
The Reddings & District Community Association

The Community Centre, North Road West, The Reddings, Cheltenham. Glos. GL51 6RF
(Charity Registration No. 266092)

MINUTES OF THE 51st A.G.M. HELD AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE ON THURSDAY 7th April 2022

The Chair, Doug McGregor, introduced himself and called the meeting to order.

For the record there were a total of 13 persons present at this AGM

This comprised all 6 Trustees, 1 Recent Volunteer, 2 Local Councillors, 2 Trustee partners and 2 general public.

The meeting was well publicised with local banners advertising the event and road signs along the approach to the centre.

1. Apologies. – Lyndsay Hope (Recent Volunteer)

2. Chairs Introduction and Address - Doug McGregor

The chair thanked those that attended and was disappointed with the low turnout although not unexpected. He thanked the two new volunteers who had recently offered their services.

As the numbers here tonight are low and comprised mainly of Trustees, their families and those that are very familiar with the workings of the centre we will go straight into the individual reports.

3. Treasurers Report - Tim Browne

Our income for 2021 has been hit hard this year however taking out depreciation we have ended up with a surplus of £6,000

The full details of the financial position of the Charity is as set out in the Independent Examiners Report for Year Ending 31st December 2021 of which the figures are set out in the extracted pages in information pack handed out.

For reference the independent examiner is Andorran Ltd, 6, Manor Park Business Centre, Mackenzie Way, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. GL519TX.

The full document was available for inspection together with last year's AGM minutes and Agenda.

(The full document was issued to Trustees prior to the meeting. No-one else at the meeting requested sight of the full document.)

4. Entertainments Report – Laura Thomas

In the past 12 months we have not been able to promote any events due to Covid-19.

Drama group are anticipating putting on a show in September (The Masked Singer and in December a Panto.

The uncertainty of whether Covid would be under control to allow us to hold the annual Fete and Horticultural Show in August 2022 giving exhibitors time to prepare in advance for the event has meant making a decision not to hold a show in 2022. All being well we will resurrect this for 2023.

However if the current progress of Covid actions continue we will put on a Queens Jubilee open day in June which will be free to the general public to promote the centre and hopefully start to return to normal.

After appealing for more volunteers I am very happy to welcome Lyndsey, Emma and Naomi who kindly came forward and have been involved in planning our community Jubilee Celebration on Friday 3rd June from 2.00pm - 5.00pm. It is shaping up well and the day will be a free event open to all. We will be inviting families and people to bring down their own picnic to celebrate together, and so far we have had some regular user groups who are kindly getting involved.

The playgroup are providing a queen inspired children's craft table for the children to enjoy. The Reddings Guides are holding a cake stall and providing decorations. The Royal Scottish Dancers are going to do a Balmoral Highland Fling and St Andrews Pipeband have said they might join in to provide entertainment.

Also a company called 'Bouncy Boing' is donating the use of such things as a children's soft play, Didi cars and a bouncy castle for a small charge.

Dundry Nurseries are providing a tree for the children to plant in order to join in the Queens Green Canopy Campaign, and we are gathering a brilliant raffle including quilts from the Montpellier Quilters, Hair styling vouchers, the 'Queen's Jewels' necklace donated by 'Rocksy Jewellery', manicures and a hamper.

We have contacted Asda, B and Q and BMW so we are hoping to get support from them and we also need more help on the day to set up and make teas and coffees.

Sadly this year due to timings and efforts being centred on the Jubilee Party planning we will not be holding the Horticultural Show and Fete around the August bank holiday, but the plans are that this will hopefully go ahead for next year.

The good news is that the Drama group will be holding a singing show in September and 'Scrooge the Panto' in December, so if there are any people who want to get involved in this on Thursday evenings from 7.30-9.30pm then please email me and I will forward it on the The Reddings Amateur Dramatic Society.

It seems like we have a very exciting year ahead of us and we all hope that more committee volunteers will come forward to help with administration, bookings, accounts, social events, maintenance and the running of the hall to allow us to keep providing this much loved centre of The Reddings community to host activities, clubs and celebrations in the years to come.

5. Bookings Report – Laura Thomas

I am very happy to report that as the year has progressed we have seen most of our user group's return, however sadly some groups have fallen by the way such as Reddings Wives who have ended after 50 years at the centre and The Coady Crew who have moved to a different hall for logistic reasons.

We have also been boosted with some new regular user groups joining our merry band, such as Senior Yoga on Wednesdays from 10-11am, Freedom Church Youth group meeting monthly on Fridays and the prospect of an Amateur Orchestra starting in September on Tuesday evenings.

We have also benefited from a number of block bookings from Cotswold Education Workshops that are being held in the school holidays, and these have been a welcome revenue stream to build back our resources.

Parties are now returning and we have had positive feedback about the hall and facilities.

We will unfortunately have to revise the cost of hiring the halls for the regular users in the near future due to the increased cost of utilities and maintenance, however reassuringly the weekend party bookings continue to be popular even after the hourly rate was increased recently in line with other comparable halls within the local area.

At present we have been trialling a new booking System called Hallmaster which is a monthly paid service that can easily be transferred to other volunteers due to the fact that they provide online training.

