

WEST AREA PROJECT

For adults with learning difficulties

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Charity Number 1182653

The West Area Project Annual General Meeting 2024

Starting at 7.00pm Thursday 16th January 2025,

at the Lenton Centre, Willoughby Street, Lenton NG7 1RQ

Agenda

7.00 Registration and refreshments

7.15 Welcome by the Member Representative:

7.30 Manager's Report.

7.45 Chairperson's Report by Alf Stiegler: Chair of Trustees

- Apologies
- Declarations of interest
- Minutes of last AGM
- Treasurers Report and Review of our annual accounts
- Appointment of Auditor
- Resignation of Trustees
- Nominations for election of new Trustees and Board

8.30 Updated WAP safeguarding policy.

8.40 Any other business

Welcome to the WAP 2023/2024 Annual Report:

The Dynamic Duo!



1. Introductions by our member representatives Martin and Mel:

Welcome everybody, to the AGM. Thank you, for joining us. We are a small and beautiful group at West Area Project. I'm Martin Stiegler and Melanie Simpson and we are the two member representatives and we are still on the committee and attend every Board meeting. We do this because we like helping, and it's our role to give our member a voice about how the WAP service is run. At WAP we listen to all our members.

2 .Manager's Report 2023 to 2024 by Yvonne Pearson, WAP Manager

As you can see from the above introduction by our member representatives, the dynamic duo of Martin and Mel are back! We are very fortunate in our member representatives who canvass the views of all our members prior to every board meeting. We are constantly looking for suggestions about how to improve our service at WAP and our member feedback is always appreciated and has led directly to many changes along the years. As always, I would like to express my thanks to Martin and Mel for keeping me on my toes for another year!

Although WAP's financial year began in April 2023, we entered this period with significant financial difficulties dating back to early 2022.

During the fuel crisis The Lenton Centre tripled our rent at a time when our membership was unusually low due to the disruption caused by Covid. Normally, WAP enjoyed a consistent number of new referrals from the community teams, especially when young people were leaving colleges, but even by the beginning of 2023 referrals had not resumed to their previous pre Covid levels. We did take on a young man as an emergency referral because there were no other day centres available to manage his complex needs.

As mentioned in the previous Annual Report the workers had already reduced their hours and as a project, we were doing all we could to reduce our spending without affecting the quality of our service which included continuing to pay for a full range of activities such as dancing and swimming.

Then in April 2023, the national living wage increased by 9.7% but this increase was not reflected in the increase in payments from the City Council. WAP has always effectively 'subsidised' the Council by fundraising for a significant proportion of its overall income. Normally in times such as these we would have intensified our fundraising efforts, but we were still being hampered by the legacy of our bank trying to 'helpfully' implement 'improvements' to our old WAP account. Sadly, these improvements were done in ignorance of what is required of a charity bank account. These

'improvements' took many months to rectify and continued to affect our fundraising efforts.

A further challenge during this period was the reality that Nottingham City Council were desperately trying to balance their books and seeking higher charges from people using social care services.

On 29th November 2023 the devastating news was announced that Nottingham City Council had applied for Section 114 notice. This meant that it would have to stop all spending other than on services it needed to provide by law. We had no idea at that stage what that would mean for WAP and its future.

During this time, the only glimmer of hope was that WAP was starting to receive referrals again and we had the pleasure of welcoming new members. We had also negotiated with The Lenton Centre a more realistic rent as it was obvious at that stage we were unable to afford the triple rent. Despite that, by the end of 2023 we had started to look for alternative premises as we were made very aware that TLC required more income from our rooms for their own survival.

Although we were delighted that the Council offered us a contract to continue to run our services until February 2025 this was a very unstable basis on which to continue a project that had been operating since 1986.

So WAP entered 2024 in a very challenging financial state. We owed rent to TLC and the prospects were not optimistic given the uncertainty over the future of Nottingham City Council.

However, something amazing happened and following a grant application, we were awarded £16,594 by the Severn Trent Community Fund which, very unusually, funded rent arrears. This funding literally saved the West Area Project and helped to pay towards the rent for the year going forward.



Again, as a manager during this difficult time I cannot express sufficiently the gratitude I have to Severn Trent Community Fund for essentially saving the West Area Project.

