
- JNDeryshire Trust

WAP ACTIVITIES 2020 to 2021

At the West Area Project we have always prided ourselves on the variety of activities on offer to our members:

Report for Dance and movement sessions with Catherine Chivers

Obviously the lockdowns due to Covid were very challenging for everyone and particularly difficult for many of the members who access WAP. During the first lockdown, although I was teaching numerous classes via Zoom, it wasn't possible or appropriate to provide sessions to the WAP group, so sadly I didn't actually see anyone until I visited the group at The Lenton Centre on 26th August 2020! It was wonderful to see the staff and members who were there and obviously poignant to feel the loss of dear Brian. I was concerned about live teaching the group in such a small space, with everyone wearing masks or visors, getting overheated and struggling with social distancing. However, I was keen to return to live teaching as soon as possible and ideally in the hall, although totally understood The Lenton Centre's need to use the hall for monetary gain. As Yvonne had secured funding for dance/fitness sessions for the group, I was very pleased to get back to dancing with the members who were able to return to the centre, albeit seated in a socially distanced circle. As I qualified to teach Seated SOSA during lockdown this was an ideal opportunity to teach the group some seated routines! Blame it on the Boogie [disco] and Chammak Challo [Bollywood moves] are still often requested by the group now that sessions are feeling a bit more normal! It was great to have a bit of a giggle with everyone again and return to the sense of community and wellbeing that the dance/exercise sessions bring.

Sadly, lockdown hit again and I had to stop teaching the group live. In November as the group were still meeting in person we decided to try Zooming the session to maintain some sense of normality and connection. This was challenging, as the group had to access the class from one laptop, but it was great to see the members and staff joining in with enthusiasm- particularly Martin! The new year lockdown was really tough on everyone and again the group were unable to meet in person for a while. It was fantastic to reconnect in March for more Zoom sessions and we all welcomed seeing each other again, albeit in strange circumstances! I reduced the length of sessions [and my fee] as it was clear that the group found it challenging to access the session from one laptop screen! It was absolutely the right thing to do though in terms of maintaining some structure and connection and certainly was beneficial for the mental and physical wellbeing of us all in the strange times we were living through. I am grateful to Zoe for persevering with the tech so that it was possible to continue to 'meet' on a weekly basis. Thank you to all the WAP family for continuing to make me smile and for your enthusiasm and commitment to the sessions I deliver.

Report from our Arts and Crafts tutor Deborah Clarke from Nottingham College

West Area Project- Arts and Crafts for Beginners

Autumn 2020- Spring 2021

This course aims to give the learners an opportunity to explore, develop and acquire skills in arts and craft-based learning. A practical focus using mixed media and up cycling where possible. Each member is encouraged to complete a finished piece.

The class aims to develop the skills of the learners to understand and apply simple crafting skills e.g. cutting of card and stamping with ink pads. Learners will be encouraged to self-assess and positively feedback on theirs and other class members pieces of work. Also, to suggest next steps in their development. The course aims to actively teach the following skills and develop self-esteem:

- Explore, develop, and acquire skills in Arts and Craft based learning.
- Explore and develop use of products taken or inspired by the natural world and including use of up cycled materials where possible.
- Develop concentration skills when watching teacher demonstrations.
- Understand and enhancing their own artistic input.
- Feeling positive and developing good self-awareness and confidence within the group context.

I met all the members and staff for WAP in October for the first time, after coming out of lockdown. We all had to change how we worked, it was a big ask for some of the members and they coped very well.

The practicalities of social distancing, having individual work desks, single person use of equipment and materials, meant additional planning, prepping and outlay.

Keeping the members safe, and stress free was the biggest hurdle. The group is happy and vibrant, each member crafting in their own unique way, some with minimum guidance, others requiring one to one. We laugh and joke, and everyone is an artist just waiting to get out.

We explore multiple mediums and techniques, often practising and designing working to a theme before we complete our finished piece. We use the natural world around us, and change of seasons to inspire us, encouraging the use of up cycling wherever possible.

Some examples of learner's work included Autumnal hedgehog and fox pictures made from leaves, Halloween gave us a mobile of witches and ghosts made from egg cartons, clothes peg bats spiders and cats. Christmas included fir cone Christmas trees, wreaths, stitched felt gingerbread men and women and of course, Christmas cards, oh so much glitter and sequins!

Then lockdown again- into summer, we managed Spring/Mother's Day cards, paper flowers in jars, papier-mâché Angel fish, window butterflies that shimmer and Loo roll Flowers, and so much more.

Please see photos of members work below:







Review of Activ2 by Zoe Beardsley Activ2 coordinator:

This will be a very short report and this is because for the entirety of the financial year included in this meeting Activ2 has unfortunately been closed. Activ2 closed on the 17th March 2020 which was just the day before the Trustees decided to close the day centre. The decision to close was prompted by the combined concerns of both the TLC and WAP staff about being able to maintain the safety of our vulnerable members with the arrival of the Covid virus.

Equally, because of the nature of the Activ2 service it was difficult to offer alternatives, team sports like cricket and Volley ball on zoom just sounded like a disaster! Also many of our members and their families did not have access to zoom or any social media alternatives. Many of our Activ2 members have spoken about how they felt isolated and cooped up during the lockdown and have said it had a detrimental effect on their mental and physical health, this was down to not only Activ2 being closed but also the closure of other day centres and activities they would normally attend. The members themselves have said that they, in

common with the majority of the population have not only put on weight but have become inactive.

It is to be hoped that in future Activ2 will not have to suffer any more closures and on opening Activ2 will work to combat all the physical and mental health problems which have accumulated during the Covid period.