

## **Aura's Annual General Meeting**

covering April 2024 until March 2025

GEMMA GLOVER

Welcome

A massive welcome to our AGM. (Toilets, fire etc)

Thank you all so much for being here at this exciting time for us all.

A little later in the meeting we will ask our members to vote to accept the finances and to vote trustees onto the board.

Members will have been given a voting card when they have arrived. Could I ask for a show of those cards so we can count how many in attendance. Please also when you are asked to vote, can you leave your cards in the air until we have counted them.

You will be asked by our Chair to accept the minutes of last years agm, a copy of which was sent with your invites, although there are a few in the room also and asked by the Treasurer to accept last year's figures, again included in the minutes you received.

Thank you.

Apologies

**I do have apologies from - None**

We do not intend to keep you long, we can all get to the refreshments very soon!

Both myself, and Aura's Chair, Helen Lockett will update you on what we have been doing in the last year and how or if we have met our aims from the last agm. They will present to you our new aims for the forthcoming year and how we propose to achieve them.

Karen Cork, our Treasurer, will present our financial figures for the last year with a report about Aura's spending, funding and fundraising.

Three of our 4 trustees shall retire at this meeting. We will then ask our members to vote in the trustees for the next year.

Each year a minimum of 3 trustees shall retire, these 3 usually being the 3 being in position for the longest.

If you have any questions or other business you would like to bring to our attention, we will be open for that and then we can have refreshments and an informal chat.

CEO speech

Well we have achieved another year, thank you for all being here, your support and time doesn't go unnoticed and I appreciate all of you, Thank you!

So In April 2024 we announced our 1<sup>st</sup> business partner Bathroom Basics in Fenton – A family run business.

We cannot thank the guys enough for their ongoing support in helping Aura to grow and spread the word about the service. Not long after we had the lovely Megan Victorias Hair salon in Alsager come on board as a charity sponsor, Thank you!

In April we partnered with Sarah Hulson-Beech, a licensed Menopause champion who helped us to run monthly menopause events 'Menopause meets' at a lovely venue in Alsager, these monthly groups ran from May to November and we met some lovely ladies along the way, Thank you to Sarah for dedicating your time and helping us to arrange these monthly groups.

In May we secured the keys to our new home, Unit 5A, Thomas Street Congleton. Thank you to Vicky at Fierce Spirit Gym (our neighbours) who made us aware of this premises. Now having 2 counselling rooms and an office has been a game changer for our service, and being able to grow the service and offer more face to face support, it is amazing even if we are slightly out growing this one too 😊

Last year I had a vision and this came alive in the shape of our Wellbeing Festival which we held on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August at Milton Park in Alsager. As Aura provide counselling to those struggling with their mental health we also understand that counselling isn't for everyone and not everyone achieves positive outcomes this way, so the idea of the festival was to bring together wellbeing practitioners and facilitators of other therapies including breathwork, meditation, yoga, vision boarding etc to provide free workshops for the community so everyone has a chance to try different things in the hope people come across something they enjoy and maybe a new positive addition to their life while also having a positive impact on their wellbeing. With many stalls in attendance and family entertainment throughout the day it went just as we had hoped and we even had sunshine too, an added bonus we raised much needed funds for the service.

In October me and Kay attended a book launch event (our first ever one, we were so excited to be asked to be part of this event). The lovely Lisa Williams – The vision board queen reached out to us and asked if we would like to attend the event to promote their new book called 'Ripples of Positivity' This book is where 27 wonderful ladies came together and shared their story and how they have managed to turn the life around to create something positive, the whole buzz of the night was mega. It included a game of stand up bingo and funds raised came to Aura, it was an amazing £225 Thank you Lisa.

Due to our work with the Menopause together groups Aura held a stall and I gave a speech to over 50 people about what Aura can offer at The Civic in Alsager, this event was also a great opportunity for networking and great fun, with a comedian entertaining us.

In October, Helen & Kay had a stall at Affinity in Talke, Raising awareness for Aura.

Then it was Christmas and we held our 2<sup>nd</sup> Christmas Fayre at Lawton memorial Hall, meeting lots of lovely people in our community as well and raising funds and providing a lovely free community event.

In Jan 2024 we kick started our new monthly 'Your Wellbeing Matters' group this was to replace the menopause events. Our first one was a fabulous Drama Therapy session run by one of our wonderful trustees Sadie. Then our February group was run by Kay/service manager thank you Kay this was a very popular one. We tapped into our inner child and got all crafty. This was a craft group and we focused on 'Positives when things don't go to plan'. Our March group was run by Anna from Writing with Purpose which was a Journalling workshop, this was the busiest group so far and enjoyed by all who attended.

In March 2024 we welcomed 4 new student counsellors who have joined us in helping us provide the much needed one to one support to clients on our waiting list, helping us open the service on more days. We hope you enjoy your time with us.

I will now pass you over to our wonderful Chair of Trustees, Helen Lockett

## HELEN LOCKETT

Hello everyone and thank you for attending this evening, we do appreciate your attendance tonight. I am Helen Lockett Chairperson for Aura.

I want to talk tonight about something I am sure most of you will have heard about, the “Let them” theory. Let Them is about letting go of the need to control others and focusing instead on what we can control—our reactions, boundaries, and choices. If the person that you're really attracted to is not interested in a commitment, let them. If your kids don't want to get up and go to that thing with you this weekend, let them.” We all waste too much time and energy on trying to force other people to match our expectations and this causes us unnecessary stress!

