

# *Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of The Guildford Institute*

**Thursday 6 March 2025, 3.15pm  
Assembly Room, The Guildford Institute**

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## **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Brian Creese, welcomed those present.

## **AGENDA ITEM 1: Approval of Minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> AGM held on Thursday 29 February 2024 and matters arising**

The minutes of the last annual general meeting held on Thursday 29 February 2024 were approved. There were no matters arising.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2: Report of Annual Report**

The Chairperson presented highlights of the Annual Report 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.

### **Our Offer:**

- Offered 212 courses, which amounted to over 1,114 hours of course teaching.
- We provided 203 activity sessions via Zoom for attendees to enjoy from home.
- We delivered an extremely varied programme of afternoon talks to more than 1,250 people.
- We ran 10 group visits to cultural venues across the year.
- We introduced a programme of new music events on Friday and Saturday nights, many of which were free and succeeded at bringing a brand new audience into the Institute.
- We continued our partnership with Guildford Arts to provide the exhibition space for local artists to use, without any up-front fees.

### **Our Space:**

- We began significant work to change the ground floor from a bank (which it has been since 1964) to a Community & Wellbeing Centre.
- We started our lease with music technology company m:tech for the majority of the second floor of our building.

- We housed 22 therapists, counsellors and psychologists throughout the year
- We had our most successful year of room hire ever this year; we hosted 644 meetings for charities this year, and an additional 133 for the NHS, representing 75% of our room hire clients.
- We continued to offer spaces to local community groups, including many clubs & societies.
- We made library book borrowing freely available to the whole community for the first time; the Library is now open on Thursdays and Saturdays.
- Developing the accessibility of our building, we received a grant from Assura & Surrey Community Action alongside a generous donation from Roslyn and Duncan McMillan for the installation of several hearing loops within our building.

### **Our People:**

- Amy Rice returned from maternity leave to resume her position of Institute Manger, and Lisa Taylor was appointed Business Development Manager.
- We've continued to benefit from the help of interns within the office and provided weekly volunteering opportunities to four interns this year.
- We ran free events such as our coffee mornings to members, with the help of our dedicated team of Library Volunteers, two of whom celebrated 10 years of service during the year.
- V Café served 8,500 customers.
- We delivered multiple free sessions for those with dementia, following receipt of a grant from the Shanley Foundation.

### **Our Image:**

- 102,000 visits to our website during the year.
- 16% of orders on our activity programme came from new customers, whilst we continued to maintain a strong base of returning attendees. It's important that we continue to grow our audience in this way.
- 40,500 people viewed our social media posts throughout the year and each of our monthly newsletters was sent to over 2,700 people.
- We conducted our first digitally-led brochure launch this year, enabling us to reduce costs, be more environmentally-conscious and give our attendees a guaranteed time that our programme bookings will open.

A very successful year, full of achievements. However, as with the previous few years, we have also had to face significant challenges, centered around the loss of the ground floor tenant, and the continuing problems associated with the dramatic increase in inflation, which have affected all our operating costs.

## **Second floor spaces:**

At last year's AGM we had agreed to let the second floor of the building (with the exception of the Judith Whitaker Studio) to m:tech. Although a private company, m:tech work to provide music technology classes in the education sector and we therefore have areas of mutual interest.

M:tech commenced their lease in May 2024, which saw them undertake a large redevelopment of our second floor. This area desperately needed some attention, but now looks vibrant and modern, with offices and a dedicated training space. Crucially, this tenancy will provide us with a healthy income and stability for a minimum of 7 years.

## **Ground floor space:**

At last year's AGM we outlined our plan to relocate our counsellors to a purpose-built space on the ground floor. This involved us using our reserves to convert the banking hall into six purpose-built, sound-proofed therapy rooms. Leases for all six rooms were agreed prior to completion of the project and presently there are approximately 20 therapists working in this centre on a regular basis. This space will provide vital income for the future but also provide an extremely positive facility for the local community as well.

The Community & Wellbeing Centre opened in mid-September, just into the new financial year, and we conducted an official opening ceremony in the autumn to celebrate this addition to our offering. We were pleased to be joined and supported by our MP Zoe Franklin and Guildford's Mayor, Sallie Barker MBE – who officially opened the site for us. Brooklands Radio attended the event, which enabled us to gain some positive PR exposure.

Steven Hayward, one of the psychotherapists who works in the Community & Wellbeing Centre gave his thoughts on the new space. He praised the high standard of finish, the calm ambience of the space, and the pleasant working environment. A delightful space, both to work in and meet with clients, he noted that the photos shown don't do the space justice. Whilst there have been some teething issues, these have been quickly addressed by Amy Rice, a good rapport has been established with the office team, and all tenants are working well together in this shared space.

