

**Minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Westway Trust (a company limited by guarantee) held at 5.30 pm on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at Maxilla Social Club, 2 Maxilla Walk, London, W10 6NQ**

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**Present:**

Trustees

Toby Laurent Belson (Chair), Tom Fitch, Alex Korda, Minal Patel, Huey Walker, Sheraine Williams

Member Organisations represented at the meeting

1. *Age UK Kensington & Chelsea*
2. *Azza Supplementary School*
3. *Baraka Community Association*
4. *Community Accountancy Self Help*
5. *Corner Nine Arts Project*
6. *Dalgarno Neighbourhood Trust*
7. *Dalgarno Supplementary School*
8. *Eri-stars Academic Excellence Academy CIC*
9. *Eritrean Culture CIC*
10. *Gloucester Court Reminiscence Group*
11. *Just Solutions 123*
12. *Kensington & Chelsea Social Council*
13. *Open Age*
14. *Optimum Sports Academy CIC*
15. *People Arise Now*
16. *Pepper Pot Day Centre*
17. *Portobello Radio*
18. *St Helen's Residents' Association*
19. *Silchester Residents' Association*
20. *Swinbrook Residents' Association*
21. *The Golborne Forum*
22. *Venture Community Association*
23. *Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea*
24. *West London Bowling Club*
25. *Youth Action Alliance*

In attendance (non-voting)

Co-optee: Corann Malcolm

Co-chair of the Community Advisory Group to the Tutu Review: Niles Hailstones

Other members of the Community Advisory Group: Nicole Belfon, Emzee Haywoode, Clive Phillips, Marcia Robinson

Executive Team: Venu Dhupa (CEO), Mat Bradley, Patrick Motindo, Ify Obu, Martin Parker

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These minutes record the key elements of the meeting and are not a verbatim account. A recording of the full meeting can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cr7LdrCEQBw>

## 1. Chair's welcome and introduction

The Chair (Toby Laurent Belson) welcomed representatives of member organisations, trustees, members of the community and staff to Westway Trust's 2021 Annual General Meeting. He said that it was very pleasing that this year we could hold an in person meeting due to the relaxation of social distancing and other lockdown restrictions. However, the threat of Covid had not disappeared and many new cases continued to arise locally. This was why the meeting was taking place in a hybrid format, with people having the option to join the meeting online if they were unable, or did not wish, to attend in person.

The Chair added that, in addition to the formal business that needed to be conducted in an AGM, there would be plenty of opportunities for members and other attendees to participate in the discussion and ask questions, as well as hearing from trustees and the Chief Executive about the events of the last 12 months and the changes taking place at the Trust.

The Chair noted the continuing impact of Covid-19 and lockdown on the local community and added that he was very much aware of how badly the pandemic had affected the area, including many of the Trust's members and tenants. He hoped that everyone and their families and friends were remaining in good health and coping with the situation as well as they could.

Those trustees present introduced themselves in turn to the meeting.

The Chair then invited the attendees to join him in a 72-second silence, in commemoration of those who lost their lives in the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

## 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were reported from the following Member Organisations:

1. Abundance Arts
2. All Saints Catholic College
3. Catalyst Housing
4. Coronation Court Residents Association
5. Echoes of Spain 1936-39 Project
6. Gloucester Court Reminiscence Group
7. HELP Counselling and Support
8. Kensington & Chelsea MIND
9. Latymer Community Church
10. Portobello Business Centre
11. Tavistock Crescent Residents Association
12. Westway Community Transport
13. Women's Pioneer Housing Residents' Associations

## 3. For Members to approve the minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting held on 15 December 2020

Members were asked to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record.

The following matter was raised on the minutes:

**Piers Thompson (Portobello Radio, Member Organisation)** referred to his comments at the previous meeting as recorded in the minutes about why the same auditors were proposed for re-appointment year after year without explanation, rather than members being told why these particular auditors were being proposed again. In response, the Chair said that given the turn-over

of key staff in the finance team in the past year, it was decided to retain the same auditors this year to ensure a level of consistency and stability in changing circumstances. However, he gave a commitment to the meeting that the Trust would re-tender for audit services for the 2022/23 accounts.

The 2020 AGM minutes were then **approved** by the members present.

