Minutes of the 18th Annual General Meeting of Westway Trust (a company limited by guarantee) held at 4.30 pm on Thursday 29 January 2026 at the Serbian Club, 89 Lancaster Road, London, W11 1QQ

Present:

Trustees: Toby Laurent Belson (Chair), Andrew Abdulezer, Des Campbell, Ruth Daniel, Abdullahi Nur, Minal Patel, Marie-Therese Rossi, Huey Walker.

Member Organisations represented at the meeting:

1. *Association for Cultural Advancement of Visual Art (ACAVA)*
2. *Azza Supplementary School*
3. *Baraka Community Association*
4. *Becauze CIC*
5. *Community Accountancy Self Help*
6. *Community Development 4 All CIC*
7. *Coronation Court Residents' Association*
8. *Dalgarno Supplementary School*
9. *Eritrean Parents and Children's Association (EPCA)*
10. *Fit For Life Youth*
11. *Grenfell Tower Trust*
12. *HELP Counselling*
13. *Kensington Speech and Language Clinic CIC*
14. *Lancaster West Residents' Association*
15. *Lancaster West United FC*
16. *Midaye Somali Development Network*
17. *Nottingwood Residents' Association*
18. *NOVA New Opportunities*
19. *Portobello Radio*
20. *Progressay Impact CIC*
21. *Silchester Residents' Association*
22. *St Helen's Church*
23. *Swinbrook Estate Residents' Association*
24. *The Dalgarno Trust*
25. *The Gheez Rite Community Association Supplementary School*
26. *The Octavia Foundation*
27. *The Pepper Pot Day Centre*
28. *Ubuntu Pledge CIC*
29. *Venture Community Association*
30. *Westway Community Transport*
31. *Young K and C*
32. *Youth Action Alliance*

Executive Team: Venu Dhupa (CEO), Mat Bradley, Robert Harvey, Patrick Motindo, Martin Parker, Jane Sandeman.

These minutes record the key elements of the meeting and are not a verbatim account, nor do they include every comment made. A recording of the full meeting can be viewed at: Westway Trust AGM 29 January 2026 - YouTube

1. Chair's welcome and introduction

The Chair (Toby Laurent Belson) welcomed everyone to Westway Trust's Annual General Meeting and thanked the Serbian Orthodox Church for hosting the event once again and welcoming us into their space. He hoped that the meeting would help to energise everyone for the year ahead.

The Chair commented that the year under review at this meeting had been incredibly busy but with so many achievements and other positive developments to highlight.

He then turned to his future at the Trust and confirmed that this would be his final AGM as Chair and a trustee. He would be standing down at the conclusion of his second term at the end of February. A lot of thought had been given to the succession plans. He reported that as an interim measure trustees Minal Patel, Ruth Daniel and Andrew Abdulezer would be leading the Trust. However, he reflected on how he had joined the Board and became the Chair. He was the first trustee to be recruited through a genuinely open recruitment process that had involved community members at all stages. This had set the benchmark for future open recruitment processes. It was really important for people to put themselves forward and to become involved in the Trust, either by applying to join the Board or by engaging in so many other ways. He encouraged everyone to think seriously about this. He particularly recommended the option of becoming a co-opted member of one of the Board's sub-committees.

Tom Fitch (Community Accountancy Self-Help and Swinbrook Residents' Association) asked how many of the current trustees were local residents. The CEO undertook to check the precise number. **(Post-meeting note:** *Five out of the nine trustees on the Board at the time of the meeting lived and/or worked within North Kensington, whilst a further trustee lived elsewhere in the Borough and the remaining three trustees either lived within the wider Area of Benefit or had very close connections with North Kensington*)

Each trustee present then spoke briefly to introduce themselves to the meeting.

2. 72 seconds silence in memory of the Grenfell Tower fire victims

The Chair invited attendees to join him in a 72-second silence, in commemoration of those who lost their lives in the Grenfell Tower tragedy, as well as those in the local community who had passed recently.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were reported from the following:

Member Organisations

Abundance Arts

Age UK Kensington & Chelsea

Gloucester Court Reminiscence Group

Kensington & Chelsea Social Council

Latymer Community Church

Making Communities Work and Grow

Open Age

Trellick Tower Residents' Association

West London Bowling Club

Trustee

Jonathan Kelly

4. Reports from sub-committee Chairs

Charitable Purposes Committee

The Committee's Chair Minal Patel presented this report on the highlights of the Committee's work during 2024-25. She covered the following:

- She began by noting that this had been a year defined by growth, impact, and a strengthened commitment to serving communities across North Kensington.

