

MINUTES OF THE GAYWEST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT THE RAINBOW CAFÉ IN BATH
ON SATURDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2018

1. **Present:** There were 24 members present.

2. **Apologies:** An apology was received from Eric Baldwin

3. Previous Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.) minutes – Matters Arising.
 - 3.1. It was agreed by everyone present that the A.G.M. minutes were accurate and that there were no matters arising.
 - 3.2. James Whatmore proposed that these should be passed and Antony Russell Seconded the proposal, all members agreed and the minutes were duly signed off.

4. **Chairman's Report:**
 - 4.1. Colin opened his report by saying that he has done 5 years as your chairman and 8 years altogether on the committee and I have put my name forward again as I am passionate about the group. We all owe such a lot to all the members who have been on your committee over the years who helped to create this unique organisation. The Rainbow Café being an example of forward thinking, which, by the way has been held here at St. Michael's Centre for just over 25 years.

Sometime the job of Chairman can be frustrating and stressful along with taking over your life, but many times it can be very rewarding.

Part of our Constitution is about the need to support our members as well as put on social events. Over the last 3 years we have been involved in Leyhill Open Prison by giving support to their gay social group, and helping those leaving with a support network in their chosen location.

We have in recent years helped some of our members with seeking asylum in this country, because of the treatment that they had experienced in their home country.

On a lighter note, On Wednesday last we were invited to the opening of the new Weston-Super-Mare Proud Bar, the Boulevard, There will be a Flier giving you all the details you require, so please, when you are down there, give them your support.

GayWest took part in the Prides at Bath Spa University, Leyhill, Weston-Super-Mare and Gloucester Bath Carnival and Pride, and the Amnesty International Garden Party at Goldney Hall in Clifton.

One thing this year, we have noticed is that many organisations want to put gay persons into boxes or who have a particular political view and give them labels, the one thing this committee has always strongly stated that GayWest does not and will not put anyone into boxes or give them labels. All people being equal and are treated as an individual. If an alien was to land at the Rainbow Café, it would be made welcome!! And persuaded to buy a drink and some cake.

On the social side, we have had a full year of events and have been very fortunate with the weather, there are some good photos on display. Many of you now log-on successfully onto the website to obtain your Magazine and other printed information, we continue to get new members joining through the website, we have 86 members at the moment.

Earlier in the year we decided that the membership fee had not risen since 2000 and that we were running on a very tight budget, so it was decided to increase all the fees by £3.00 per year and to keep this under review.

Unfortunately, last month we were informed that our rent for the use of the centre would rise to £40.00 per week from October 2018.

To evaluate all we do, earlier this year we sent out a questionnaire on topics which might let us know where we could improve the service you get, disappointingly we only had about 30% back, but we did get some good points that we can build on.

One suggestion was that the Journal should return to the Name of Magazine but stay as bi-monthly.

I would like to conclude by thanking Michael and Jim for all their hard work, along with Robert for taking charge of the Café when we have been away, John Martin for keeping our Facebook page going and all those members who have come along to help us at various events.

Finally, in case you were wondering, we have booked the “Butlers in The Buff” again for this year’s Christmas Dinner, which will be held on Friday 14th December at the Pavilion Restaurant.

5. Treasurer’s Report:

5.1. Jim had handed out copies of the Annual Finance Account Summary which highlighted all the income and expenditure, along with the starting and finishing bank balances.

Jim stated that in a world with prices keep rising, our Insurance has remained at the same level as last year.

It was stated that the price for the Annual Christmas Dinner to be held on Friday 14th December will cost £25.00 for members and £27.50 for guests, but sorry no reduction this year. We have arranged for two guests this year, to serve and assist with the raffle.

Questions that followed: - Antony Russell asked if the minutes could be circulated well before the meeting, Jim did explain that the minutes had been available shortly after the last meeting and a copy was in the Rainbow Café and On-Line.

Jim asked if there were any questions relating to his finance report, these were clarified.

The Committee then stood down and Robert Howes took the Chair.

6. Nominations:

Robert announced that nominations had been received for Colin O’Brien as Chairman, Jim Phimister as Treasurer/Membership Secretary and Michael Reid as Secretary, These were collectively proposed by Duncan Ross and Seconded by Ernie Everest.

6.1. There were three more members who had expressed a wish to be on the committee, John Martin would like to return to the post of Outreach Officer, also Duncan Ross and Chris Martin would like to help by joining the Committee, this was accepted by those present and their roles would be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

7. Any Other Business:

Ernie who joined GayWest in 1988 and is still involved with the group, spoke in praise of the committee and their achievements.

7.1. Desmond Eastup felt that the offer of a FREE COFFEE on someone's first visit should be discontinued, along with the consumption of any food not purchased at the café, except under strict dietary conditions.

7.2. It was suggested that a greater variety of cakes and items for sale should be considered, and this was answered from the floor, by saying that we had tried this in the past and the short answer is that goods often go out of date and then are destroyed with a resulting loss in revenue to the group, but this is always something that would be kept under review.

7.3. Robert pointed out that other organisations like us, who do not charge for their events, ask those attending to give a donation to the Group funds.

7.4. More members wanted to act as servers in the café.

7.5. John Martin said that outsiders that he had contact were under the impression that the Café was only for members, he was reassured that all persons were welcome, although membership is encouraged it is not compulsory to attend.

John felt that many could not afford the fees and this might put some off joining, and he asked if the fee could be lowered. Jim answered that the cost of running the group did not allow for this, as we kept all our running costs to a minimum.

Robert suggested that if someone was finding it difficult to pay out all the membership in one go, then could we take it in the form of a Monthly Standing Order of a smaller amount, say £3-£5. Jim stated that he could cope with this for the few that might require it.

7.6. Duncan and Chris both thanked GayWest for all the support that they had received whilst at Leyhill.

7.7. Antony Russell asked if we could have an Auction again, Colin informed him that one is planned for March next year but in a new format, we were also asked if we would consider more regular raffles, the answer was yes, but we must have some realistic prizes, so donations of some good prizes are required.

There were no more comments so the meeting was closed.

Jim Phimister

24th September 2018