If we listen to ourselves and say two simple words “let them”, it is amazing how free we can begin to feel. I know it won't eradicate stress completely but it will begin to make us realise that we can only control the way we respond to other people's actions or words and this in turn may make a difference to the way we feel

We feel that the Let Them theory has an important message to send to clients we work with at Aura and we are happy to support this way of thinking, always remember getting professional help is so important to help us adjust our way of thinking and explore our feelings.

Last year we spoke of our aims to support the government plans to prevent suicide and we feel very much that we have achieved this by supporting the clients and offering a safe place for them to share their thoughts and feelings.

Due to the funding crisis we find ourselves in we have unfortunately not met the other 2 aims we set ourselves

- Help clients to improve their emotional health by offering support to improve physical health and fitness.
- To promote counselling support and drama groups in schools and education facilities in and around Stoke on Trent.

With the funding situation we, and many other charities find ourselves in we have decided that keeping our aims for the year ahead as realistic and possible is the best idea, therefore,, the year ahead will see us aim to:

- Source sustainable funding
- Continue offering support to those who need it
- Investigate the need for our service in Stoke on Trent

My thanks to the tremendous volunteers who have meant that Aura have been able to stay afloat this year and help each other and the clients that come to us

If I can ask members to now vote, if you haven't already done so, to accept and adopt the minutes of 2022 to March 2024 agm.

For = In person: 10, online: 9

Against = 0

Abstain = 0

Here is to our future year being another success.

I will now pass you on to Karen Cork to present Aura's figures for the past year and to say a few words before the voting for our trustees takes place.

### Treasurers report (KAREN CORK)

We are going through difficult times and our biggest challenge continues to be the acquisition of funding to secure the Future of Aura and to allow us to continue our good work and to support as many people as possible.

Everyone involved in Aura does this voluntarily to ensure costs are kept to a minimum, but there is definitely a cost to provide this service, which is why funding is crucial for this much needed mental health service.

All our volunteers work tirelessly giving their time freely to ensure the running of Aura and the services offered are maintained for our clients.

We began with just 2 volunteer counsellors, we now have 13 counsellors and 3 admin volunteers, we work closely with Keele and Staffordshire University and other training providers to help students gain the counselling hours needed to qualify and to gain the experience they will need moving forward.

In this reporting period we have offered over 50 clients, 12 weeks of one to one. This means we have offered over 580 hours free support for those who come to us for help. This figure allows for holidays, client and counselling cancellations. In addition we have run workshops and events that have reached 100's of clients, wellbeing practitioners, supporters and the general public

In this reporting period other volunteers have offered us over 1500 hours. These hours are needed for fundraising, administrative tasks organising events and ensuring Aura are running legally and in line with the charity commission.

We cannot thank you enough for the massive amount of support we have received throughout this time and we want you all to know how grateful we are. Enormous thanks to all our volunteers, funders and supporters.

Can I now bring your attention to the figures that were submitted at last years agm and ask you to vote to accept and adopt these. (SENT WITH INVITE)

For = In person: 10 Online: 9

Against = 0

Abstain = 0

The figures for this financial year, 2024 to 2025 are also listed in the pack for your perusal and will be accepted at the next agm.

These figures cover the period April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

Aura will upload all financial reports necessary onto the charity commission website if you would like further information.

### **Income for the year**

April 2024 opening balance was £8,653.69 and closing balance in March 2025 £3,937.87.

Income	Date received	Funder/Donation	Restricted/Unrestricted
£2,400	05/08/2024	Congleton Town Council	Restricted – Rent
£2,010	17/09/2024	Cheshire East	Restricted – Equipment
£1,320	14/11/2024	Alsager Town Council	Restricted - Groups
£500	20/03/2025	Co-Op Community Fund	Restricted - Groups

Total Income: £6,320

**Expenditure will be available soon once the accounts have been finalised.**

Thank you to all our funders and supporters.

I will now pass you to Gemma.

GEMMA

I will ask you, if you have not already done so via online or postal vote, to re-elect our trustees wishing to stand again for the next year.

### **Election of trustees**

Is there anyone present today who has voted prior to this meeting for any of the above candidates? If so please hold up your voting cards, you need not vote again today.

*At this annual general meeting, it being the 3rd for Aura, 3 members of our board of trustees shall retire.*

*Sadie Berrisford*

*Karen Cork*

*Helen Lockett*

*Sadie has decided not to stand for re-election. A big thank you from us all for the support you have offered to Aura.*

*As sent out in the invitation for this meeting 2 people wish to be considered for re-election of their posts. This being the case I will ask for your votes please to re-elect:*

Helen Lockett for the position of Chair

FOR In person: 9 Online: 9 AGAINST 0 ABSTAIN 0

Karen Cork for the position of Treasurer

FOR In person: 9 Online: 9 AGAINST 0 ABSTAIN 0

You will have seen a bio for Natalie Catterall who has been volunteering with us for the past 12 months and we ask you to vote to elect her to the board of trustees.

FOR 9 In person: 9 Online: AGAINST: 0 ABSTAIN :0

Thank you Natalie for your support over the 12 months. Welcome to Aura's board.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT TO THE RE ELECTED ONES.

If there is anyone here today that may be interested in volunteering their time for the advancement of Auras objects, and would like to join our trustees, or have other ideas about how they could help us please speak to one of us.

Any other business

**Trustees:**

Signed: H.Lockett (Chair) 31/10/2025

Signed: S. Boden (Secretary) 02/11/2025

Signed K.Cork (Treasurer) 02/11/2025

Signes: N. Catterall (Trustee) 02/11/2025