



## **MINUTES OF THE FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF WEA YMCA CC CYMRU**

**Held on Saturday 16 April 2016 at Newport YMCA, Pillgwenlly**

### **Present:**

**Officers** – John Graystone (Chair), Mark Isherwood (Chief Executive), Stephen Thomas (Clerk to the Council) (3).

**Individual Members, Staff & Governors** – David Ashman, Mark Baines, Rhys Barfoot, Simon Conlin, Steve David, Viv Davies, Cath Dawkes, Kelly Edwards, David Elis-Williams, Christopher Franks, Christina Gallagher, Tracy Garnett, Jeremy Gass, Jonathan Goddard, Dai Griffiths, Fran Griffiths, Moelwen Gwyndaf, Elaine Gwynne, Ann Herbert, Cath Hicks, Rob Humphreys (Vice-Chair), John Hurley, Lynette Hurley, Jayne Ireland, June Jeremy, Nathan Jones, Jenni Jones-Annetts, David MacManus, Clive Morgan, Lynne Osborne, Graham Price, Sharon Reader, Martyn Reed, Susan Roberts, Dafydd Rhys, David Smith, Jan Tiley, Alan Tinsley, Elaine Topping, Peter Townend, Rebecca Watson Stubbs, Gillian Wilde, Heather Willbourn, Maria Worley (44).

**Individual Members & Branch representatives** – Ceinwen Statter (Blackwood and Oakdale branch), Marilyn Thomas (Caerphilly), Phil Elias (Llanelli), Huw Williams (Merthyr), Derek Edwards (Unit 10, Port Talbot), Sonia Reynolds (Upper Amman Valley) (6).

**Branch, Affiliated or Partner Organisation representatives** – Mary Newman (Global Community Learning branch), Val Williams (Sylfaen Cyf.), Catrin James (Urdd Gobaith Cymru) (3).

**Auditors & Interpreter** – Huw Baker and Richard Knoyle (Btp Associates Ltd.: minutes 1-3 only); Nerys Hurford (Simultaneous Interpreter) (3).

### **Apologies:**

Rufus Adams, T G Allen, Alan Balcombe, Sarah Bryan (Coleg Harlech Learner Forum), Sarah Burrows, Karyl Carter, Cathrine Clark, Julie Cook (Wales TUC Cymru), Nichola Crow, Andrea Davies, Maggi Dawson, Steve Drowley, Tudur Evans, James Fleming, Christine Franks, David Girdler, Lynne Hayes, Steve Hayes, Adrian Heathfield, Daphne Holdsworth, Mena Ifans, Andrew Jenkins, Gerry Jenson (Vice-Chair), Sarah K Jones, Sonia Jones, Victoria Knappett, Olwen Leavold, Ros McAlister, Betty Mason, Elaine Moore, Graham Morris, Helen Murphy, Sarah Murphy, Ray Neil, Annie O'Brien, Valmai Owen, Yasmin Rayner, Cllr. Caerwyn Roberts (Harlech Comm. Council), Julie Roberts, Cllr. Peter Roberts (Neath Port Talbot CBC), Toni Schiavone, Karina Scott, D A Simcock, Richard Speight, Val Thomas, David West, Margaret Whitcombe (47).