We've also been able to use the former bank office as a new room for our activities and room hire. Named the Westwood Room after our long-standing member Margaret Westwood, this space is used for our Language courses and for regular room hirers, including the NHS, who use the space on a weekly basis.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3: The Financial Report of 2023-24**

Treasurer Mike Kirby delivered the Financial Report of 2023 – 2024:

For the second year running, we received no revenue from the ground floor. In addition, the second floor was vacated in May 2024 when we signed a long lease with m:tech. There was no repeat of the receipt of the £165,000 of dilapidations that made the previous year's revenue stand out at £430,000.

The conversion of the ground floor was completed in summer 2024 and we will have received almost full rental value in the current year from the Community & Wellbeing Centre, which was completed on time and within budget (thanks to the sterling efforts of Amy and Lisa) and opened last autumn. In addition, we will start to receive revenue from the second floor as their 'rent-free' period for m:tech is about to expire.

Room hire revenue increased by over 30% from the previous year and course income was up 9%, at just shy of £100,000. Overall revenues totalled £262,000, a reduction of £168,000 on the previous year, £165,000 of which was from the RBS dilapidations settlement.

We also received a lot less in grants and donations this last year - £6,000 versus £36,000, but we're very grateful for what we did receive. Personal donations and legacy giving are always very welcome, as they can generate further revenue for the charity from Gift Aid and can reduce personal income tax bills for the donors.

Our overall costs came in at £340,000, £16,000 less than the previous year, excluding the £124,000 that we spent on the dilapidations in 2022/23. Staffing costs remain our most significant expense at £172,000, an increase of 8% over the previous year and just over 50% of our total expenditure. Our second most significant cost area this year was the tutor fees at £31,000. However it would be impossible to run our activity programme without investing in either of these.

Inflation has impacted us as it has all businesses, charities and individuals, but our staff team have done a great job to keep cost increases in check and to look for efficiencies. For example is the decision to publish only two brochures a year instead of three, and only to send printed copies only to those who have opted in to receive postal communications, thus saving printing costs and postage. We will continue to focus on further cost reductions wherever such opportunities arise.

Our legal and professional costs were significantly lower this year at just over £6,000, compared to almost £30,000 the previous year mainly due to the abortive costs of the first attempts to lease the ground floor to a dental practice. However we are happier with the Community & Wellbeing Centre, which seems to better serve our charity's *raison d'être*.

The year to July 2024 was one of some major changes - a transitional year - however, our costs exceeded our revenue by £78,000. We also spent over £150,000 on the redevelopment of the ground floor.

Our cash resources started the year at £336,000 and ended at £234,000 before paying most of the invoices for the ground floor conversion, we will run out of funds prior to the delivery of the 2028 AGM. By the end of October 2024 we were down to £73,000 after paying the bills for the ground floor. By the end of February 2025 we were back up to £104,000, due to the receipt of some grants and a very healthy response to our recently published April - September programme brochure.

Our cash flow forecast indicates the need to raise further amounts outside of our core activities over the next two to three years. However we are confident that we can achieve this through the hard work of our staff, trustees and volunteers, as well as the continued generosity and support of our members. As a charity, we are probably better placed than many others are, but it is not an area for any complacency.

We are constantly striving to secure further funding and develop new, ongoing sources of revenue. Lisa Taylor, our Business Development Manager, is working to raise funds from granting bodies, including for example the National Lottery, for both capital projects and overheads. Lisa is also trying to secure sponsorship for our events, the production of our brochures and developing closer relationships with other local organisations.

## **AGENDA ITEM 4: Re-election of Trustees**

Today we hope to be able to re-elect four of our Trustees. According to our articles of association, our Trustees are permitted to serve on the Board for a maximum of three terms. A term finishes at the next AGM after a Trustee has served for a period of three years. The following Trustees are due to stand for re-election at this AGM:

- Sophie Chapman (third term)
- Janet Crowe (third term)
- Mike Kirby (second term)
- Phil Davies (second term)

*N.B. Biographical information relating to these Trustees was issued with AGM papers.*

