



SOUTH WEST DORSET TALKING NEWSPAPER

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held at The Moose Lodge, Chickerell Road, Weymouth. 2:30pm Thursday 19th May 2016

Welcome to our Guests:

Ann Sawtell, the Chairman, welcomed everyone to this year's Annual General Meeting and, in particular, extended a warm welcome to our honoured guests; The Mayor of Weymouth & Portland, Councillor Christine James, Jonathan Holyhead CEO Dorset Blind Association and Jenny Clift from Weymouth & Portland Blind Club.

Apologies:

Apologies had been received from Mr & Mrs Neale, J Tremelling, J Marshall, J Jenkins, E Bartlett, M Anderson, J Newington, Mr & Mrs Dunford, J Yallop, J Uff, E Smith, A De Gruchy, S Vernon, T Neville, S Gow, Mrs Rant.

Minutes of the Previous A.G.M. 28th May 2015 were agreed as a correct record of the proceedings and proposed by Mike Deadman, seconded by Ann Beeston and accepted by the meeting.. There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report: Ann Sawtell, our Chair, gave the following report.

“Welcome again Ladies and Gentlemen and a special welcome to the Mayor of Weymouth and Portland Christine James, who is here on her last official engagement before handing over her chain of office tonight to the next Mayor. I understand that the Mayor and Jonathan Holyhead are going to give us a few words afterwards

The main thing that has happened during the past year is, after being there for many years, our move from the Portland Council Offices. These offices are closing shortly so we had to find new premises, and whilst we were grateful to Portland Council for the accommodation over the years it has been nice to re-locate from a cold basement to a warm room upstairs. The Moose Lodge kindly offered the room at the same rent as we were paying at Portland. They had to get a skip to clear it out and the room had to be decorated but it was eventually ready for us to move into. It took a bit of planning but we moved in at last. Special thanks to Mike Deadman for updating our website and disconnecting and reconnecting all the computer and recording equipment so we were able to continue sending out the memory sticks without missing a week. We had a few problems to start but it seems to run fairly smoothly now. I had to have my photo taken for the *Echo* and the *View From* and I hate having my photo taken!

I would like to thank the committee for all the help they have given me over the past year especially with the move.

Last October we finished sending out CDs and are now using only memory sticks. We were only able to do this only through the hard work of Dave Beeston and his team.

We have lost a few listeners and gained a few but our numbers seem to stay around 120 most weeks.

Over the last year Ann Conman, Margaret Jones and Amy de Gruchy have decided the time had come for them to leave us; we appreciate all of the many years of service they have given to us.

We tried holding the AGM in the afternoon this year instead of the evening to see if more people would be able to come unfortunately that doesn't seem very successful.

We are having a collection at Sainsbury on Saturday 2nd July and at Morrison's on Thursday 11th August .On Thursday 21st July we are having a sea front stall, and on Wednesday 17th August. We have, as usual, offered to help with the carnival. If you are able to help with any of these or have any good quality items for stall can you please contact Keith. The Carnival also want people to sell draw tickets in Supermarkets before carnival day, so if anyone is interested in doing that I will let you have the details.

I think that is all for now so to finish we would like you to invite you to join us all for refreshments after the official part of the afternoon and followed by magic and comedy courtesy of DEK- ABBRA for you to enjoy.”

Treasurer’s Report: Steve Rook, our Treasurer, gave the following report.

“Here is my report on the accounts of the South West Dorset Talking Newspaper for the year ending 30th April 2016. Hopefully you all have a copy of the accounts in front of you, which also shows for comparison purposes the 2014-15 figures. (A copy is attached to the File Copy)

As usual, **first of all the summary position.** Our finances are still in a reasonably healthy state, having **£12158.45** in our bank accounts at the end of our financial year. Overall in 2015-16 we spent **£1497.22** more than we received – the deficit being much less than last year when we had bought USB players and a new copying machine to ensure our transfer to just memory sticks for our listeners was successful. Our deficit would have been less had we not had to move offices from Portland to here at the Moose Lodge.