- This past year had seen the Westway Trust deliver £383,000 in grant funding to community groups and local residents. This was not only a significant achievement, it represented the largest grant-giving programme undertaken by the Trust in many years. It demonstrated both the scale of need in our community and our determination to meet that need with meaningful, targeted support.

- A portion of this funding continued our long-standing partnership with Everyone Active, supporting football pitch access and sports bursaries at the Westway Sports Centres. These programmes remained essential community deliverables within our contract, and they directly enabled young people and families to access sports, physical activity, and the wellbeing benefits that come with them.

- This year also marked the first full cycle of our Transformation Grants programme. Through this initiative, we distributed £120,000 to three organisations delivering programmes designed to confront and challenge the systemic injustices faced by many residents of North Kensington. Now, with a full year of delivery behind us, we were beginning to see the real-world outcomes. A powerful example was the work of The Traveller Movement, which had produced new educational materials for decision-makers and authorities. These resources shone a light on the systemic barriers faced by Traveller communities nationally, drawing heavily on the lived experience of families in Stable Way within our own estate.

- Building on this progress, Minal was pleased to share that £118,000 more had been allocated for further transformational projects in the coming year. This next round

of work would be delivered by the Women's Trust and the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre—two organisations with deep roots in North Kensington and a proven ability to drive change.

- Another major area of focus for the Committee had been the review and refinement of the Trust's Emergency Response Grants. The need for rapid intervention was increasing, and this programme—now steadily growing year on year—had become essential for some of the most vulnerable residents across our community. Over the past year, we had worked to ensure that emergency applications were processed within 48 hours, enabling us to meet urgent needs quickly, respectfully, and effectively.

- The Committee had also continued its oversight of the Trust's education services, including Adult Learning, Early Years provision through our crèche and nursery, and the Westway network of Supplementary Schools. These remained among the Trust's most valued and high-impact services. As these programmes had expanded, so too had the challenges, particularly with securing the affordable space needed for our supplementary schools to continue thriving. The CPC had engaged closely in identifying long-term, sustainable solutions to support these vital learning environments.

- Finally, Minal wanted to acknowledge the exceptional work of our award-winning Cost of Living Crisis Clinic, delivered weekly at the Trust. In the past year alone, the clinic had supported more than 2,300 clients, many of whom were living with disabilities, long-term health conditions, or housing insecurity. Through benefits claims, appeals, and grant applications, the clinic helped residents secure £670,000 in financial support—a lifeline for many families navigating extremely challenging circumstances.

- Taken together, this had been a year of ambitious activity, grounded in compassion, community leadership, and a genuine commitment to justice. The Committee was proud of the progress made—and even more committed to the work that lay ahead. Thank you to everyone—staff, partners, and community members—who had contributed to making this year so impactful.

Property and Place Committee

The Committee's Chair Andrew Abdulezer gave his report on the Committee's key activities during 2024-25 as follows:

- He started by introducing himself again to the meeting, noting that he had been an architect for almost 30 years and had sat on this Committee since becoming a trustee in 2024. He had taken over the Chair role from Marwin Elnaghi in July 2025 following the end of Marwan's term as a trustee. Andrew paid tribute to Marwan for the boundless energy and enthusiasm for the estate that he had brought to the Chair role and for his commitment to improving the lives of everyone who lived and worked there. He added that playing a role in the care of the estate was a task and duty that all trustees took on with humility and seriousness.

- During 2024-25 there had been a continued expansion of the Trust's Property Team, enabling us to deliver a more managed structure in our approach to the estate. We had been proactive in addressing the long-term health of the estate, completing audits around sustainability, access and security. Andrew thanked members, tenants and beneficiaries for their valuable input into these pieces of work. The outcomes would give the Trust a baseline understanding of our strengths and weaknesses in these areas, as well as information we needed to plan future works and upgrades effectively.

