

SPECIAL FRIENDS CLUB
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THURSDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2022, 7PM
THE BEEHIVE, WESTBURY ON TRYM, BRISTOL

1. Welcome

LS welcomed and thanked everyone for coming, and all attendees introduced themselves. Copies of the agenda, were made available to everyone.

2. Attendees and apologies

2.1 Attendees: Liz Stratton (Chair) (LS), Colin Gimblett (Vice Chair) (CG), Maya Vaitilingam (MV), Leanne Parks (LP), Chantal Byrne, Sue Edgerley (Minutes), Sarah and Kevin Rosser, Claire Sutton (CS), Jo Cooper (JC), Jackie Bignell (JB), Janice Porter (JP), Mohammad (MR), Bina and Zak Rashid, Shaista Yaqub and Mum, Pearl Kofi, Tony and Gail Bowden, Jo Saunders, Helen Saukuru, Jane, Peter and Molly Walker, Susan Richards, Amy and Alex Irachi,

2.2 Apologies: Jane Joyce, Sophie Axford, Helen Conway, Rebecca Werret, Melaney Bennett, Jayne Wright

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of last year's AGM were approved and signed off by CB and MV.

4. Chair's report

LS explained that her report covered the new accounting period of April 2021 to March 2022 with the dates being changed to align with some of the grants that the club receives.

This year had the benefit of covid lifting which has enabled venues to open to visitors again. The club was able to resume some favourite sessions such as family cycling, and some new ones such as sole use inflatables and a trip to Legoland. A program of teen activities such as climbing and tennis was provided through the year, as well as 35 families joining family short break weekend at Devon Bay.

In September we said goodbye and thank you to our administrator Michelle. After a selection process, we were pleased to welcome Sue Edgerley as our new associate administrator in January 2022. Club activities generate many emails, invoices, queries, and arrangements so having someone with administrative oversight is extremely helpful to the Trustees.

Our membership is stable at about 165 families. During Covid some families took up the offer to suspend their subscription payments during the Covid lockdown periods, but the majority continued to pay, allowing the Club to maintain our financial sustainability.

The board of Trustees remains stable with 8 serving Trustees.

5. Treasurer's report

MV presented the accounting period from April 2021 to March 2022. It was an unusual start to the year while coming out of Covid restrictions however we were able to resume a full program of visits.

SFC had offered a full programme of activities up until March 2020 when the country went into lockdown.

Income was £59,663 for the period – extraordinary given the potential impact post-covid. This included:

- Donations from Virgin Money Fundraising £2000, Groundwork UK £1,000. Donations were also received from Womens' Institute and Starlight Singers.
- Subscriptions: £16,000
- Members' contribution to activities (Caravan short breaks) £25,000
- Grant from South Gloucestershire Council: around £16,000 which has been ongoing for many years. The membership split between South Gloucestershire and Bristol Local Authorities is approximately 30:70. Bristol City Council has never contributed to the club.

Expenditure was £50,000 on activities including entry fees, short break, Trustee's training, admin, IT, liability insurance and accountants' fees(discounted).

Maya added that there was £52,666.70 in the club's bank account and £20,027.99 in the club's savings account. Finances continue to be healthy.

6. Election of officers

LS explained that, according to the Club's Constitution, all Trustees had to stand down. All Trustees agreed to stand again for election and stay in their current roles as detailed below.

Elections took place as follows:

All candidates nominated and seconded - Unanimous vote

Chairperson: Liz Stratton

Treasurer: Maya Vaitilingam

Secretary: Chantal Byrne

Vice-Chair: Colin Gimblett

Activities: Sophie Axford

Database: Liz Stratton

Funding: Leanne Parkes

Activities: Helen Conway

Activities: Jane Joyce

7. **Activities**

- LS advised that the demographics of the club was increasing towards teens and young adults and the club wishes to continue to provide activities relevant to all. To this end the trustees are planning to publish a survey to members for their input on the type of activities they would like to do.
- Hosting – LS explained that we aim to host all of our activities but occasionally it is difficult for trustees to be available to do this. LS explained the roll of hosting as being available to register attendance at activities, and asked for volunteers

8. **Trustee opportunities** – HC leaving in January so there is a vacancy and so the opportunity was announced. Anyone who would like to join the committee would be most welcome.

9. **Fundraising opportunities and connections** – LS said that community and corporate donations can be a valuable part of the club's income and asked for any suggestions of potential companies and organisations that are looking to make donations and fundraising initiatives. [OOB]

10. **Any questions**

CG opened the floor for questions.

MR felt that the AGM agenda and the constitution should be shared at the time the details of the AGM are emailed out so that attendees can prepare ahead with the constitution being conveniently to hand. LS replied that the constitution and associated documents were freely available online, but the trustees would look to accommodate this in future.

JP said that Joshua had loved the sailing at the harbour

MW said that she would like more activities exclusively for older teens and young adults.

JC – Expressed her thanks for the activities the club provides and commented that for her it was a good mix.

PW asked whether parents need to accompany young adults on activities where they are able to and may prefer to attend independently. In reply LS stated that the club's remit is to make activities accessible to families with children and young adults being required to be accompanied by an adult with parental responsibility, which could include PA's

CS suggested that some of the teen's events were appealing for under teens and asked whether younger people could book, especially where they feel they are outgrowing activities for younger children. teens events if suitable for under teens – LS felt it was

reasonable to consider case by case and invites members to enquire by email on individual activities. We are a club for our members, so all enquiries and suggestions are welcome. It is recognised that some 'tweens' don't enjoy being around children so teen exclusive activities are valued. JB pointed out that similarly Young Adults may find many of the teen activities are not suitable and maybe have subgroups for more/less sensory needs. LS said that the planned member survey will give light to this.

Meeting finished at 8pm