Now I’d like to take you briefly through the **Income and Expenditure account** starting with the income received during the year.

Income – Donations £2583.55 As always we are grateful for the many kind donations we have received and I’ve listed the larger sums we have received –

Mr P R Gawler (Durnovarian)	£1000
Mrs J Luke (in celebration of her 90 th birthday)	£460
Weymouth Carnival	£300
Loyal Manor Lodge	£300

We also received contributions from many other generous individuals and organisations totaling £523.55 - around 20 in all, including some from talks given about us by Eleanor Smith and Dave Beeston

A big thank you to all of those who have contributed

You will see that we received about £1500 more this year.

Fund Raising £512.28

This figure is made up of £194.72 raised by a collection at Morrisons and £317.56 at the Sea front stall.

The “100” Club raised £1045 and you’ll see on the opposite side we paid out £750 in prizes which makes a net contribution of £295 to our funds, some £200 less than last year. As usual, thank you to all of you who have supported these fund raising ventures.

Finally we have received **Interest of £121.15 on our Accounts** with Cambridge and Counties Bank including one penny from our Santander current account. We had to take our money out of the Cambridge and Counties Bank early in 2016 in order to have funds available for our move here and this took us below the £10,000 they required us to have invested with them. We therefore decided to place our funds with Santander so that we could move money from our Deposit account from our current account and vice versa. This transfer was only completed in the last week of April. Unfortunately we will receive only 0.5% interest compared with the 1.8% previously.

Our total income therefore is £4261.98 up by about £1300 from last year.

Now let’s look at our Expenditure

For the **Rent** of our offices in Portland we paid just under the usual **£1000** less a refund of about £50 as we moved out just before the end of the period, in arrears to WPBC and £500 in advance to the Moose Lodge for our new office here. We are very grateful to them for letting us come here as it suits us very well and of course we have thanked Weymouth & Portland Council for renting us our offices in Portland for the past 20 years.

We’ve spent a total of **£1571.37** on **equipment** this year – an decrease of **£2700** from last year. The major purchases this year have been for 100 more memory sticks and 10 more USB players.

Insurance came in at £183.51

Printing and postages etc. of £446.04 and the office phone, answer machine and broadband cost £481.22

The move to these premises cost £876.46 and included the cost of decorating, new carpet, keys and the physical removal itself. I would like to say that the cost would have been considerably higher had it not been

for the excellent organising skills and hard work of Ann Sawtell in particular. The fact that we were able to send out the memory sticks without a break over this period was a considerable achievement.

The “100 Club” prizes - £750 I referred to earlier

Total expenditure was therefore £5759.20 (down by £1400 on last year)

Overall we spent £1497.22 more than we received in income compared to £4220 last year, the difference of £2700 being made up of £1300 more in income and £1400 less expenditure)

So if we turn over and look at the Balance Sheet you’ll see how our overall finances look and I’m happy to tell you that we continue to have healthy reserves.

Our **Assets** are made up of

Cash at the Santander Building Society Current account of

£3158.45

Santander Deposit Account

£9000.00

Giving us **Total Reserves** of

£12158.45

As I have said in previous years we are in a very healthy financial position. In previous years I have said that we needed to have plenty in reserve in case we had to find new accommodation and that has now happened. Our overall annual deficit or surplus is very dependent upon the level of donations we receive and what we need to spend to replace aging or broken equipment so that we can continue to provide and develop our service to listeners.

We do continue to keep good control over our finances and I’d like to thank Ann Sawtell and the Committee for the support they have given me over the past year as your Treasurer.

Finally you will have noticed that the accounts have been audited and found correct by Vic Patterson but if you have any queries on the accounts I’ll try to answer them. Otherwise I submit the accounts for the year ending 30 April 2016 to you for approval.”

Acceptance of the Treasurer’s report was proposed by Richard Rant, seconded by Julie Knight and unanimously accepted by the meeting.