I am now happy to report that despite the difficult economic climate WAP has managed to stabilise its finances. The first thing we did was to shut down our office at TLC so they could rent it out to another organisation who could pay higher rent. We moved our 'office' into a store cupboard without heat or electricity, but it was free. We also gave up our telephone landline which means we now have a much cheaper telephone service. These were all conditions of the funding with Severn Trent but also actions we needed to take. We have also increased our membership and continued to receive a steady number of referrals.

See below our new office after it had been given a 'purple over'!



We ended the financial year in March 2024 in a far more hopeful and stable financial position again largely due to the significant funding boost from Severn Trent Community Fund.

Although the main project WAP was doing well the Awards for All funding for WAPACTIV2 had started to run down by October 2023. WAPActiv2 is a joint project with the Lenton Centre (TLC) to provide a Tuesday night Activity Group aimed at people with learning disabilities and/or autism who did not use the main WAP service. However, we decided to keep running this service because we knew that we would lose our membership if we took a break whilst we waited for new funding. This meant that both WAP and TLC were having to subsidise the Activ2 service out of our reserves which put a further financial strain on both agencies at the end of the financial year 2024.

The demands on the outreach service have continued to grow and have provided a necessary service to our members and their families. We have also been approached for support with applying benefits and information

from people who have seen our project at The Lenton Centre. The outreach work has included medical visits supporting an ex-member through their cancer journey, serious safeguarding issues including relocation, benefits applications, fairing charging appeals, urgent service reviews, bus pass applications to everyday primary care or psychiatric appointments for medication reviews. The list is long and varied but has emerged essential in keeping some of the members and their families afloat in the community and therefore able to continue to attend WAP and Activ2. An enjoyable part of the outreach service is the Xmas visits to ex members as well as the opportunity to spend time with the families of WAP members who have died. Can I take this opportunity to thank the families of Chris Quigley and Durval Hemans for their very kind donations to WAP.

Sadly, one of our original Kickstarter trainees, who we took onto full time employment at WAP left us to return to her hometown to pursue her career in clinical psychology. We all miss Ryleigh but are delighted that she pops back to visit us whenever she can. In her place we have welcomed Alex as a part time worker onto our team. We have known Alex for years because he has been providing holiday cover for some time for WAP so it was a very easy transition. Ryleigh's leaving 'do' at TLC before we had to evacuate the building due to a 'bomb scare' locally!



Lastly, I would like to thank our workers and volunteers who have had to present a positive face to our members as we have had to weather so much financial and long-term insecurity. They have done us proud throughout. It is not the easiest job pretending that things are fine when you don't know whether you will be made redundant and have had to reduce your hours at a time of rising living costs. I can only thank them again for their dedication, commitment, support and loyalty. We have such a tremendous team at WAP.

Yvonne, WAP Manager

2. Chairperson Report by Alf Stiegler

Alf again thanked all the staff for their commitment to the project especially over this particularly trying year.

4. Minutes of the last AGM meeting

WEST AREA PROJECT AGM MEETING
held on Monday 15th January 2024
at 7pm at The Lenton Centre

Those present:	In attendance	Apologies
Alfred Stiegler – Chairperson/Trustee Farrah Athar – Secretary/Trustee Mary Harrison – Treasurer Ann Stiegler –Trustee Rita Beard –Trustee Ruth Noyes - Trustee	Yvonne Pearson - Project Manager) Martin Stiegler Member Rep Rachel Sharp Member Rep	Russell Jays - Trustee

Agenda Items		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apologies: Russell sent his apologies. 2. Conflict of interests. None were declared 3. Welcome by the member representative: 	M S	
Martin welcomed everyone to the meeting. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Manager’s Report Yvonne talked about the financial challenges facing WAP due to the energy crisis and how the project responded by; reducing workers hours, reconfiguring the service to take people with higher needs and trying to		

extend its fundraising. However, by making the first few changes it meant that there was little time left for fundraising.

