

**THE BROMLEY AND DISTRICT TALKING
NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION**
Registered under the Charities Act 1960: No.268490

**MINUTES OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN THE BROMLEY METHODIST CHURCH HALL,
COLLEGE ROAD, BROMLEY,
ON SATURDAY, 1st OCTOBER 2022 AT 2:30 pm**

1. ADDRESS OF WELCOME

The Chairman for the meeting, Mr. Graham Towills, opened by welcoming The Association's Patron, The Worshipful Mayor of Bromley, Councillor Hannah Gray, and thanked her for finding the time in her busy schedule to be with us today. He also welcomed our President, Richard Groves MBE, and our Vice-President, Paulette Obee.

He then welcomed the Members, together with their faithful friends, the guide dogs, and said the Board appreciated the chance to meet them, the Listeners to Bromley District Talking News.

He also welcomed Life Members and hoped they were enjoying their retirement from the Association.

Associate Members were welcomed and thanked for being the people who do all the hard work behind the scenes.

Friends of the Association too were welcomed. The Board is most grateful for their support.

He welcomed colleagues from Associate Organisations, which include Bromley TORCH, the VIPAS Group and the Macular Society. KAB were not able to attend this year.

Any guests or escorts of a Member were also warmly welcomed.

The long list of those present would not be recited, but the names would appear as an appendix to the Minutes of this meeting, and there was a list of those who promised to be at the meeting on each table.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Some 20 people have sent apologies for absence and their names also will appear in the Minutes and are printed in the list on each table.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF LAST AGM

The Chairman reminded Members that the Minutes of the 2021 AGM had been heard on BDTN. He asked for approval of the 2021 AGM Minutes.

The Minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of Members present.

4. ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairman reminded Members that they had read or heard the Annual Report which had included a robust assessment of where we are by our

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President, Dick Groves, and reports from all the Heads of departments, but took the opportunity to point out a few important points.

Our financial position had improved greatly and we are now in a very healthy position thanks to some generous donations and legacies. One special donation to be mentioned is that from Beckenham Social Club for the Blind and partially sighted, which had to close after many years of service to the community. When the Club closed the Club's Trustees made our Association the main beneficiary of their funds, as a result of which we received the magnificent sum of £40,000. He asked two of the Trustees of that club, Jill Rees and Michael Bagge, to stand and receive a round of applause from us as thanks for their generosity.

A new Lease has been negotiated for the next five years. The new rent is £8,800 per annum, so despite our currently healthy financial position we will need to continue to be prudent when it comes to expenditure.

He then spoke of the problem reported by our Technical Managers with regard to the supply of Memory Stick players. Regrettably the manufacturer of the Sovereign and Sonic players that we give to Members has ceased trading. Whilst the Talking Newspaper movement is actively engaged in trying to find a replacement suitable for the blind and partially sighted, so far they have not found one. This may lead to supply problems in the not too distant future and we will keep everyone informed as things develop.

The Chairman then asked for approval of the Annual Report

The Report was adopted by a unanimous vote of Members present.

5. A REVIEW BY THE PRESIDENT DICK GROVES

Our President started his speech by asking whether he could call the Mayor "Mayor Hannah", as addressing her as Madam Mayor made him feel as though he was talking about one of the late Queen's horses. He said he always does some research into the background of the visiting Mayor, and he had discovered that she loved singing and dancing, neither of which he was any good at. He couldn't see himself taking part in Strictly Come Dancing. He said the purpose of the Talking Newspaper is to support and inform the visually impaired members of the Borough. We do not know how many people there are who would benefit but we have 120 regular Listeners. Numbers have dropped over the years as more people access digital options. Many are living at home and have very little outside stimulation, and the Talking Newspaper comes via memory sticks which go out every week. We have Editors and Sub Editors, who sometimes have difficulty accessing news, Readers, Technical Staff in the Studio, Distributors who deliver the machines and give instructions on how to work them, and many others who do jobs behind the scenes, somewhere in the region of 60 or 70, who give their time voluntarily to the Association. An edition goes out every week, local news, information about support, joke of the week, and a lot of information which is of interest to visually impaired people (VIPs). He encouraged Members to tell us their stories - everyone has a story. The BBC programme "In Touch" specifically for blind people is great and is added at the end of each news edition on the memory sticks.

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He particularly wanted to congratulate the team on producing editions during the covid lockdown when some of the Readers had to make their recording under duvets to exclude outside noises, and everyone worked together, with not one edition being missed.

He said he is just Graham's warm-up man, who is the Association's Secretary and keeps the whole thing going. This was greeted with warm applause.

The Chairman thanked him for his kind remarks.

6. ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF BROMLEY

The Mayor said it was lovely to be invited to the Talking Newspaper's AGM. She had been Deputy Mayor during the covid lockdown period and it had been very difficult keeping in touch by Zoom and other methods without any personal face-to-face meetings, so it was very good to be back to normal.

She spoke of what a lot has happened this year, especially during the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, during which time she visited numerous street parties in the Borough, and a wonderful afternoon with an outside gathering when everyone, including young children, were dancing and having a very happy time. This was followed two months later by the sad death of the Queen, when the emotion was huge, and she had been heavily involved in leading the Borough's tributes.

She told of the time some young children came to the Council Chamber to see how things worked, and two of the children told her that they thought that she, as Mayor, would be a really old man.

She finished by saying how much volunteers are appreciated for all the help they give in the community. She would be glad to help in any way and thanked them for all they do.

The Chairman thanked the Mayor and wished her a successful and enjoyable year as Mayor of Bromley.

The Mayor was presented with a plant, Anthurian Colorado, by our longest serving Associate Member, Catherine Gandolfi.

7. PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

This year there are three Associate Members who have decided to retire. Unfortunately, only two of them were able to be present.

ANN BARTLETT

She has volunteered with the Association for more than 27 years, during which time she built up a vast experience across several departments. Her biggest involvement was with the Editors, preparing scripts for the Readers, not just for the weekly news, but also for many magazine editions over the years. She also had a long period of being in front of the microphone herself recording news items, no doubt using the skills she had learnt during her time with the West Wickham Operatic Society. She also used her clear speaking voice to give talks to other organisations when called upon and not only that, she got involved in

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fund-raising schemes as they arose, particularly with the Christmas Tree Festival in 2019. Sadly, health problems dictate that she retire.

Ann said how much she had enjoyed working for the Association and was very sorry to have to give it up.

PAUL TURNER

He has been a valued member of the Technical Team for more than 10 years, not only operating the mixing desk on a Thursday evening recording session, but has always provided and operated the loudspeaker system at Annual General Meetings. He has a wealth of knowledge on the subject of audio recording and has given advice to Peter Gandolfi on many occasions. He will be greatly missed.

Paul said how important clarity of sound is and he is sure that the volunteer Technicians will continue to do a good job.

8. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

The proposed change to the Constitution has been circulated. The proposal will ensure that there is a quorum at future General Meetings. For many reasons and in keeping with other small charities, we do not have the large numbers of Full Members attending the AGM as we used to. By opening up voting to all categories of Membership and reducing the number required, achieving a quorum for meetings will be more certain. The Board has approved the change and one Life Member who cannot be here today has emailed approval. Thus, the Board recommend that the Membership approve this amendment. The Charities Commission do not need to be informed.

The amendment was adopted by a unanimous vote of Members present.

9. ELECTION OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Chairman said he was pleased to say that Dick Groves and Paulette Obee are happy to continue to serve as President and Vice-President respectively.

Unfortunately, there are still three vacant posts on the Board, that of Chairman, that of Editor in Chief and that of Head of Marketing and Publicity. If anyone knows of someone who would be suitable and willing to take on any of these posts, please let the Secretary know.

The Editor-in-Chief's portfolio continues to be filled on a rota basis by Editors Marilyn Johnstone, Ken Tracey and Christine Wilson until a new Chief Editor is appointed. The Board is grateful to them for continuing to do so.

The above three were asked to stand and were warmly applauded.

Those standing for election are:

Treasurer
Technical Manager - Production
Members' Representative
Technical Manager - Maintenance
Readers' Representative
Distributors' Leader

David Masters
Peter Gandolfi
William Gould
John Grinstead
Judy McKeown
Linda Müller

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Office Manager and Head of Copying
Secretary

Robert Wynne
Graham Towills

The Board was elected by a unanimous vote of Members, Life Members and Associate Members present.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Margaret Theobold asked whether information could be given on Talking News of fireworks events and dates, as this would be helpful for those people with dogs. The Editors agreed that this can be done.

11. LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AND DRAW OF THE RAFFLE

The Chairman said that the formal part of the meeting was concluded and everyone was invited to enjoy tea and cakes.

The Mayor circulated to talk to many of those present.

The raffle, which made approximately £200 for the Association's funds, was drawn by Paulette Obee.

12. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING THANKS

The Chairman said because of a Royal Mail strike, USB memory sticks had not been sent at the usual time, but the local sorting office had agreed to pick up the mail sacks on the following Monday morning, and arrangements had been made in the office for a Copying Team to carry out the usual Friday despatch duties.

The Chairman hoped that everyone had enjoyed the meeting and the refreshments.

He hopes to see everyone at next year's AGM on a date to be announced.

He thanked everyone for attending and supporting the Association, particularly all the Associate Members and Friends of the Association. He asked for a round of applause to show our appreciation, which was given.

He declared the meeting closed and wished everyone a safe journey home.

Graham J Towills
Secretary

The Bromley and District Talking Newspaper Association
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20th October 2022

2022 AGM ATTENDEES

THOSE ATTENDING:

Members

Mary Bramwell #301
Linda Carmichael #228
Iain Carmichael
Heather Donovan #233
Ruth Kenwood #285
Margaret Theobald #273
Guide dog Poppy

Life Members

Ann Bartlett
Brian Flagg
Peter Gandolfi
John Grinstead
Jeff Lee
Mavis Robinson
Paul Turner

Friends of the Association

John Hague
Jill Rees
Michael Bagge

**Affiliate organisation
representatives**

Jane Cleveland TORCH
Joan Dixon VIPAS
*Keith Dixon #017 Macular Society

Patron

Mayor: Councillor Hanna Gray
Chauffeur

Note

* = also a Member
= Register number.

Associate Members

Frances Boyden
Monica Daly
Catherine Gandolfi
Mary Garnish
*William Gould #667
*Dick Groves #302
Caroline Jenner
Marilyn Johnstone

Associate Members continued:

David Masters
Sue Masters
Judy McKeown
Tony McKeown
Linda Müller
*Paulette Obee #296
Guide dog Bunty
Nikki Packham
Joy Putt
Catherine Ross
James Scorgie
Susie Shelton
Graham Towills
Ken Tracy
Gillian Watson
Christine Wilson
Bob Wynne

Total attending 45

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Carol Andrews
Sheila Brittain
David Broomfield
Gill Emsden
Marjorie Goodridge
Peter Hawker
Janet Hunter
John Ilson
Joyce Ilson
Margaret Jacob
KAB Bromley
Beryl Kerrigan
John Maydwell
Richard Mead
Tricia Melliush
Joyce Morgan
Michael Morgan
Alan Moss
Anne Routledge
Carol Tarhan
Val Terry
Queenie Weaser
John Webber
Maggie Webber
Margaret Westall
Roger Woodward