#### **4. Ordinary Resolution 1**

The following resolution was proposed by Piers Thompson (Portobello Radio, Member Organisation) and seconded by Ian Cassidy (Open Age, Member Organisation)

***To receive the Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts and Auditors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2021.***

As background to the resolution, Tom Fitch (Trustee and Chair of the Board's Finance, Audit and Risk sub-committee) gave a presentation on the accounts to aid understanding, with key points highlighted being as follows, and illustrated in the meeting by slides showing relevant extracts from the accounts:

- It was always essential for the Trust to remember that the money it has is the community's money and that the staff are there to provide services for the Trust's beneficiaries.
- The auditors had confirmed through their independent report that the accounts gave a true and fair view of the state of the charity's financial affairs and of its incoming resources and application of its resources.
- Total income for the year was £5,980k, slightly down on the previous year. £449k had been received from RBKC to fund several learning programmes. £385k had been received in grants from the Government's Job Retention ('furlough') scheme – this had helped to reduce financial losses through a difficult period.
- Bad debts of over £2.2m had been written off. This was an exceptionally high amount and was as a result of the challenges of the pandemic faced by tenants. Charity Commission written approval had been needed for this write off.
- Total expenditure for the year was £6,833k. Although this was an increase of £700k on the previous year, this was more than accounted for by the high amount of bad debts written off.
- In summary, if the Trust were a private company, it would be worth about £62m.

Questions raised on the presentation were as follows:

**Piers Thompson (Portobello Radio, Member Organisation)** asked:

*"What was the total cost to the Trust of carrying out the Institutional Racism Review?"*

In response, Tom Fitch said that the total cost of the review and associated work was in the region of £200k. A more detailed response would be provided in the document to be circulated to attendees in the coming days setting out responses on all the questions raised in this meeting.

**Luke Narcisse (tenant) and Emmanuel De Silva (local resident)** asked:

*“Why can’t we see the income from the advertising towers reflected in the accounts? It appears that this has been hidden.”*

In response, Tom Fitch said that for reasons of commercial sensitivity we were restricted on the detail we were able to provide on income from individual tenants. However, within the overall legal framework of how we had to present our accounts - “Statement of Financial Activities” (SoFA) – we would look at how we could make the accounts more accessible and transparent for members and stakeholders, perhaps through expanding the Notes to the Accounts. We would also consider running workshops to explain the accounts in more detail.

The resolution was then put to the vote. **The resolution was carried** and the voting was as follows:

For:	15
Against:	-
Abstentions:	4

## **5. Ordinary Resolution 2**

The following resolution was proposed by Ian Cassidy (Open Age, Member Organisation) and seconded by Angela Spence (Kensington & Chelsea Social Council, Member Organisation)

***To re-appoint Moore Kingston Smith LLP, Devonshire House, 60 Goswell Road, London, EC1M 7AD, as the Trusts’ auditors and authorise the Trustees to fix their remuneration.***

**Piers Thompson (Portobello Radio, Member Organisation)** reiterated his previous comments about the need to re-tender for audit services. However, he was content with the commitment made by the Chair earlier in the meeting on re-tendering.

The resolution was then put to the vote. **The resolution was carried** and the voting was as follows:

For:	20
Against:	-
Abstentions:	2

## **6. Any other business formally notified in advance**

The Chair reported that no other business had been formally notified in advance. **He then concluded the formal business section of the meeting at 6.25pm.**

## **7. Updates from the Chair and Committee Chairs – and screening of video “2020/21 Year in Review”**

This section of the meeting opened with a screening of the video “2020/21 Year in Review” which set out what the Trust did and how it did its work, with a particular focus on the many events and developments in what had been a fast-moving and in many ways unprecedented last 12 months. At the end of the screening the Chair thanked everyone involved in putting together the video.

## Toby Laurent Belson

In opening his update, the Chair acknowledged that 2021 had been a hugely challenging year, in which residents, tenants, members, staff and trustees had all experienced huge impact and in many cases loss of one kind or another. Many tenants faced an existential threat, being legally unable to trade and unable to work with and for the community. In turn, Westway Trust had also faced an existential threat. The challenge and the threat could be seen in the financial numbers and it could be seen in all of us.

