

RUSS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023: MINUTES

Date and time Saturday, 25 June 2023, 14.00 – 15.00
 Location RUSS Community Hub

1	Welcome from Anurag Verma, Chair of the Board
1.1	RUSS Trustee Eleanor Margolies (EM) welcomed RUSS members to the AGM, ran through the housekeeping rules and handed over to the Chair to start the meeting.
1.2	RUSS Chair Anurag Verma (AV) outlined the agenda for the day which would include, after the business of the AGM, talks from guest speakers from the self-build community, who were also in attendance: Janet Emanuel, Board member, London CLT and Assistant Head Teacher at Sydenham Girls' Secondary School Lewisham; Oliver Bulleid, Chief Executive, London CLT; Alex Ingram, Resident at Citizens House; and Tom Bremner, CDS Cooperatives.
2	Minutes of 2022 Annual General Meeting
2.1	AV proposed that the minutes for the 2022 RUSS Annual General Meeting be agreed as true and accurate.
2.2	Members agreed to record the minutes as a true record.
3	Last year's achievements and the year ahead
3.1	AV outlined key activities and achievements of the previous year, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that 2022 has been spent progressing the scheme which is nearing completion • A momentous topping out event • The news that Councillor Brenda Dacres, Cabinet Member of Housing and Lewisham and Tom Coakley, the Deputy Mayor of the GLA had during the year confirmed they were committed to supporting community-led housing. • The HUB has now been given permanent planning consent. • The RUSS school will soon be back after a hiatus. A new module will be introduced called Built, which is the 4th part of the 5-stage development process for community housing. • RUSS applied to acquire two new sites.
3.2	AV asked all to spread the word that all the flats are allocated but that there are some vacancies in our shared flats.
3.3	In 2023, RUSS made the following appointments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Boyd, assisted by Harry Bridgeman, in October 2022 to assist the self-builders through to completion and organise further works outside the building contract, such as the landscaping, guestroom and office. • Victoria Panting as a client representative and project manager to manage consultants and other professionals. • Jennie Graham took over our administration work on Church Grove and also supports the allocations.

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3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judith Witting joined in 2023 to handle the bookkeeping. • Following the departure of our longstanding managing director, Dinah Roake, in October 2022, the Board decided to appoint Eleanor (EM, a trustee and future resident), as managing director. <p>Following a decision by our board in 2021/22 not to apply to become a Registered provider of social housing (RP) we have been very, very fortunate to be able to partner with CDS Cooperatives, with whom we share our values and aims, to provide affordable homes to our communities.</p>
3.5	<p>AV thanked all of the staff, volunteers and trustees that had helped RUSS throughout the year.</p>
4	2022 Annual Accounts presented by Phil Morris
4.1	<p>RUSS Treasurer Phil Morris (PM) presented the RUSS Financial Statements for the year to 31 December 2022.</p>
4.2	<p>PM noted that the accounts had been approved by the auditors late the previous night and have not yet been signed though they will be in due course.</p>
4.3	<p>PM noted that the accounts give RUSS a clean bill of health and that Third Sector Accountancy (TSA) had stated that there was nothing to report that would cast significant doubt about the society's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of 12 months from the date that the accounts were authorized for issue.</p>
4.4	<p>The members attending the AGM agreed to record that the Financial Statements for the year to 31 December 2022 had been received.</p>
5	Appointment of auditor for 2023
5.1	<p>PM noted that the RUSS Board were recommending the re-appointment of TSA as the auditors for 2023 as they already had a sound understanding of RUSS and its finances.</p>
5.2	<p>Members attending the AGM approved the proposal to re-appoint TSA as the auditors for 2023.</p>
6	Election to Board
6.1	<p>Tessa, Ahmed, Evan, Danny, Eleanor and Ruby retired from the Board. AV thanked them for their dedication and contribution to RUSS's work over the years adding that the project could not have succeeded without them.</p>
6.2	<p>As AV would stand again, EM outlined the role of the Board, ran through the trustee selection process and presented the 3 candidates recommended by the Board for election:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Anita Rasaratnam</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Joel Simpson</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Elly Greig</p>
6.3	<p>Joel was present and introduced himself to members. Anita and Elly were not able to attend in person. The statements of all three can be read on the website.</p>
6.4	

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6.5	<p>Since the number of new and re-standing candidates did not exceed the number of vacancies, no election was required and the Chair declared those candidates duly appointed.</p> <p>EM welcomed the new Board members.</p>
7	Questions from members
7.1	<p>A RUSS member asked for an update on fire safety. This was given by EM with reference to the building's sprinkler system, non-combustible cladding and fire strategy. The member requested a copy of a letter sent to the London Fire Brigade by the Approved Inspector (Socotec), responding to London Fire Brigade (LFB) comments made in August 2021. EM commented that she thought this had been previously shared. [Post-meeting note: On checking Church Grove Project Board minutes, EM noted that the CGPB had decided it was not appropriate for RUSS to share others' correspondence with external bodies and DR had in March 2022 emailed the member who made the request to say that RUSS was awaiting a further response from the LFB. This correction was communicated by email post-AGM.]</p>
7.2	<p>Another member asked for clarification around how the RUSS School will operate when it resumes. AV confirmed it will operate as before, through in person meetings of usually around 15 attendees.</p>
8	Close
8.1	<p>AV thanked EM for organising the AGM and members for attending.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 3pm.</p>