- Andrew noted that the Trust had continued during the year to make more spaces available for the community, including in 1 and 6 Thorpe Close and in the Acklam micro units.

- The Trust had progressed and completed the Community Street project, including at the Westway Sports Centre, Pear Tree Walk, the re-levelling and opening up of Acklam Walk, new lighting in various places across the estate, the completion of the Acklam Toilets refurbishment and the opening of the information hut on Acklam Walk. New and improved directional signposting had been brought in across and connecting the estate.

- Through a partnership with Grow To Know, the landscape and pavilion in Maxilla Gardens had been completely transformed and was an amazing example of thriving biodiversity and thoughtful landscape design which provided a vital and restorative community asset.

- Andrew said that he was very proud of the Trust's landscaping team for having achieved the Green Flag Award for their work at Portobello Green as we continued to learn of the positive impacts of our green spaces on the physical and mental health of all our communities.

- Finally, he noted that the Trust had now completed the demolition of long neglected structures at 35 Stable Way. The Trust had opened a constructive dialogue with both RBKC and the residents on the Travellers site about the future of this area of the estate. We would be working through the opportunities and potential of Stable Way's future development. Through partnerships with beneficiaries and stakeholders the Trust would be looking for ways to reintroduce community focus into this unique urban landscape.

People Committee

The Board's Chair reported in his capacity as Chair of the People Committee on the highlights of the Committee's work in the 2024-25 year under review. He covered the following:

- As well as chairing the Board, he was also very pleased to have chaired the People Committee since 2022. He reminded the meeting that the Committee's main roles were to oversee the Trust's People Strategy, Policies and Processes, ensuring they supported the Trust's determination to put the community at the heart of all we did and our ambition to become an 'employer of choice'. The Committee also oversaw work on trustee recruitment, induction, training and development.

- The Committee met five times during 2024/25. The core trustee members working with the Chair on the Committee during the year were Minal Patel and Niamh Graham. Other trustees had attended some meetings, especially Ruth Daniel. The Chair said he was very grateful to all trustee colleagues for their input to the Committee's work. He wanted to record particular thanks to Niamh who had stood down from the Board shortly after the year under review. He had greatly valued the insights and contributions Niamh offered from a younger person's perspective and this proved very useful to our work. He added that it was very important to have diverse voices on the Board.
- We had also welcomed onto the Committee during the year two co-optees – Natasa Graovac Atacan and Kay Scott – who had brought with them different and helpful perspectives on the Committee's work, not least from Natasa's considerable experience as a HR professional. Both had strong connections with the local area.
- The Trust's commitment to ensuring the welfare of all our staff had remained as strong as ever during the year. A range of wellbeing workshops and seminars had been offered, including piloting sessions provided by St Charles' NHS, and we had now implemented a site on the staff intranet that provided a wealth of information on all aspects of wellbeing and links to where staff could find out more about subjects of interest.
- We had 79 staff on our payroll at the end of March 2025. Recruitment activity had kept the HR Team busy during the year, with 27 different recruitment exercises taking place and around 700 applications received in total. We had continued to expand the channels through which we advertised our jobs, including finding ways of better targeting jobs that local residents were likely to be particularly interested in.
- We had a particular focus during the year on overseeing and reviewing the plans and progress on working towards our external assessment against the Investors in People standard, which took place in November 2024. The Chair was delighted to say that we were accredited at the Silver Standard, two levels up from our previous rating. An excellent result and a great testament to all the hard work that had been put in to address those areas that the previous assessment had identified as needing more work. But we were not resting on our laurels. We were now aiming for a Gold accreditation in our next assessment and work was ongoing to get us in the best possible shape for hopefully achieving that within the next two years.
- The annual staff survey continued to provide us with valuable information on those aspects where staff felt we were doing well and those aspects that staff told us required further development and improvement.
- We continued to oversee progress on taking forward the HR-related recommendations from the Tutu Foundation Report, including the review of our use of zero hours contracts. The Chair was pleased to say that all staff who wished to transfer from a zero hours contract had now been offered a permanent contract.
- Our new trustees who had joined the Board in the early months of the year under review or at the end of the previous year had benefitted from our new expanded induction programme for new trustees that we had been developing for a while. Feedback from the trustees on this induction programme was very favourable.