More positively, the Trust had made good progress in its transformation towards a truly community-centred organisation. The Chair set out the background and key developments of recent years as follows:

- After three years of watching the Trust make tokenistic changes or changes designed to placate, Westway23 made the decision in 2019 to make a final demand for real change.
- The Trust had failed to bring about the rebalancing of the Board that had been agreed to at the very beginning. This now meant that the Board of Trustees was where real change had to begin.
- Priorities since 2019 had been:
  - The appointment of a new Chair with true commitment to serve the community.
  - An immediate rebalancing of the Board of Trustees to reflect the local community.
  - An end to the corporate executive structure.
  - A new purpose of community grant-making and investment.
  - A new all-inclusive membership structure that represented community concerns and enabled constructive dissent.
- Most of these had either been achieved or were on the way to being achieved. However, the Chair noted that the membership structure was the one aspect that had not yet been seriously addressed but this would now happen.
- The Board and the Chair were where this change must begin. The Board was where a real and achievable strategy of community-led change must develop and be implemented.
- There was a particular focus on how we were able to restructure and rebuild the organisation to achieve new things in new ways with the same resource and retain a similar level of motivation and resilience.
- Removing the barriers between the organisation and the community was a top priority. The Chair stressed that he wanted a Trust that recognised the motivation and resilience in the community properly and was in a position to support it fully.
- His vision for the Westway Trust was to involve hundreds of local people making decisions themselves.
- All Trustees should be capable of chairing meetings and forums, whether immediately or with the right support and development.
- The Chair added that he wanted the Trust to consider all appropriate types of payments, financial support and pastoral support for Trustees.

In closing his update, the Chair said he wanted to record his grateful thanks and appreciation to Mark Lister for all he had achieved as Interim Chief Executive at a crucial time for the Trust in the middle of a pandemic that had presented so many challenges, financial and otherwise.

The Chair then said how delighted he was to welcome Venu Dhupa as the new Chief Executive of the Trust. Venu had been appointed following an extensive selection process that had established a new way for the community and the Board to choose the leadership of the Trust.

Finally, the Chair thanked members of the Executive Team for all their hard work and commitment during the year. He also gave his appreciation to current trustees and those who had left the Board over the last year for willingly giving up their time to provide considerable input to moving the Trust forward and for all that they had achieved collectively as a Board.

Following the Chair's presentation, attendees raised a number of questions and comments:

**Piers Thompson (Portobello Radio, Member Organisation)** asked if the Chair shared his disappointment in the overall engagement levels of members in the work of the Trust. In his view there was a solid core of around 20 members actively engaging. The remaining 50 rarely had direct engagement with the Trust, and certainly not on a proactive basis. In response, the Chair acknowledged that there was a lot more to do to increase member engagement as part of revamping the membership structure. This was now a priority area for the Trust as he had noted earlier.

**Luke Narcisse (tenant)** commented that it was very important for the Trust to keep challenging Catalyst Housing on their housing decisions and overall approach. In response, the Chair said he agreed with this comment. Whilst acknowledging that Catalyst was a member of the Trust, that would not stop the Trust challenging and seeking to intervene on decisions where it seemed appropriate to do so.

**Jacob Rety (local resident)** commented that the Trust should be looking to take back for community use space currently occupied by Pret a Manger and the Preparatory School. In response, the Chair said that the Trust was engaging with RBKC over the spaces they looked after within the estate, with a view to the Trust eventually taking back those spaces.

**Niles Hailstones (Co-chair of the Community Advisory Group – CAG - to the Tutu Review)** read out a collective statement from the CAG about developments over the last 12 months since the publication of the Tutu Report and about what needs to happen next.

The full statement can be heard as part of the recording of the whole meeting at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cr7LdrCEQBw>.

Niles noted that it had taken far too long to reach this point. It was encouraging to see that progress had finally started to be made but there was still a very long way to travel. On behalf of the CAG he welcomed the appointment of Venu as the Chief Executive. Early signs since her appointment were encouraging but the CAG would be watching closely over the coming year to ensure that the fine words translated into clear progress and that the pace of change accelerated considerably. The Chief Executive thanked Niles for his words and reassured him that pressing ahead on this vital agenda for the local community was her top priority.

#### Property and Place Committee

The Chair of this Committee of the Board, Cllr Marwan Elnaghi, was unfortunately unable to attend the AGM due to Council business that evening. However, he had recorded a short video message which was played to the meeting at this point. In that message he spoke about the many challenges that had been faced during the past year as a result of the pandemic and the significant impact of these challenges on tenants and the Trust's income.

Marwan particularly wanted to give grateful thanks to Theresa Shonibare who had recently left the Trust after 14 years outstanding service, mostly as Associate Director, Property and Estates. Her contribution to the work of the Trust and to the local community had been immense and he wished her all the best for the future.

