AVOW Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date: 9th October 2025
Location: Rossett Hall Hotel, Wrexham
Chair: Peter Howell

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from:
Mark Isherwood MS, Ken Skates, Alwyn Jones, David Fitzsimon, Julie Gillbanks, PC Andy Dunbobbin, Cllr Beryl Blackmore, Jo Hughes, Julie Francis and Dr. Banerjee

2. Welcome

Peter Howell opened the meeting, welcoming all attendees and introducing the keynote speaker.

3. Keynote Speaker – Lesley Griffiths MS

Lesley Griffiths, Member of the Senedd for Wrexham, delivered the keynote address. Key points included:

- Reflections on volunteers as "unsung heroes" and their vital contributions to communities.
- A look back at the pandemic, highlighting AVOW's frontline response in coordinating local volunteering and community support.
- Recognition of the Welsh Government's investment in Wrexham, including regeneration projects such as Wrexham Gateway, transport improvements, and educational developments.
- Discussion of Volunteers Week (June) and the importance of youth volunteering.
- Overview of Welsh Government funding for volunteering – over £4 million since April 2022, supporting over 419,000 volunteer hours.

Lesley expressed deep gratitude to all volunteers and AVOW for their continued dedication and partnership.
Peter Howell thanked Lesley on behalf of AVOW and presented flowers in appreciation.

4. Trustees' Report – Peter Howell

Peter Howell presented the Trustees' Report, highlighting:

- The importance of volunteers to Wrexham's community life.
- AVOW's growing social media presence and outreach, thanks to staff efforts.
- Recognition of the AVOW teams, working to make the organisation more resilient.
- Success of Community Agents, a new initiative providing direct community support.
- Shopmobility continues to thrive, with new equipment supported by grant funding.
- Ongoing strategic planning work between trustees and staff to set short- and long-term goals.
- Community Lottery—encouragement for members to participate; 60% of proceeds go directly to local causes.
- Thanks to Kevin Forbes for his efforts in trustee recruitment and ongoing governance work.

5. Financial Report – Scott Owen

Scott Owen, Finance Chair, presented the financial summary:

- Total Income: £1,703,350
- Total Expenditure: £1,715,815
- Resulting in a small deficit of £12,465, a strong position given the financial climate.
- Reserves: £910,000, with around one-third restricted.
- Unrestricted funds increased by £81,000 to £619,000, earmarked to support AVOW's future vision and building improvements.

Thanks were given to:

- Jane Tweedy (Auditor)
- Katherine Prince (Head of Finance)

- Mervyn Dean, former Finance Committee Chair

It was noted that over £12,000 was raised through the Community Lottery, with nearly £10,000 directly supporting local causes.

Voting:

- *Approval of Accounts:* 13 votes in favour, none against. Accounts accepted unanimously.

6. Trustee Elections

- **Re-election:** Margaret Heaton stood for re-election and was accepted unanimously (13 votes for, none against).
- **Outgoing Trustees:** Thanks were expressed to **Mervyn Dean** and **David Thompson** for their many years of service.
- **New Trustees:** Two potential new trustees, **Jane** and **Katie**, were introduced and will be co-opted ahead of formal election at the next AGM.

Peter Howell encouraged members interested in becoming trustees to get in touch.

7. Future of Ty AVOW – Dawn Roberts-McCabe & Guests

Dawn Clarke introduced the next phase of AVOW's journey:

- Plans for the renovation and revitalisation of Ty AVOW, to modernise and future-proof the building.
- The building, originally the Wrexham Waterworks offices (1880s), holds rich local heritage.

Ian Davies, Chartered Engineer, provided a historic overview of the building's origins and architecture.

John Edwards, Project Manager, outlined the renovation plans, including:

- Preservation of the heritage façade and interior features.
- Addition of a new two-storey community space with accessible meeting rooms, offices, and event facilities.
- Commitment to local contractors and sustainability, including solar power, heat pumps, and green spaces.

- The project cost is estimated at £3.5 million, with £1.7–£1.9 million in funding already identified.
- Plans to create a new courtyard green space facing King Street and the bus station.

Members were invited to share feedback and suggestions on post-it notes and through an upcoming survey.

8. Closing

Peter Howell and Dawn Roberts-McCabe thanked all attendees, trustees, volunteers, and staff for their continued dedication.
The meeting concluded with refreshments, networking, and a demonstration by AVOW's Community Agents of their chair-based exercise programme.

Meeting closed at: 11:10 a.m.
Minutes prepared by: Sarah Buck