Introduction to AGM business:

Minutes of the last AGM Meeting:

The minutes of the last AGM meeting of Wednesday 23rd November 2022 were discussed and agreed as accurate and signed by Alf and Mary

Chairperson's Annual Report:

Alf highlighted the difficult financial climate facing charities. Alf shared his concerns that WAP was being forced to get bigger to increase its revenue when its strength was in being 'small and beautiful'. The Board discussed this dilemma.

Treasurers Report

Mary gave her treasurer's report and presented the accounts.

These were discussed in detail. Firstly, we noted the very slight growth in the project in 2023 compared with 2022.

Ruth mentioned that the amount gained from service contracts appeared to have reduced in 2023 but Mary explained that the funding to employ the Kick Start workers had inflated the amounts in the 2022 figures.

The accounts were agreed as accurate and signed by both Alf and Mary.

Appointment of Auditor

Clayton and Brewill were proposed by Alf Stiegler and seconded by Mary Harrison to remain our auditors for next year.

Elections

The whole Board resigned and then the previous Board were re-elected.

Other business

1. Ruth presented her contribution for the AGM Report. It focused on the dedication and commitment of the workers at West Area Project in supporting the members to pursue their 'passions and interests'. Yvonne thanked Ruth, on behalf of the workers, for her moving tribute.
2. Updating of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy for WAP. This Policy was agreed with a few amendments.

As there was no other business the meeting was declared closed

5. Treasurers Report April 2023 to March 2024

This has been the most stressful year financially since West Area Project opened. We have had increases in salaries, HMRC payments, pension contributions and are still trying to accommodate the steep increase in our room rental charges. The income we receive from Nottingham City and County Councils only just covers our salaries, tax and pension payments, which means that the rent and activity expenses for our members needs to be found by bidding for charitable donations. This year has been particularly worrying as Nottingham City Council, along with several other city councils, had to issue a Section 114 notice, which obviously put WAP at the risk of possible closure.

To improve our financial position, we have relinquished the room we used as an office space and have also welcomed new members with more complex needs, requiring a 'one to one' service. We are also providing an Outreach service which has generated additional funds. Whilst these measures have increased our income, the provision of a 'one to one' service has also placed a greater onus on other staff members to continue providing an excellent service for existing members. We are extremely fortunate to have such dedicated staff who all work so hard to keep everything going.

Our Project Manager has worked tirelessly to manage and reduce our monetary shortfall by applying for charitable donations, she has done

incredibly well but obviously this is also getting harder to accomplish as businesses tighten their belts. We are of course tremendously grateful to the Severn Trent Community Fund for their generous donation to WAP.



Our funding from the Nottingham City Council is only guaranteed until 2025, so our future is still uncertain. Every year we hope that our financial position will improve as WAP is an important lifeline to our members and their carers.

Mary Harrison Treasurer

WAP ACTIVITIES 2023 to 2024

At the West Area Project, we have always prided ourselves on the variety of activities on offer to our members:

Walking and snooker groups on Monday:

Swimming sessions



The established swimming sessions are still proving very popular with our members, and we have turned them into regular aqua aerobics session to music usually led by Alex! The session remains open to any people with learning disabilities and autism because it is so unusual for people to find a 'safe space' which is friendly to people with special needs.

Dance and movement sessions with Catherine Chivers

Dance sessions AGM report 1st April 2023-31st March 2024

Sessions during this year have been weekly on Wednesday afternoons. I still notice a definite shift in energy and positive wellbeing during and after classes. However subdued the group is when I arrive we always have a good giggle during the class!

Sessions always start in a circle either seated [if in the WAP room] or a mixture of seated and standing [in the hall]. We always begin with an aerobic, dance warm up lead by me, then often lead by the group in turn. It's wonderful to see the different styles and movements that everyone feels comfortable performing! We still often go round the circle choosing a movement and going around the circle each adding a move until we have a repeated 'routine' of movements to dance to the music. This is often based on a theme- sport, Halloween, Birthdays etc. We often try different movements in cannon around the circle [like a Mexican wave, claps, stamps etc] to develop concentration and rhythm.

We have quite a repertoire of dances which we often dance either all seated or a combination of seated and standing. Favourites include Geraldine's Routine, Blame it on the Boogie, Happy, Do you love me.

The group enjoy taking it in turns to create a shape together in the middle of the hall and then exploding away to break up the shape.