- We had also looked at ways in which we could enhance our training and development offer to trustees throughout the period of their trusteeship, including continuing with the personal allowance for each trustee to undertake training and development opportunities of their choosing that they felt would enhance their effectiveness as trustees.
- Finally, the Chair wanted to record his grateful thanks to the HR Team led by Martin and supported by Michelle, Elaine and Shabana who had worked hard throughout the year to deliver the good progress we had continued to make.

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

The Interim Chair of the Finance Audit and Risk Committee Marie-Therese Rossi gave the following statement as an overview of the Westway Trust accounts for 2024-2025:

- The main highlights from the Statement of Financial Activities were that we had received a total income of £7.09 million, with expenditure of £6.85 million. This had resulted in a surplus of £241,000 on ordinary activities of the Trust. We had also experienced a reduction in the valuation of the estate to the tune of -£842,000. This had subsumed the small surplus that had been made on ordinary activities to give a net loss of -£601,000.

- The fall in the value of the estate was due primarily to the need for the refurbishment of the Sports Centre. Due to accounting regulations, any change in the value of the estate was required to be included in our main results seen here in the financial statements net income figure. Marie-Therese noted that in the past this would have been treated as an unrealised loss and would have been excluded from the income statement.

- As well as keeping up the value of the estate, we had contributed £500,000 to our community through direct grant awards and subsidies and in contributing to running costs of our community groups. There were other contributions that pushed the figure higher and we would continue to ensure that our overall contribution rose each year.

- The financial statements included the balance sheet which showed total net assets of £61.8 million of which £54 million related to our property portfolio and fixed assets. Our working capital, representing current assets less current liabilities, sat at a healthy £8 million. We had a cash reserve of £5.4m.

- In closing, Marie-Therese wished to thank the Finance Team for their work. She added that we had the aim of completing the audit of the 2025/26 accounts earlier than in recent years, so that we could present the next Annual Accounts to the Membership before December 2026.

Formal Business

5. For members to approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25 March 2025

The Chair invited comments on the accuracy of the minutes and any key omissions to be raised.

Tom Fitch (Community Accountancy Self-Help and Swinbrook Residents' Association) noted that the minutes did not include the list of possible compensation amounts that a Tribunal could award in racism and other discrimination cases. He had requested that this specific information be included and felt that the failure to do so had been deliberate.

Marcia Robinson (Hope Gardens) said that despite her many years of discussion and engagement with the Trust, she had been told on arrival that Hope Gardens was not a Member Organisation and hence would not be able to vote in today's meeting. The Chair responded that this matter would be looked into. **(Post-meeting note**: *on further investigation it was confirmed that Hope Gardens had never applied to become a Member Organisation. Just Solutions 123 had previously been a Member Organisation but Marcia had been informed that it was not possible to transfer membership from that organisation to Hope Gardens as they did not share the same constitution. The onus was on Hope Gardens to submit a membership application in their own right*)

The following motion was then put to the meeting:

"That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25 March 2025 be approved."

The motion was put to the vote. **The motion was approved** and the voting was as follows:

For:	24
Against:	2
Abstentions:	1

6. Ordinary Resolution 1

Tom Fitch (Community Accountancy Self-Help and Swinbrook Residents' Association) raised the following points on the 2024-25 accounts presented to the meeting:

- He questioned the rent charged for land on Acklam Road and felt this should be looked into.

- There should be a list of all Trust-owned buildings that should be handed to the auditors for review,

- He asked questions about the cashflow statements, to which Patrick Motindo (Senior Manager, Strategic Finance) responded, talking Tom through Notes 24 and 25 to the Accounts which explained the points raised.

Djalis on behalf of herself and other Portobello Arcade tenants raised matters relating to service charge delays. She commented that she now had two years of service charges to pay, amounting to almost £600 a month. The charge had almost doubled but she said the amount was wrong and it was also unrealistic. She noted that many tenants could no longer afford to rent in the Arcade.

In response, the CEO thanked Djalis for sharing her experience. She then explained the principles of service charges that had resulted in the current amount.