Item	WEA YMCA CC CYMRU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Introductory Matters</b></p> <p>John Graystone welcomed everyone and made a few housekeeping announcements. The meeting was confirmed as being properly convened in constitutional terms, and quorate. Jan Tiley and David Ashman were elected tellers for the voting procedures at the meeting.</p>
2.	<p><b>Approval of minutes of the previous AGM</b></p> <p>The draft minutes of WEA Cymru's Annual General Meeting, held at Coleg Harlech on 25 April 2015, were considered and approved as a correct record (proposed: Sonia Reynolds; seconded: Graham Price). In terms of follow-up action, an update on the motion relating to research work had been circulated with the AGM papers, and a progress report on four of the other motions passed at Harlech was distributed for members' information. No other matters arising were raised.</p>
3.	<p><b>Presentation of WEA Cymru's Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15</b></p> <p>David Elis-Williams, in his capacity as Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, referred those present to the full Report and Financial Statements available in English and/or in Welsh for their reference. Much of their content was statutorily necessary because of WEA Cymru's status as a Further Education Institution and a charity, but it was also an opportunity for it to present itself to the wider world, so included additional pieces of information to add to its level of accountability to members and more broadly. He highlighted that WEA Cymru had met four of its six financial targets for the year, falling short on the income generating and alternative sources of funding ones and therefore remaining more dependent on Welsh Government income than planned.</p> <p>Huw Baker, on behalf of the external auditors Btp Associates Ltd., confirmed that the accounts represented a fair and true view of the organisation, did not contain any material mis-statements and showed a body in good financial order which had made a surplus for the year. Auditors' reports within the overall document stated this, including a report on proper use of the Welsh Government's money during the year. He foresaw differing challenges in the current 2015/16 year, emanating from the merger with YMCA Wales CC Ltd. and the introduction of revised financial accounting standards.</p> <p>It was proposed that the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2015 be received (proposed: David Elis-Williams; seconded: David Smith) and this was unanimously approved.</p> <p>Clarification was sought on the report and accounts covering the same period for YMCA Wales CC Ltd.. That document had been approved at a separate AGM of that body held in February, which had also formalised the process of</p>

	<p>closing it down as a legal entity ('striking it off' the Companies House register): that report and accounts were available for information to those present. Chris Franks noted that YMCA Wales CC Ltd. had made a deficit in the 2014/15 financial year, outweighing the surplus made by WEA Cymru. He was told that that was explained by certain readjustments and provisions made in preparation for the merger. There was also a sum of over £1.6 million in cash reserves which came over from it as a consequence of the merger. As Chair of the Audit Committee, Chris Franks stated that those accounts would be scrutinised at its next meeting.</p>
4.	<p><b>Appointment of auditors for 2015/16 financial year</b></p> <p>Encouraged by the Audit Code of Practice issued by Welsh Government for Further Education Institutions to review external auditors every five years, the current year still fell within that 5-year cycle. The AGM therefore unanimously authorised the re-appointment of Btp Associates Ltd. of Merthyr Tydfil as WEA YMCA CC Cymru's auditors for 2015/16 (proposed: David Elis-Williams; seconded: Jeremy Gass).</p>
5.	<p><b>Chief Executive's Report on the year's work</b></p> <p>Mark Isherwood spoke of achievements in terms of the previous academic year - a solid financial performance, which over the two legacy organisations exceeded educational delivery targets, with completion, attainment and success rates higher than other providers, though a need to improve Welsh language and bilingual provision.</p> <p>In the present year, data showed that we were ahead of student target figures, which was doubly commendable because of the degree of change occurring within the organisation – on staffing matters, governance, data system upheavals and reductions in funding. With reviews of adult community learning and of funding mechanisms occurring, as well as National Assembly for Wales elections, there was much lobbying and advocacy work being undertaken, to influence politicians, civil servants and others through on-line systems and hustings meetings. He spoke highly of partnerships, collaborations, branch activities and initiatives such as the ESOL, Dyfodol and Erasmus projects, and referred to the National Coding Week Award that had recently been won.</p> <p>As for the future, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 represented a sustainable framework for the organisation's work and its priorities and all 7 of the well-being goals in the Act were of relevance to WEA YMCA CC Cymru's activities.</p>
6.	<p><b>Chair's Report on the past year and list of Governors (Directors) in 2015/16</b></p> <p>John Graystone said that the merger had gone through relatively smoothly in August 2015, but there remained many aspects to resolve as a consequence of it, with some of them included on the AGM agenda. The resulting new</p>