Props are as popular as ever- pompoms, streamers, shakey eggs, glow sticks and the coloured lines and dots! The members still love placing the line markers around the space and we play a musical chairs style game with a line being removed after a few goes of dancing and stopping on a line! We often have a theme for the shapes we make when we freeze- something related to the colour we land on, dinosaurs, fruits and vegetables, sport etc! There are some very competitive members who always manage to win! The group always enjoy dancing with floaty fabric and particularly enjoy it when I bring the long blue fabric which we can pretend is the sea! Chinese New Year dragon dances are always a highlight! The group like follow the leader activities. This year the group have also enjoyed exploring movements using my new octoband prop [lycra fabric with 16 'arms'].

Country style circle and line dances are always popular with the group.

Sessions always end with a cool down- usually lead by me but sometimes lead by members of the group who are now confident to take on this role. Martin is really confident leading the cool down and incorporating appropriate stretches and movements.

I still enjoy being a part of the West Area Project family and sharing dancing, games and giggles with you all!

Crafts sessions with Deborah from Notts College on Wednesday mornings.

November 23-24

What fun we had this year, the sessions are planned to enable all members to participate, not only with hands-on skills to enhance fine motor skills, but to encourage their own ideas and creativity, whilst sharing ideas with the

rest of the group. We have painted, splattered, blown through straws, sponged, stencilled, sculpted, ripped, stamped, printed, weaved, made cards, collaged, rock painted, experimented, made a mess, laughed and finally presented our piece of art at the end of the session, with lots of praise from all members of the group.

Highlights include cupcakes and doughnuts made from air-dry clay, painted in the brightest of colours with scrumptious icing on top. We weaved on mini wooden looms using waste plastic bags. We made painted face masks inspired by the band KISS. We have tried a new technique of printing with the use of gel plates. Prints were made using leaves and acrylic paints onto the gel plates, the prints were then cut up and collaged. This made owl pictures, that were fantastic in a range of colours and textures

Seated line dancing and team games on Thursday afternoons with Deborah from Notts College

“Howdy pardner” and a tip of the hat to you!

We continue to enjoy seated exercise sessions to music, with many new dances this year, Beyonce (Texas Hold ‘em) is now a firm favourite.

The team games which change each week help build social skills, team building, and turn-taking/sharing along with team pride, as we shout out for each member to do well. The members take it in turn to be team captains and the duties that this involves. We finish with “hip hip hooray” to the winning team and a “better luck next time” to the second-place team.

All members are encouraged to participate and do so with great gusto and “yee-haw”, health and safety and working within their limits are explained and reminded during the session. Sensitivity to each member's individual needs and skills is paramount in planning, making the sessions fun, and improving the range of movement, coordination, memory recall, and concentration.

“So long, pardner”

WAP ACTIV2 by Zoe Beardsley - Coordinator

Activ2 annual report March 2023 – March 2024

Activ2 run by Zoe and Amy continues to be a warm and friendly group, it has been said that our members are all very loyal and supportive to one another, they're really all good friends. This year welcomed a couple of new faces who have quickly become valued members of the group.

Activities continue to be enjoyed, boxercise and rounders are probably the favourites but we also have cricket, badminton, pool, darts, archery, power walking and many more. It has been a pleasure to gain access to the swimming pool a handful of times too, all the members have opted to go in the water and were found throwing themselves on and off of floats and doing a woggle tug of war!

We had a really involved group of students this year who brought new energy to the team, the members really like getting to know new people. The students were all keen to get involved with running the sessions and supporting on a 1;1 basis in the gym. They were also able to gain experience in monitoring members weight and blood pressure as this remains an important part of activ2 and the members find it helpful to be able to keep check on their health with us.

The best Activ2 sessions are always the parties, we've had Easter hunts, Summers spent on the Lenton park, Halloween pumpkin bowl and Christmas pinatas.

Party on Activ2!

Xmas parties at West Area Project.

At Xmas we always enjoy 'a bit of a do' with lovely food from Crocus Café, terrible dancing and dreadful singing! We also enjoy the opportunity to meet up with ex volunteers and tutors. It's a blast! In Xmas 2023 we had the 'Grinch' pop in to give out the Xmas presents!

