



Joseph Cowen Lifelong Learning Centre

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Annual General Meeting

Monday 20th May 2025 - 1.00pm

Face-to-Face (Brunswick MC Hall) & Via Zoom

Unconfirmed Minutes

Present:

JCLLC CIO Trustees

Dorothy Stainsby (co-chair), Jo Champion, Louise Freeman, Rita Prabhu, Simon Pallett, Lesley Pringle, Trevor Buck

JCLLC CIO Members:

F2F: Myra Bavidge, Marie Browne, Pat Fuller, Peter Fuller, Olive Hogg, Patricia Hutson, Quentin Mitchell, Hazel Mitrani, Joan Oliver, Roger Reeve, Harry Rose, Jean Wigham, Anne Williams

Zoom: Ann Boardman, Nova Brockbank, Barbara Buck, Anne Bundock, John Bundock, Robert Champion, Catherine Cleeve, Elsie Denham, Pamela Denham, Stephen Fry, Gloria Grice, Jenny Ranson, Kath Smith, Helen Watson, Helen White

In Attendance: Nancy Isherwood (minutes)

	<p>Welcome</p> <p>DS opens the AGM and welcomes all in attendance, both at Brunswick MC and via Zoom.</p> <p>Before moving on with the agenda, DS announced the sad news that Ken Young died at the weekend, noting his dedication to Explore both as a founding member and as treasurer from 2014 until 2019 We send our condolences to Angela.</p>
1	<p>Apologies:</p> <p>Malcolm Grady (chair), David Allen, Linda Allen, Elizabeth Hole, Lily Burnet, Jan Widmer</p>

2	<p>Minutes of meeting 20th May 2024</p> <p>DS requests any comments or suggested amendments to the proposed minutes – none noted.</p> <p>DS asks for those in attendance F2F to show agreement and asks AB to start voting process for Zoom attendees.</p> <p>Vote to accept minutes of last meeting as a correct record – minutes accepted.</p>
3	<p>Matters arising from minutes</p> <p>No matters arising from minutes. (Any other issues to be discussed within the agenda)</p>
4	<p>Receipt and approval of the Report and Financial Statements for the period ended 31 August 2024</p> <p>SP introduces Financial Report and shares screen to show simplified figures to aid understanding (Excel of Income and Expenditure)</p> <p>Reminds members that the time period covered is to 31st August 2024 which may feel like a while ago and notes that year on year no much has changed.</p> <p>Income: Subscriptions are slightly higher, but this is largely due to a price increase rather than increased memberships. Also notes the bank interest which is still being accrued but that this is likely to decrease next year due to expected interest rate falls.</p> <p>Expenditure: Expenditure is slightly lower, some costs have increased but others are down, such as payment to tutors, room hire etc. The lower number of tutors being paid reflects the difficulty of recruiting new speakers to replace our older speakers who are stepping back.</p> <p>This leaves a small surplus of £9 (HR asks what we're planning to do with it) but this is actually unexpected as the board were expecting a loss for the financial year.</p> <p>SP explains that the restricted funds relate the Midgley funds which are being used to enhance our Philosophy strand, but which is expected to be used in the next year or two.</p> <p>Reserves are slightly higher than they ought to be – glad to have them, especially in light of recent years, but planning to run them down to nearer £55K. So the board have agreed to reduce fees this coming year</p>

