Covering Essex & East London
Registered Charity No: 263075
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MINUTES OF THE 68th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON Friday 14th November 2025

VENUE:	St Anne Line Church Hall, South Woodford
TIME:	19:00-19:30 — AGM followed by the celebration event
CHAIR:	Keith Fernett MBE — Trustee Chair
PRESENT:	Margaret Todd (Trustee Secretary), Daniel Ruscoe (CEO), Keith Fernett MBE (Trustee) — together with members, families, volunteers, staff and supporters. Attendance count: 68
APOLOGIES:	Teresa McHale (Trustee), Chuka Agbasiere (Trustee),

The Charities Constitution was present at the meeting and referred to where required. The meeting was confirmed quorate.

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The CEO welcomed members, families, volunteers, staff, trustees and supporters to the 68th Annual General Meeting. It was noted that this was the first AGM held under the new constitution and governance structure adopted earlier in 2025, which had been designed to be modern, transparent and sustainable. It was confirmed that the AGM would be purposefully brief, covering the formal business and a review of the year, before the celebration event.

2. Minutes of the Previous AGM (2024)

It was recorded that the minutes of the 2024 AGM had been reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees and were available at the back of the room for members to inspect. The Trustees' annual report and financial report was also available on tables around the room.

3. Declarations of Interest and Motions

No conflicts of interest were declared. It was confirmed that no other business or motions had been submitted for the meeting.

4. Trustees' Annual Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

The CEO presented the Trustees' Annual Report. Key points reported to members:

- Membership increased by 36% to 445 members, the highest level in more than six years, including a 22% rise in members with disabilities.
- 13 new volunteers were welcomed, bringing the total to 49 active supporters across the groups and services.
- The Community Disability Advocacy Service supported 45 families, achieving an 80% case resolution rate and an 89% satisfaction rate.
- Groups in Ilford, Havering and Wanstead & Woodford continued to deliver the Saturday centre, Wednesday club, pub group, BBQs, discos, holidays, coach and theatre trips, bingo and swimming trips. Detailed group reports were available at the meeting.
- The new constitution simplifies ways of working, centralises banking and introduces Group Leadership Teams, reducing paperwork for volunteers and clarifying how the charity works together as one organisation.

5. Financial Position for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

The CEO presented the financial summary. Total income was £40,622 (an increase of 119% on the previous year) and total expenditure was £95,331. The charity achieved 97% of its income target and remained within 3% of budget.
At 31 March 2025 the charity held over £707,000 in total assets, including more than £500,000 in ethical investments generating sustainable income. A further £20,000 of investment growth was achieved after the reporting period and therefore does not appear in the reported figures. A detailed breakdown was available to members at the meeting.

6. Independent Examiner

The CEO thanked Zeeshan Munawar of Ames Ltd for his continued professionalism, support and transparency. It was reported that the Board had approved his reappointment as the charity's independent examiner for 2025-2026.

7. Trustee Appointments and Retirements

It was confirmed that Keith Fernett MBE and Chuka Agbasiere had been formally appointed to the Board earlier in the year, bringing extensive professional, charity and community experience to the charity's governance. The membership was thanked for voting them in.

The retirement of Canon Bob Hamill, who had served as trustee and chaplain for many years, was noted. Members recorded their gratitude for his pastoral leadership, support of members and friendship over a considerable period of service.

It was confirmed that there were no further appointments or retirements to report and that the Board now operates in accordance with the updated constitution.

8. Chair's Address
The CEO expressed the charity's gratitude to Teresa McHale, who had led the Board as Chair with dedication, wisdom and compassion over the previous three years, and welcomed Keith Fernett MBE as incoming Chair.

The Chair then addressed the meeting thanking Teresa, Trustees, Dan and the volunteers for their achievements over the last 12 months. Keith shared his positive outlook on the coming years and continuing the work being done to maintain our governance but meet the changing needs of people with disabilities. He closed by thanking our members and looked forward to a year of events and activities.

9. Thanks
The CEO thanked volunteers for their patience and resilience during the period of change, paid tribute to Ismat Jaffari, who had moved on to new ventures but was fundamental in developing and shaping the Community Disability Advocacy Service, thanked members and families for their continued trust, and thanked fellow trustees for their dedication and support.

10. Close of Meeting
On behalf of the Board of Trustees, the CEO formally declared the 68th Annual General Meeting closed. The formal business concluded in approximately fifteen minutes and was followed by the celebration event, which included entertainment by Sara Peterson, a photo booth and games.

Signed: _____ (Chair of Trustees)