

Chair's remarks. AGM 19th May 2018

As you can see in the Annual Report, Kingston Mencap has a healthy bank balance, despite the costs of the refurbishment of Searchlight. You will also see that we continue to provide leisure activities and support for our Members, with the benefit of having our own home in Kingston, the Searchlight Community Centre.

This is in line with our hopes and expectations when we took the decision to obtain the lease of Searchlight at the beginning of last year. However, we cannot be complacent. At present, we are more than covering the rent with income from lettings and by the end of this financial year we will be closer to covering all our running costs. Lettings have increased dramatically in the last five months.

Whilst we need to generate income, we are conscious that we must not become a letting agency. That is not what Kingston Mencap is for.

We set out to encourage other organisations connected with learning disability in Kingston to come and use Searchlight for events and meetings. We have managed to do that, largely through Michelle Kitch networking and inviting groups to come and meet us to discuss how we can benefit each other and use Searchlight as a hub. This is what we envisaged at the outset, and we are now working closely with a number of local charities. At the same time, our own Members enjoy the facilities we offer here at Searchlight.

We continue to explore links with other charities: the latest development being with SEND Family Voices who are about to share our office at Searchlight and develop their work based at Searchlight. This will bring in additional income, and expose Kingston Mencap to a young generation, who may become our members of the future.

I must thank Michelle Kitch for her hard work in helping to make all these things happen. Michelle has been extremely pro-active. At times, I have found it hard to keep up with her!

There are still major projects that we are considering at Searchlight. The car park will need resurfacing and upgrading. (It was not built as a car park, and therefore not made to withstand constant movement of vehicles.) We are considering a permanent Sensory Room and the garden could also be

developed into a sensory area. I would also like to see the graffiti on the roof removed.

I am confident that obtaining Searchlight has been a good investment for Kingston Mencap and has raised our profile within Kingston considerably.

As you can see in the Report, we provide a wide range of activities and events for our Members. We rely on our faithful band of volunteers to help at our Clubs, we could not manage without their loyal support. We welcome new members and volunteers.

Christine Towers has been working on a project for us, particularly regarding family memberships. We held a meeting recently where Christine explained about the process of 'Annual Reviews' and next Friday we have a meeting where Christine will be talking about 'Thinking Ahead', to which you are most welcome.

The future for Kingston Mencap is looking very positive and I am proud to be your Chairman at this time of radical change.