	<p>and possibly the year after, but can't promise beyond that due to market uncertainty, inflation and so on. SP invites and questions from the members.</p> <p>HR asks how much it would cost to print papers for AGM. SP confirms this would be relatively little.</p> <p>HW refers to the reduced speakers to stress the importance of wider membership helping to recruit tutors. AB adds that members can approach speakers or get their contact details if they're at a talk etc.</p> <p>A member asks if we know why it is hard to recruit speakers? Is it that our fees are too low, don't like working with us or clashing schedules, times etc.?</p> <p>SP suggests that the situation at Universities means that many aren't in a position to take ad hoc teaching work. TB explains that it appears not be fees but more issues of availability for most speakers. RP explains that many of our long-term speakers are now retiring and stepping back from teaching.</p> <p>HW answers the suggestion that maybe people do not enjoy speaking for Explore, that it is absolutely not the case. Speakers are really positive about Explore, they have no concerns about how welcoming they are but the problem is finding new contacts, perhaps young retirees with more free time to teach.</p> <p>LF adds that she does a lot of online courses and sometimes the difficulty is getting speakers in a particular format – an individual might be available but only in a particular format, that doesn't fit the programme, so it's really difficult to juggle.</p> <p>Vote to accept financial statements – Zoom and F2F both accepted, passed without objection.</p>
5	<p>Reappointment of Essell Accountants Ltd as Independent Examiners of the Financial statements</p> <p>SP explains that the AGM needs to formally appoint our independent examiners. As a small charity we don't have to have our accounts audited, but the process still requires an external check which is good.</p> <p>Essells Accountants in North Shields have been our independent examiners and now they're nominated to continue for another year.</p> <p>Vote to accept independent examiners – Essells proposed for reappointment. F2F show of hands - approved. Zoom poll – approved</p>

	<p>Reappointment of Essell Accountants Ltd agreed.</p> <p>SP hands back to DS.</p>
6	<p>Appointment of Trustees</p> <p>DS explains the appointment of trustees – usually we have had nine trustees, and according to our constitution 1/3 retire from the board each year by rotation but are eligible for re-election. However this year the numbers were out of kilter and we had two due for reelection, and four due next year. To rebalance things, DS has stood for reelection this year to make it three, leaving three for next year.</p> <p>We're also happy that Karen Gammack will be attending trustees' meetings as an observer, with a view to co-option.</p> <p>This year SP, LP and DS are retiring and seeking re-election. All have been duly proposed and seconded.</p> <p>Request agreement for those three trustees for a further 3-year term – F2F show of hands - agreed. Zoom poll – agreed.</p> <p>DS explains that the board really are like the proverbial swan frantically paddling and offers thanks to them all.</p>
7	<p>Gordon Brown Lecture 2025</p> <p>AL explains that our annual Gordon Brown lecture will be renamed 'The Legacy Lecture' to avoid confusion with the labour politician.</p> <p>We tend to alternate between male and female speakers, and last year we had Baroness Joyce Quin. This year we have Jeff Brown and it will be on Tuesday 9th September at 6.00. It will be Blended and AL hopes that we can Jeff a very warm welcome.</p>
8	<p>Member Survey</p> <p>NI presents an initial summary of responses and results from the Members Survey recently conducted. The presentation refers to the results approximately question by question with some additional comments about what the results can be interpreted.</p> <p>The presentation was not minuted but the presentation slides are available on request.</p>

	DS thanks NI for the presentation and for the work involved in the survey.
9	Any Other Business (Member Questions) (Combined with discussion below)
10	Open forum discussion HM comments that she doesn't want more Zoom as although it was really useful during Covid, she wants to get out of the house. HR adds that he likes getting out but that we need to accept that Zoom is here to stay. DS explains that it's a balance between the two preferred formats, and AL confirms as programme lead that there is no intention to abandon either format, both are important but there is no intention to abandon Zoom. DS offers the Zoom attendees opportunity to add their comments to floor also. RP notes that from the results of the survey we can see that more than 50% of members do use Zoom, as Zoom Only or Blended sessions. HW adds that, as a programmer, the benefit of Zoom means we can draw in tutors who could never attend F2F, for example we've had speakers from Edinburgh, London, France – it really broadens our possibilities. LF adds that the hybrid method is the hardest one to crack. RR asks if we track any switch from F2F to Zoom, giving the example of a course that was F2F in one slot then moved to a different slot on Zoom and the numbers have really dropped. RP counters with a different example of a course where the numbers have increased on Zoom. DS offers thanks to everyone involved, in particular the Programme team, the volunteers, and Friends of Explore for all the catering and warm welcomes the offer. Goodbyes and close of meeting.
11	Date of next meeting – May 2026 Specific date TBC