<b>Vote – Re-Elect Sophie Chapman</b>	
Proposer Name	Phil Davies
Seconder Name	Jennifer Margrave
<b><i>Majority voted in favour, resolution to re-elect Sophie Chapman carried.</i></b>	
<b>Vote – Re-Elect Janet Crowe</b>	
Proposer Name	Mike Adams
Seconder Name	Margaret Westwood
<b><i>Majority voted in favour, resolution to re-elect Janet Crowe carried.</i></b>	
<b>Vote – Re-Elect Mike Kirby</b>	
Proposer Name	Jon Korndorffer
Seconder Name	Peter Smith
<b><i>Majority voted in favour, resolution to re-elect Mike Kirby carried.</i></b>	
<b>Vote – Re-Elect Phil Davies</b>	
Proposer Name	Sue Dragon
Seconder Name	Jon Korndorffer
<b><i>Majority voted in favour, resolution to re-elect Phil Davies carried.</i></b>	

A huge thank you is due to our Trustees, all of whom have impressive experience and bring a great deal of knowledge to their roles. This year, the Trustees have played a very hands-on role within the organisation, for which we're very grateful. This has included serving behind the bar at events, helping to run Mini V Café and painting walls within the Institute. Thank you!

### **Looking Forward:**

Looking at the current financial year, we are continuing to innovate and investigate new ways of ensuring the success of The Guildford Institute. We've recently released our latest brochure which showcases our largest ever activity programme and covers a 6-month period. By switching to bi-annual programmes, we will move

away from the historic term-time model, enabling courses, talks and activities to be taking place at all times of the year. This shift also has the benefit of reducing postage costs and making the processes of our staff more efficient. We want to ensure there are no fallow times when we are not operating, or rooms are empty. We hope these changes will help provide the Institute with a strong financial boost.

We have continued to invest significant efforts into growing our audience. One of our most recent music events, *The Flamenco Thief*, succeeded in generating over £600 profit, and enabled us to attract a new audience; 74% of attendees had never been to the Institute before. A huge thanks is due to our Trustees, who have run these events themselves, including working behind the bar. We've also succeeded in obtaining significant sponsorship from Anderton for our live music events.

As our new Business Development Manager, Lisa Taylor has been forging stronger links with other local organisations, and the business community, within the town to generate financial benefits for the Institute. For the first time, our most recent brochure was sponsored by three local businesses: Cheyney Goulding, Knight Frank and Experience Guildford. This sponsorship helped to cover many costs of the brochure production. Additionally, we received a £15,000 grant from Garfield Weston Foundation in December 2024 towards the core costs involved in running our charity. Moving forward, we will be working to close the gap that we're left with financially with a greater focus on fundraising and grants.

Finally, a huge thank you to our hardworking and dedicated team of staff and volunteers, as well as our incredibly supportive members and donors.

On behalf of everyone involved in the Institute, Councillor Amanda Creese gave a huge thank you to our Chairperson Brian, for the enormous amount of time and energy that he has put into the Institute.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 5: Any other business**

There had been no items of business submitted by the deadline.

***Questions were left until the Q&A session.***

**The meeting closed at 4.05pm**

### **Trustees in attendance**

Phil Davies (Trustee)	Brian Creese (Chairperson)	Mike Kirby (Treasurer)
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### **Members in attendance**

Mike Adams	Deborah George	Doreen Shaw
Jenny Austen	Pamela Holt	Belinda Singleton
Anne Barclay	Trevor Jones	Joan Smith
Margaret Clements	Mike Kirby	Peter Smith
Mike Clements	Jon Korndorffer	Martin Taylor
Jacqui Coussmaker	Mary Korndorffer	Rhona Thomson
Brian Creese	Andrew Macleod	Graham Thorp
Phil Davies	Jennifer Margrave	Jane Thorp
Sally Dewey	Duncan McMillan	Margaret Westwood
Brenda Doherty	Roslyn McMillan	Olive Wholey
Sue Dragon	Lesley Myles	Reg Wholey
Rob Durham	Susan Purcell	
Ann Fearey	Steve Rawlins	

### **Non-members known to be in attendance**

Amy Rice (Institute Manager)	Chelsea Eves (Programme Manager)	Lisa Taylor (Business Development Manager)
Amy Mason (Events Assistant)	Steven Hayward	Councillor Amanda Creese

### **Apologies**

Linda Baker	Janette Costello	Margaret Sharp
Steph Chambers	Janet Crowe	Linda Stevens
Neil Chambers	Sandra Cumming	Margaret Wailen
Sophie Chapman	Andy Davis	Harry Wickens
Valerie Charles	Tammy Ellis	Jean Wickens
David Cheeseman	Fawzia Rahman	

### **Proxy voting forms received from:**

Sandra Cumming	<i>For all resolutions</i>
Ellen Donovan	<i>For all resolutions</i>
Linda Stevens	<i>For all resolutions</i>

**Copies of these minutes are available in large font on  
request**