The following Resolution was then put to the meeting, proposed by Venture Community Association and seconded by Nottingwood House Residents' Association:

To receive the Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts and Auditors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The Resolution was put to the vote. **The Resolution was carried** and the voting was as follows, including proxy votes:

For:	35
Against:	2
Abstentions:	0

7. Ordinary Resolution 2

Tom Fitch (Community Accountancy Self-Help and Swinbrook Residents' Association) said that the appointment of new auditors for the Trust was long overdue. He was concerned about the length of time that Moore Kingston Smith had been the Trust's auditors as it encouraged a lack of objectivity to develop in undertaking the audits.

In response, the CEO noted his view. She gave a commitment that the Trust would re-tender for new auditors within the next two years once the new financial systems were in place.

The following Resolution was then put to the meeting, proposed by Lancaster West Residents' Association and seconded by Westway Community Transport:

"To re-appoint Moore Kingston Smith LLP. Devonshire House, 60 Goswell Road, London, EC1M 7AD as Westway Trust's auditors and authorise the Trustees to fix their remuneration."

The Resolution was put to the vote. **The Resolution was carried** and the voting was as follows, including proxy votes:

For:	32
Against:	0
Abstentions:	3

8. 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 5.50pm.**

9. Niles Hailstones, Chair of the Community Advisory Group (CAG)

The CEO invited **Niles Hailstones, Chair of the Community Advisory Group (CAG)**, to address the meeting. Niles spoke in particular about the following:

- He questioned how the Trust could present itself as doing so well and achieving so much when to his mind nothing was actually happening.

- He asked who measured the extent of the Trust's achievements other than the Trust itself. He thought that we should ask the people we dealt with about how they perceived the Trust's progress.

- He asked what was happening with areas like the Stables and Maxilla.

- He noted what he saw as the continuing lack of meaningful engagement between the Trust and the Community Advisory Group, as well as between the Trust and the community generally.

- He highlighted the huge amount of work that community members routinely put in to bringing about change and regretted the severe impact it had on the health and wellbeing of so many.

- He pointed out that the Trust's Chair had not attended a meeting of the Community Advisory Group for more than two years. He considered this to be an insult and arrogance on the Chair's part and was a great disappointment.

- He concluded that the Trust found the truth too difficult to deal with and preferred instead to retreat to its comfort zone and present its own unrealistic assessment of matters.

10. Members questions submitted in advance

The CEO answered the following questions submitted by members in advance of the meeting:

(i) **Marwin Elnaghi, Nottingwood House Residents' Association** asked:

"What financial and general support is available to member organisations to improve online presence and collaboration?"

In response, the CEO said that the Westway Trust was investing significantly in strengthening engagement with our member organisations. A key part of this was our twice-yearly Members' Away Days, which provided a dedicated space for members to speak directly with the Trust team about the support they needed, whether that was training, tailored advice, practical assistance or opportunities to connect with other organisations facing similar challenges.

In terms of financial support, all member organisations were welcome to apply to the Trust's annual grants programmes, which offered funding for a range of project-based initiatives. While we were not able to fund core organisational costs, we were always keen to explore collaborative approaches, particularly where a challenge was shared across multiple members. If improving online presence or digital collaboration was an area where several members would benefit, we would be very happy to discuss how we might support collective solutions.

(ii) **Filsan Deeq, Midaye Somali Development Network**, asked:

"I am aware that Westway has recently awarded grants, but it is worrying that some funding has gone to organisations based outside Kensington and Chelsea, who may not have the same depth of connection or reach within this community. With this in mind, I would like to know whether Westway is willing to review its grant-giving process to ensure local charities are prioritised so that the community can genuinely benefit.

I would also like to ask whether Westway is considering ways to support the long-term sustainability of local charities, including reviewing and potentially reducing the current charity rent rates."

In response, the CEO said that all the Trust's grants programmes were designed in consultation with our Charitable Purposes Committee and had a single purpose: to benefit residents living in the five wards of North Kensington. The Trust prioritised supporting local charities and community organisations that delivered meaningful social impact within our community, and the vast majority of our grants went to organisations based here in North Kensington.

The Transformation Grants programme focused on long-term, systemic change, particularly around tackling inequalities and advancing social justice. While applicants to this programme did not have to be based within North Kensington, they must demonstrate a clear commitment to delivering tangible benefits directly to local residents.