Publicity Officer’s Report: In Eleanor’s absence her report was read out by the Secretary.

“The SWDTN has always been very lucky in the support it receives from the local media. In particular this year we have had several articles published by the Dorset Echo. Radio Solent has also been very helpful in our continuing hunt for technicians, and our treasurer Steve Rook was interviewed at length on the Dorset Brunch. He is an excellent speaker, and is of course very knowledgeable about the Talking Newspaper, having been involved from the earliest days. I also gave a short interview a few days before. It is very difficult to identify the results of publicity like this, as sometimes it may be a few weeks before people decide to get in touch.

Our fund raising activities are always a good time for us to talk to the general public about the service which we offer, Supermarket collections enable us not only to raise money but to have a stand with leaflets, posters and time to chat. Ann and I attended a volunteers’ fair at St Marys Church, another opportunity to speak to people and let them know more about the newspaper.

As you know this year has been an important one for us, as we have moved premises and we did have a very good afternoon with some of our supporters and volunteers visiting the new premises. The ‘View From’ newspaper came and interviewed Ann, and this resulted in a good article. Also the ‘Echo’ came and took some photos, and also published an excellent article. They have been very supportive, and even published an article about this AGM!

We continue to send our publicity material to Doctors’ surgeries, the Sight and Sound Centre, and encourage people to take our leaflets to nursing homes, clubs or groups with visual disability. The Dorset Blind Association has one such group here in Weymouth, and I was pleased to visit them and get some new listeners from their group.

Social media such as Facebook can help raise awareness as well, and Mike has made a Facebook page for us. We are on the *Dorsetforyou* web pages and *My life/My Care* pages. We do give talks, and we have two very shortly, to be given by Dave Beeston, at the Business and Professional Club and St Emmanuel’s church group.

As always the most important thing that any of us can do to publicise the Talking Newspaper service is to talk about

It. Word of mouth is a great tool.”

E. Smith, May 2016

Election of Ordinary Members to the Committee:

Ann Sawtell announced that the existing committee members were all willing to stand for re-election.

Ann Sawtell, *Chair*, Keith Eagleton, *Secretary*, Steve Rook, *Treasurer*, Eleanor Smith, *Publicity*, David Beeston, Ann Beeston, Cathrin Dunford, Graham Ryan, June Ryan, Derek Sawtell.

Their election, *en bloc*, was proposed by Michael Deadman, seconded by Jenny Clifft and unanimously accepted by the meeting.

Any Other Business:

A comment had been received from a ‘Listener’ that letters enclosed with the wallets should be in large print.

Councillor James, Mayor of Weymouth & Portland addressed the meeting. She said that she had not previously been very aware of the Talking Newspaper, indeed during this past year of her term in office she had learnt of many new organisations existing in Weymouth. On a recent visit to the USA she had been in a Fire Station where she noticed that every door had a notice which was also in Braille. Weymouth Fire Safety Centre does not have this facility, and she thought this was worth considering. This led to a short discussion explaining that sight loss most frequently comes to people later in life when their tactile abilities are diminishing, and they are less motivated to learn new skills.

Jonathan Holyhead was invited to address the meeting. He has been with Dorset Blind association for 10 years and although AGM’s are a necessity he sympathised with us for the poor turn out which was a similar experience for the DBA. He paid tribute to the team at Weymouth running the Talking Newspaper, and also to the volunteers throughout the whole of Dorset – very many people working to make life better for the blind and partially sighted. He had estimated that this ran to 40,000 hours of volunteer time per annum.

The DBA will be 100 years ‘old’ in 2018. For most of the previous 98 years its work was aimed at the older members of our population, but now the focus is turning towards the young and those of working age. He is proud of this new development. He concluded with thanking everyone who helps in any way with services for those with impaired sight.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for coming and invited them to stay for light refreshments. At the same time we were entertained by DEK ABBRA, a magician.