#### Charitable Purposes Committee

The Chair of this Committee of the Board, Eve Wedderburn, was unfortunately unable to attend the AGM due to illness. However, she had prepared a statement to the meeting which the Chair read out. The statement set out the Committee's remit and priorities and reviewed key elements of its activities over the past year, including around reviewing and refocusing our approach to grant-making and supporting local groups to submit bids to funders, as well as considering how the legacy of the Tutu Review could be incorporated into our thinking and practices. The Committee had also received reports during the year from the full range of the Trust's charitable activities.

#### People Committee

The Chair acknowledged the considerable work that trustee Sheraine Williams had undertaken as the inaugural Chair of this new Committee of the Board, a role from which she had recently stood down. Unfortunately Sheraine was unable to attend the meeting but the Chair wished to place on record his grateful thanks for all that she had done to bring the Committee into existence and shape its remit. A particular focus of the Committee's work over the last year had been to oversee the development and implementation of an extensive support and wellbeing programme for staff. This had been especially important for staff morale given all the challenges faced through financial pressures, the restructure programme, capacity issues and the Job Retention ('furlough') scheme as well as individual concerns about the personal impact of Covid.

### **8. Question and Answer session**

At the start of this session Venu Dhupa formally introduced herself as the relatively new Chief Executive of Westway Trust, having taken up appointment full-time in August 2021. She spoke briefly about her background and thanked everyone for the very warm welcome she had received on joining the Trust. She had focused in the early months on getting to meet as many members and other community groups as possible.

The meeting was then opened up to general discussion with, and questions from, members and other attendees. A number of questions had already been submitted in advance or earlier in the meeting – these were now worked through but additional questions were invited as well. The Chief Executive reminded everyone that a document would be circulated to attendees in the coming days, setting out responses on all the questions raised in this meeting, including responses on any points that we were not able to deal with in the meeting.

**Dahabo Isse (Dadihiye Somali Development Organisation, Member Organisation)** asked the following:

*"Funding of Community Accountancy Self Help (CASH) has not been renewed, leading to a potential gap in the provision of this important service locally. Can Westway Trust engage in discussion with Kensington and Chelsea Social Council (KCSC) about future funding and provision of this service for community organisations in North Kensington?"*

In response, the Chief Executive said that the Trust would discuss the situation with KCSC and work with them to investigate how this important service could be retained locally.

**Emmanuel De Silva (local resident)** said that he welcomed the appointment of the new Chief Executive as a breath of fresh air. He asked the following:

*“What is being done to engage the hard-to-reach youth within the local community?”*

In response, the Chief Executive said that one of the most common requests from the community was around provision of space. The Trust planned to review our asset management, taking into account the balance of space that could be shared with the community and the rates and fees for community use of spaces. We were building the tools we needed to conduct this review, which would allow us to take a much more comprehensive look at the balance. One of the six priority areas identified in the Hatch Report conducted in 2019 is to focus on ‘Places and Spaces for Young People’. This priority was reflected in our grants programmes and other deliverables. We were committed to bringing more space into community use.

**Shamaali CIC (local group)** asked the following:

*“What is the Trust doing to support the Moroccan community that has been established in the area since the 1960s?”*

In response, the Chief Executive said that the Trust was interested in exploring themes affecting all communities. Everything the Trust offered was open to every community in North Kensington. However, we were aware it was harder for some communities to access those resources or even know about them. We therefore needed to be better at building two-way communications and dialogue between ourselves and communities, including the Moroccan community. We would be initiating community forums in the coming year and we were committed to ensuring that the Moroccan community, and all other communities, played an active role in those discussions. The Chief Executive noted that we had great connections with the Moroccan community via our Supplementary Schools programme, the Dalgarno Supplementary School for example, and also our Strengthening Parenting programme.

**The First Georgian School in the UK and "Anna & Friends" Kensington and Chelsea Young Disabled Peoples Support Group (local groups)** asked the following:

*“For many years Westway Trust has been providing active support to the Kensington and Chelsea Supplementary School Consortiums. Are there any plans for the Kensington and Chelsea Supplementary Schools to have shared accommodation for a few hours a week?”*

In response, the Chief Executive said that whilst we greatly valued the work of Supplementary Schools in the community, there were presently no plans for shared accommodation.