A good example was The Traveller Movement. Although not based in North Kensington, they were awarded a Transformation Grant specifically to work with the Traveller community at Stable Way. Their work shone a light on the systemic inequalities that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities faced across the country, using the lived experience of Stable Way residents to drive change and amplify their voices.

We remained committed to ensuring that North Kensington organisations could thrive, and we continued to explore ways to strengthen the support we provided — including how our wider policies and programmes could best contribute to the sustainability of local charities.

There were many other ways in which we offered benefits to charities working locally, for example with rental subsidies on office space.

11. Non-member questions submitted in advance

The CEO answered the following questions submitted by non-members in advance of the meeting:

(i) **Paprika Williams, Hot Stuff Studios** asked:

"What is the budget for the regeneration of Stable Way as it is such a neglected part of the Estate?"

In response, the CEO said that she would first focus on the year under review. She agreed with Paprika about Stable Way, as we had not been able to address the issues there as part of Community Street because the scale of the task in Stable Way was huge and needed to be tackled over many years. Community Street identified 28 projects and a community panel made the decision on which projects we would take forward.

The Trust had recently made the right strategic decision - which had been outstanding for many years - to invest in Stable Way.

However, last year we had decided we would invest in improving the environment, which we had done, we have cleared the East Side of Stable Way. These were units that were either contributing to challenges to security, or not paying rent, and affecting the cost of the Trust's Insurance premiums overall.

We had so far invested about £250,000 into that area and we had indicated to the Council that we expected them to match that investment. The Road was an unadopted road but it led to Stable Way Close which was a Council Managed Traveller's Site. This level of investment would amount to just under half the funds that we invested in the whole of Community Street. The residents in Stable Way Close were our nearest residents and we wanted to make improvements that would positively affect their quality of life.

The CEO added that she had recently heard from Pat O'Donnell who lived in Stable Way Close and he had said:

"We are pleased at the efforts the Trust has made to work with us and to make improvements in Stable Way, particularly in the last 14 months. We think others should take their lead."

We had not set a budget for future works as yet, but we would continue to ensure that residents and tenants were informed and involved in each stage of improvement.

(ii) **Carol Scott, Mangrove Community Association**, asked:

"Where are the responses, review of Prof. Gus John's enquiry into the institutional racism paid research report and its findings? Why have findings not been published for the local community?"

In response, the CEO said that Professor Gus John had been commissioned by Westway Trust in 2023 to carry out the 'Review of the Review'. He had carried out extensive field research including a series of interviews with the Community Advisory Group, Westway staff, former Trustees and individuals who submitted testimony to the Tutu Review.

Sadly, shortly after completing the field work, coming on for two years ago now, Professor Gus John suffered very serious ill health and had since been unable to complete the report. He had remained in close contact and despite being unable to complete the full report, he had committed to completing the work which would provide key findings, themes and recommendations. We were expecting a draft by the end of

February and we would publish the full report when it was finalised. We were dependent on and praying for Professor Gus to maintain good health.

This delay was not to do with the Westway Trust and his report would be published when it was complete.

12. Questions and discussion from the floor

Cllr Eva Jedut (Councillor, Dalgarno Ward) referred to information about Westway Trust on the Charity Commission website and noted in particular that several staff members received salaries in excess of £60k, with one staff member appearing to receive a salary of £109k. In response, Martin Parker (Head of Governance and Organisational Development) said that the figures quoted on that website were not the actual salaries received by the staff members concerned but also covered the full costs of the benefits paid to those staff, including employer pension contributions. **(Post-meeting note:** *Cllr Jedut followed up this discussion in an email exchange with the CEO*).

Sam (Lancs West Voices) thanked Westway Trust for holding the AGM and for being transparent unlike the case with his own estate. He said it was disappointing that there were only a few members from North Kensington and something needed to be done about this. He also asked if individual meetings could be arranged with the Trust.

Sam continued by thanking the Trust also for their help since the Grenfell Tower tragedy and for their support in the justice campaign but he said that more was needed than financial support or helping out at a few events. Social media support from the Trust would be particularly welcome.