	<p>organisation of WEA YMCA CC Cymru, while sharing facets of its identity with Further Education colleges, the voluntary sector, training providers and with other social and community organisations, was unique and not equivalent to any of them.</p> <p>Although the external funding environment was tough, it was important that the organisation maintained its core values, and used such values to shape the future of adult community learning (ACL) and its priorities. WEA YMCA CC Cymru had the potential to become a national co-ordinating body for ACL in Wales. With a recommendation from the Hazelkorn Review that there be one funding body for Higher and Further Education, work-based learning and ACL, the voice advocating for lifelong learning needed to be a strong one and WEA YMCA CC Cymru had to respond proactively to the challenges that lay ahead.</p> <p>The list of governors who had served in the period since the AGM at Harlech the previous year had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. It and the Chair's report were formally received by the meeting.</p>
7.	<p><b>Feedback from the two morning discussion sessions</b></p> <p>Kelly Edwards described the robust exchange of views that had occurred in the workshop on the future vision, aims and strategic plan of the organisation, which had received a summary presentation of results from two surveys conducted on those issues. Ideas from both legacy organisations' purpose statements had been promoted at the session. The next step would be to revise the strategic plan by incorporating the feedback received and collating common themes from the legacy organisations' strategic plans.</p> <p>Stephen Thomas talked of the main points covered in the governance structure workshop – the continuing need to spell out a role for the proposed Assembly structure, the aim of having an active membership that was more reflective of the body's learners, and also whether membership should be free or not in future. Points were raised from the Floor on the importance of giving enough prior knowledge to members of a date for the Extraordinary General Meeting that would aim to conclude these issues in the summer, given that it was not only the Council that had to agree them. Furthermore, in the eyes of some members, the consultation on sweeping new arrangements in the staffing structure and operational regions should be finalised before the governance and branding issues were resolved, because it was important for the voluntary side of the organisation to know the shape of the support organisation on which it depended before reaching conclusions on those matters. These views were noted.</p>
8.	<p><b>Motions for Debate</b></p> <p>There were five motions, with Motion 4 also including a formal amendment. The proxy voting system in operation meant there were an additional 15 votes which had been received beforehand by the Clerk, with the Chair appointed as proxy, to be added to the votes counted by the tellers from the Floor.</p>



### **Motion 3**

*This AGM urges the organisation to consider re-instituting its past policy of offering financial and other support (such as the provision of a crèche) to those attending courses who are carers or who have childcare costs, in a bid to ease access for a broader range of potential learners.*

Proposed: Heather Willbourn; seconded: Huw Williams.

Heather Willbourn said the South East Wales Regional Forum had originally raised this matter at its November meeting. While the Financial Contingency Fund existed to support students, its scope was limited and it also required learners to apply to it, which put certain people off. It was a finite and targeted fund which concentrated on learners already on concessionary fees. The demographic data seen earlier suggested that something additional was required so that the 20-25 age group could be reached more effectively. Offering child care was a powerful incentive to young mothers to participate. The organisation should also prioritise making the Financial Contingency Fund more widely known and creatively look for other funding sources. Huw Williams added that that morning's Siân Thomason award winners from Cwmbran ('Mums Matter') could not have studied had a Communities First crèche not been available to them. Marilyn Thomas noted that Caerphilly branch's activities had diminished as a result of the ending of its crèches, and that grandparents also benefited from their availability. John Hurley spoke of empirical studies undertaken in the Newport area, showing that great benefits came from a comparatively small investment in this realm.

**The motion was carried as follows:**

**In Favour: 72**

**Against: 0**

**Abstention: 3**

### **Motion 4**

*This AGM calls on Council to ensure the Coleg Harlech site's future for education and to expand provision there to include courses which give progression to Higher Education, which are accessible and suitable for students with families, while increasing the number of courses that are delivered bilingually and through the medium of Welsh.*

Proposed: Iwan Perry (on behalf of Coleg Harlech Learner Forum - formally); seconded: Christine Cockroft (formally).

### **Amendment to Motion 4 (from Council)**

Delete '*... to ensure the Coleg Harlech site's future for education and to expand provision there to include ...*'; and insert in its stead: '*... to do all within its powers to continue the provision of education on the Coleg Harlech site and to expand provision there or elsewhere in the vicinity to include ...*'.

Proposed: David Elis-Williams (pp. Council); seconded: Jeremy Gass (formally).

The motion's proposers were not present but had indicated that they accepted