**Marcia Robinson (Just Solutions 123, Member Organisation)** commented as follows:

*“While we have been hearing a lot of promises, there has been a lot of planning and a lot has happened for which we are grateful, what people want to see now is consolidated realistic and tangible responses on paper, we no longer need to hear how hard it has been to get to this point, we have all lived it, we have all felt it. What we want to see from you Venu is not more talk but action.”*

In response, the Chief Executive said that Marcia’s points were well made and had been fully heard by the Trust. She noted that the Trust had developed a forward-looking ‘Horizon Plan’, which set out our strategic direction and key deliverables over the coming three years. This was all about continuous improvement and transformative activity within the Trust, which would have a knock-on effect on the way we interacted with communities and stakeholders. A summary of the Horizon Plan would be distributed to all attendees at the conclusion of the meeting.

**Ramijo (Optimum Sports Academy, Member Organisation)** asked the following:

*“You said the board members and the trustees are now going to be more reflective of the community and a lot of the comments that I’ve heard today would be resolved by people in the board and the trustees being reflective of the community. How will you ensure the board members and the trustees are now going to be*

*more reflective of the community? How do we decide what's reflective of the community? What is the breakdown of the board membership at the moment in regards to gender, age, ethnicity, background when we're talking about reflectivity?"*

In response, the Chief Executive said that the Board of Trustees was now perhaps more reflective of the local community than at any point in the history of the Trust. This had been achieved through an approach which has put our community at the centre of decisions on the leadership of the charity. She added that we were committed to ensuring that this reflection of the community was maintained and expanded as we moved forward. We would shortly be commencing the recruitment of a further member-elected trustee to the Board. We would be working very closely with our member organisations to ensure they were empowered to make nominations which not only filled any skills gaps but also represented the diversity of the community we were here to serve. A detailed breakdown of the current Board membership would be included in the document to be circulated in the days after the meeting.

**Portobello Green Arcade Tenants** asked the following:

*"The façade and entrances to Portobello Green Arcade are routinely blocked by Portobello Road market traders, impacting footfall in the arcade. What are you doing to resolve this issue for tenants of the arcade?"*

In response, the Chief Executive said that there was a new provision in our contract with the market operator to keep the façade of Portobello Green Arcade on Thorpe Close clear of market stalls. This new provision would be implemented once Community Street works had been completed on the Arcade in the coming 18 months. We were also exploring better signage and lighting. We would raise the position of stalls with the contractor that manages the market to see if anything could be done as we wanted to increase the footfall in the Arcade.

**Dini Kennedy (Portobello Radio, Member Organisation)** commented as follows:

*"Many feel the prices for admission at BAYSIXTY6 Skate Park are too high and thus not inclusive for the local community, Local members of the community have been unable to have access and use of the skate park for those reasons."*

In response, the Chief Executive said that we would look into the detail of admission charges and provide a fuller response in the document that would be circulated in the days after the meeting. She confirmed that the Trust was committed to doing whatever we could to help the community on this.

**Christopher Bradley (Architect, on behalf of Just Solutions 123, Member Organisation)** asked the following:

*"Do you intend to bring that discussion forward with Just Solutions 123 and Trees 4 Grenfell around the Ecology Centre, particularly referencing Bay 13? What are the sorts of timescales that are being talked about internally?"*

In response, the Chief Executive said that the Board of Trustees had acknowledged the remarkable work that has been done with Hope Gardens under the leadership of Marcia Robinson and other organisations she has worked with. The Executive Team shared the Board's view and we were very grateful for all the considerable work that had been done. Trustees would be discussing this matter at a Board meeting the following week. We would be in touch with Just Solutions 123 and other relevant parties with the outcome of the meeting. At present there was no commitment to time-scales internally.

## **9. Close of meeting**

The Chief Executive invited Lesa Thomas to join her on stage. Lesa had trained to become a pilot and was now achieving considerable success in that role. The Chief Executive wished to pay tribute to her as an excellent example of the success that local residents had achieved and as a role model to others. She presented Lesa with a small gift as acknowledgement of her achievements.

The meeting then came to a close. The Chair thanked everyone for their support and input at the AGM. He appreciated all the engagement and challenge by attendees. He was looking forward to the next steps on the journey. He wished everyone well and hoped that the coming year would be a better one for all.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm. Attendees were invited to stay for light refreshments and informal networking.

**Martin Parker**

**Head of Governance & HR**