In response, the CEO said that there were twice-yearly Members Away Days which all members were encouraged to attend. Members were always welcome to set up meetings at any time during the year. She confirmed that the Grenfell grants programme would continue until at least the ten-year point and the Trust was hoping to increase the amount of money available under this programme.

Tayshan Hayden-Smith (Grow To Know) introduced himself as someone who had been born and raised locally and then spoke about how he had been involved with the Trust in various ways over the years. He commented that the Grenfell tragedy had been the catalyst for him taking notice of what was actually happening and he was continually learning about the history of the Trust and the structures that had governed and made decisions on behalf of him as he grew up. A key moment for him had been meeting Adam Ritchie who had been part of the movement that established Westway Trust.

Tayshan questioned how we had got here. He reflected on his lived experience with the Trust and shared his disappointment and astonishment at the disconnect with the Trust in terms of understanding community sensitivities and decision-making on behalf of the Trust. He had encountered a lot of difficulty and adversity in working with the Trust and he had now had to consider moving into legal territory. He found it ironic that the organisation was called Westway Trust but there was no trust in it.

He continued by highlighting that in his opinion the Trust was underestimating the persistence and new found energy of a younger generation ready to take over the baton from the likes of Adam Ritchie, Niles Hailstones and all those who had stood their

ground over the years and fought for opportunity and access. North Kensington was known as the frontline for a lot of social justice movements that had national impact. He felt a duty towards the younger generations to be able to benefit from some of those movements, rather than allowing it all to be in vain.

Tayshan concluded by saying that he did not want to think of the Trust in the same way as the Council for whom he had no respect. However, he wanted the Trust to know that his concerns were not going away. Many of the issues were systemic and were reflective of some of the issues around institutional racism, with much of what the Tutu Foundation Report had highlighted as needing urgent attention still being experienced six years on.

In response, the Chair thanked Tayshan for his thoughtful and thought-provoking contribution. The question of how we had got here was a good and interesting one, he did not think that a lot of what Tayshan had said was wrong. Some of the issues faced were enormous. We existed with systems all around us and we all relied on those systems to be effective and function properly. However, challenges arose when they became very difficult to work with and they were fixed in certain ways or began to exhibit characteristics that were exclusionary or marginalising. Adam Ritchie was a great place to start in answering the question but 50 years had passed since the early 1970s and we needed to look across the 50 years and plot the different steps the Trust had taken in that time. The Chair said that his personal view from all his considerable reading and research was that things had started in a problematic way with the Council and that has perpetuated itself over the years until about 2014/15 when work had started to bring about change and to ensure that it was local people who led the organisation and could begin to face up to some of the systemic issues that had simply ben left untouched hitherto. He had found this incredibly challenging throughout the six years he had been working on this and responding to the challenges.

Turning to earlier comments from Niles Hailstones, the Chair said that he did not want to respond to what Niles had said specifically and personally to and about him in this meeting. However, he did agree that a lot of issues did speak to the points Niles had made about the impact of all the work on individual stress levels and general health. He had been forced to face up to his own health concerns and he knew a lot of the people in the room had needed to do the same. He acknowledged that engaging with these issues was serious work but it was an opportunity that had been denied to the community until he had come into the organisation. He had spent five years trying to open up the doors of the organisation but the previous leaders of the Trust had kept the doors firmly closed. He accepted that there would be many challenges, disagreements and differences of opinion along the way as that was the nature of change and the reality of facing up to the toxicity of the previous 50 years. However, he had come into the organisation to take responsibility and to start to bring about change. He could only do so much though and the real solution lay with everyone in the room, all of whom should be part of the change.

A brief further exchange then followed between the Chair and Tayshan, with Tayshan disagreeing with the key points made by the Chair. They concluded that they would have to agree to disagree on these matters.

Jacob Rety (local resident) commented that institutional racism went much wider than the Trust, it was endemic in many other places too, including the Council, the police, schools and the market office.

Turning to the Stables, Jacob said that there had still been no proper or satisfactory resolution to a long-standing matter that had removed a place much loved by the community. It was very difficult to move forward when there were still significant concerns in the community about this and other matters. It was upsetting to see Sarah Tuvey having been treated so badly over the years and her business destroyed.

