

FRIENDS OF THE RANDELL COTTAGE WRITERS TRUST

Minutes of Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 25 May 2022

11.00 am Room 4 of the Alliance Française, Mercer St. Wellington.

Agenda:

- 1. Present:** Dame Fiona Kidman, Leslie Brown, Christine Hurley, Gillian Cameron, Susan Stevens, Rachel Underwood, Jessie Munro, Jackie Chong, Maggie Rainey-Smith, Winston Roberts, and Robyn Skrzyńska.
- 2. Apologies:** Beverley Randell, Susan Price, Tony Simpson, Bernadette Rundle, Mary-Jane Monaghan, Des Smith, John Jolliff, Juliet Smith, Renée Taylor, Tim Gruar, Linda Burgess, Francis Cooke, Felicity Wong, and Kon Kuiper. Received LB/RS
- 3. Welcome:** the President of the Friends, Leslie Brown, welcomed the members, noting that there was a quorum of 10.
- 4. Confirmation of the draft AGM minutes of 27 July 2021.** Received and approved with amendment to the numbering and the removal of the question mark on p3. LB/RU
- 5. Matters arising:** Rachel Underwood asked if all actions had been carried out and Leslie replied that they would be covered in his report.

6. President's Report:

Creative New Zealand Funding

I reported last year that the Trust is on an annual funding cycle with Creative New Zealand. This means annual applications with the attendant uncertainty about whether the application would be approved. So, I should start by thanking trustees, Sian Robyns and Christine Hurley, for carrying this load and again getting to a successful conclusion.

New Zealand Writer 2021

Lynn Davidson has been and gone. Her project is a volume of memoir and poetry, which she spoke about at our last AGM.

2021 Open Day

The surge of Delta put paid to this event although a small number of socially distanced Wellington Heritage Week events were able to go ahead. Planning will soon be in hand for our 2022 Open Day.

French Writer

Progress at last! The 2021 French writer, Caroline Laurent, will be able to travel to New Zealand to take up her residency in instalments. The Trust has called for applications for 2023.

New Zealand Writer 2022

Rose Lu is the 2022 NZ resident writer at the Cottage and will speak after the AGM has ended.

More recently

COVID, this time Omicron, stymied our plans to do an open afternoon at the cottage before Rose started.

We have been able to help the Trust and have funded half the cost of a professionally produced video featuring Lynn that we hope will be the first of a series. We have also funded the cost of what we call the 'blue plaque', an official heritage plaque. This has been manufactured and we await the setting of a date to unveil it.

We seem to be past the worst of COVID and hopefully we may feel more confident about hosting events.

We await with great interest the anniversary publication of the Trust and the occasion of its launch. I thank Dame Fiona Kidman for sterling work fundraising for the book.

Next to last

We have farewelled our Treasurer, Tracey Schuyt. Tracey worked hard to deliver our accounting function including invoicing subscriptions and receipting donations. She leaves a gap. So too does the departure of committee member Gillian Cameron. Gillian is looking forward to more time for her own writing.

Conclusion

I thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you at our next event!

Leslie Brown

President of the Friends of Randell Cottage Writers Trust

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Christine Hurley, Chair of the Randell Cottage Writers Trustees added that Lynn Davidson was making good progress with her project and that the anniversary publication "Singing across Time" of approx. 200 pages was well underway. The title was taken from a quote in a poem by Whiti Hereaka, herself a past NZ resident writer. Dame Fiona Kidman and Beverley Randell had both contributed pieces. Maggie Rainey--Smith, one of the literary editors, said she was enjoying the project and working with Linda Burgess, the other literary editor, and meeting the various deadlines.

Christine explained that the publication would be ready in October and the launch, probably in November, would await the naming of the new French Ambassador to NZ. Professor Jean Anderson was busy with the translation side of the articles contributed by both NZ and French past writers.

The sources of funding were identified as the French Embassy which contributed \$10,000 and Wellington NZ which contributed \$7,000. Some contingency funds were available should they be needed.

President's report was received and approved. LB/GC

7. Annual Financial Report:

Leslie Brown presented the annual financial statement which had been prepared by Tracey Schuyt. He explained that \$1250.00 was the Friends' contribution to the video and \$2050.00 was our payment to cover the cost of the blue plaque.

Rachel asked if the roof was still deteriorating, since the original amount of \$20,000 raised two years ago was for the replacement of the Cottage roof. Christine replied that there had been no significant change and based on the opinion of our expert the roof was deemed as not needing to be replaced. Dame Fiona Kidman asked about the cost of replacing the roof in the future. Christine replied that it was impossible to predict with time and rising costs to be taken into account.

Rachel Underwood asked about the main events of the year and Leslie replied the events at the National Library.

Annual Financial Statement was received and approved. LB/RS

8. Annual Subscriptions: The current subscriptions as approved in 2021 were accepted for 2022 and the following was approved: subscriptions for 2023/24 remain at \$15.00 for seniors/students, \$30.00 for individuals, \$45.00 for families and \$60.00 for businesses as set at the 2020 AGM. LB/RS

9. Election of the Officers of the Society:

President: Leslie Brown was re-elected unanimously. FK/ RS

Treasurer: (currently vacant) Leslie was working on finding a volunteer.

Secretary: Robyn Skrzyńska was re-elected unanimously. LB/FK

Committee: Current members Dame Fiona Kidman, Susan Stevens, and Tim Gruar were re-elected unopposed. LB/GC

Dame Fiona asked a question about future volunteers to the vacant positions on the committee and Leslie replied that people can be co-opted.

Leslie added that Christine Hurley, as Chair of the Trustees, was an *ex officio* member of the Friends committee and that she had regularly attended our committee meetings.

10. Any Other Business:

Dame Fiona said she had uncovered some possible sources of funding for the future and that these could be discussed at a committee meeting later.

The meeting concluded at 11.45 am and refreshments were served before Rose arrived and the conversation between her and Leslie Brown took place.

Here is a summary of the conversation between Leslie and Rose Lu after refreshments.

Rose Lu speaks to the Friends members at the AGM.

After the Friends of Randell Cottage AGM on Wednesday 25 May concluded, President Leslie welcomed Rose Lu, the current writer-in-residence, to the meeting and directed the conversation with some probing questions.

Her project while at the Cottage is the beginning of her debut novel with NZ Chinese characters in an intergenerational situation set in a past era.

Rose shared with us her various challenges in starting her major creative writing journey on this topic.

Dame Fiona Kidman, Maggie Rainey-Smith and Jessie Munro offered encouragement and support by giving their experiences and often endorsing Rose's decisions based on her "trial and error" approach in the early stages of writing while aiming to write 20,000 words a month.

Dame Fiona, however, reassured her that it was good not to feel that you had to meet a certain target, or plan, and how she considered that to do research first was useful, leaving the creative side freer when the writing part started.

Rose's reading of her rock-climbing/bouldering piece was highly amusing and expressed relevant things in a novel way, elevating this activity to an extreme sport followed by many.

Altogether a refreshing conversation with an inspiring young and talented writer who views the creation of "identity " as a key ingredient of her trade.