He referred to the earlier comments from Niles Hailstones and said that Niles was a very good gauge for progress that the Trust had made with its transformation and his assessment that there had been little progress should be taken very seriously. Jacob noted that Niles had led by example since starting Westway 23 and he brought a perspective to which it was very important to listen.

Jacob expressed his continuing disappointment with the Trust and noted that he had been more successful in challenging the Council than he had been in various matters raised with the Trust.

Finally, Jacob mentioned that in his capacity as a locally-based website designer he noticed that there had been no opportunities to tender for the design of the Trust's new website. It was disappointing that the work had been given to a Brighton-based company when there were numerous website designers in the North Kensington area.

Henock Hailemariam (Ubuntu Pledge) said that it was very easy to focus on the challenges of the past but we needed to move forward and look at current priorities such as tackling digital inclusion in the community, as well as planning for the future. His experience was that the Trust was transparent and progressive when it came to liaising with the community and involving the community in various aspects of its work.

Moktar Alqaderi (Progressay Impact) said that he wanted to express his gratitude to the Trust for all the work they did in and with the community. It was sometimes easy to forget that everyone was human and that people should not be treating the Trust as a collective.

He added that he was disappointed to hear about litigation claims against the Trust. He noted that litigation could result in a waste of time and money for all concerned and every effort should be made to avoid ending up in court. In response to a question from Moktar, the CEO confirmed that nobody at the Trust was aware of any unresolved litigation at the present time.

Sammy (Lancaster West United) requested that the Trust should organise more activities for the youth of the borough.

Eyob Tesfazgi (Fifty Plus Aged Eritrean Welfare Association) said that RBKC had forgotten about the local community whereas Westway Trust had a much more positive and supportive relationship with the community. He added that the value of Westway to the community should be recognised more widely, especially at a time when RBKC was cutting off the voluntary sector.

Nour-eddine Aboudihaj (Grenfell Tower Trust) thanked the Trust for observing the 72 seconds of silence in the meeting and for all the work undertaken throughout the year

with those impacted by the Grenfell tragedy and who remained frightened and angry at what happened, with some being vocal about the Trust. He said that this was not the occasion to take any of that anger and fear out on the Trust and he could personally testify that the Trust had changed and was changing. However, he noted that some engagements he had with the Trust were positive and effective whereas others were not. He added that the Trust should look at improving staff development, ensuring that actions were timelier and more effective, although he recognised that communities needed to play their part too. He felt that it would be great if the Trust could tap into some of the talent in the community and work together to the benefit of the community and the Trust. Finally, he thanked the Chair and others who had opened the space to have conversations on how to move forward together. This was a major step forward from the situation previously.

Rosita Lynch (Portobello Shack, local business) said that she found the Trust to be supportive of business and was grateful for all the help provided to her. She thought that this AGM had been a good one but did however feel that the same issues kept coming up year after year. Clear dialogue and engagement between the Trust and communities throughout the year was essential, not just once a year in this forum. She added that the Community Advisory Group needed to meet with all the communities of North Kensington.

13. Close of meeting

The Chair invited Marwin Elnaghi to close the meeting with some final reflections. Marwan had recently stood down from the Trust Board but continued in his role as a local Councillor. The Chair highlighted how much work Marwan did for the local community and how visible he was across North Kensington. He regarded Marwan as a role model for how visible trustees should be in the community.

Marwan thanked the Chair for his kind introduction and noted that he was attending today as a representative of his Residents' Association in which he had been involved for more than twenty years. He was pleased that the AGM had gone so well and had been organised so effectively. He did hope, however, that trustees and senior staff had been listening to the concerns raised by community members in the meeting and would reflect on how best to address them. Continuing dialogue with the community would be essential. He hoped too for more collaboration from the Trust with its members.

Marwan also commented on the challenges the community faced with a Council that seemed increasingly detached from the community. He highlighted the forthcoming Council debate on the budget cuts and said how important it would be for the community to make its collective voice heard loud and clear.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and participating in the meeting and for all the support and engagement during his time as the Chair. He encouraged everyone to think seriously about how they could best get involved in the Trust's work in the year ahead.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm.

Martin Parker
Head of Governance & Organisational Development