They offer a three month free trial which we are halfway through and it is looking promising.

Some groups have kindly offered to help me with this and I will be continuing to work my way through the site to see if it will be a good alternative to our bookings site that we have at the moment.

We are also updating our website to make it more user friendly and include more information for our users.

If any of our regular users have content such as photos of their groups that they would be willing to be posted online or links that they would like included on the site then please send them to me on the bookings email and I will forward them on. I would like to thank Steve, who runs the Wing Chun Martial Arts group, for all his help in revising the website.

6. Election of Officers – Paul Barnes

The agenda for this meeting set out those Trustees willing to continue and those who resigned since the last AGM in 2019. AGM's for 2020 and 2021 were postponed due to Covid.

As time scales for serving as Trustees were exceeded by the inability to hold public meetings the timescale was reset and all Trustees were due for re-election. All agreed to continue and there were no nominations from the floor.

A vote from the floor in favour of the continuation of the current trustees was unanimous.

A vote of thanks was given to James Mclean who had recently resigned together with a small token gift as the Trustees thanks for his involvement and organisation in the major events undertaken by the centre.

He had loyally stayed on the committee although he had moved out of the area some time ago.

7. Secretary's Annual Report – Paul Barnes

This report is taken from the Independent Financial Statement containing the Trustees Year End Report

It deals solely with the interests of the Reddings & District Community Centre and its Users and not the wider issues that may affect the Reddings Area, except where it has a bearing on this Centre.

The Community Association is now entering its 53rd year of service to this community with its unique management structure comprised solely of local volunteers who manage and administer the centre on a daily basis to ensure that the community has a meeting place to pursue the various activities of the community.

The Unique nature of this form of management and the success of this Association has been maintained only with the input and dedication of the many trustees over the years since its formation in May 1969.

“2021 has been a year where we have seen widely varying responses by each regular user group over concern about Covid-19 which has resulted in some groups having ceased altogether, others yet to restart, others having delayed return until later in the year, whilst Playgroup has commendably maintained a continual daily presence throughout the year.

Private parties have also been affected with cancellations continuing until mid-year when a reduction in Covid -19 infections resulted in relaxation of government guidance which gave greater confidence for users to start planning and booking again and also for the community centre management to start to plan ahead.

With the exception of Playgroup and Coady Dance (Children's dance activity) there were no other regular user bookings until May 2021 and in order to comply with government guidance no ad-hoc private bookings were able to be accommodated until May either.

August saw an increase in parties as national meetings guidance further relaxed and the level of bookings rose to a greater than normal level as postponed parties were re-scheduled.

This did not improve income though, as many of those rescheduled had already paid some of their bookings in advance.

The emergence of the Omicron variant in late December 2021 had an immediate effect on the number of private parties and at the time of writing this report it is anticipated that the persistence of this variant will continue to affect bookings into 2022 and therefore affect our income for another year.

Never the less our income for 2021 has stood up quite well to the ups and downs in comparison to 2020, as groups learned to adapt to the various changes in guidance.

We have achieved a net profit (excluding depreciation) in the region of £6,150 this year and this result has been achieved without the benefit of a business grant as was received in 2020.

To meet our obligations and ensure it complied with the rules for meeting places we have had to continually change the instructions to Ad- Hoc weekend party Users.

This has meant additional work to advise every user personally of the precautions they needed to take based on their particular activity especially to ensure separation of contact between each respective group in common areas of the centre.

All returning regular groups were well organised and adapted quickly to the respective changes.

Playgroup, were exceptional in controlling the various groups who were likely to meet in the common areas and our thanks goes to them for ensuring arrangement went smoothly.

Our management model (all volunteers) which has been the modus operandi since the R&DCA was formed, has helped to keep our costs down for many years but is a model that will now need to be reviewed if our pool of volunteers continues to diminish. Currently we are down to six Trustees, of which 2 live outside the area but who have committed to support the centre by remaining as trustees and for which we are extremely grateful.

Losing another trustee in November has left us with only two immediately available trustees in a position to respond to matters arising on a daily basis, but on weekdays this is down to one and a situation that is unsustainable.

We have advertised for volunteers in local publications, by display of a large banner at the entrance and via Facebook and have had 3 people come forward but unfortunately they are only able to limit their involvement to a supporting role as a volunteer which although welcome does not address the managerial & governance shortfall.

In an attempt to rectify this we had one final try at attracting support from the User Groups with a circular to them all, and, at the time of compiling this report, this has not resulted in any further interest.

We are therefore faced with what alternatives are available to us to keep the centre going. this could be by either employing a caretaker for the practical response to maintenance or reducing the number of private hires which is the activity where most effort is usually concentrated, so that the number of users at the centre at any one time are more numbers become more manageable for one Trustee.

This does not address the periods where a stand in is not available through illness or holiday so it may be necessary to stop private hires completely during those times.

We are also currently looking at the ongoing costs, in particular those costs arising from the forecast increase in fuel charges, where all energy costs are set to rise considerably.

In our case will probably more likely treble our previous costs?

We were fortunate to have contracts for both Gas & Electric with British Gas which included no standing charges in 2021 which itself was extremely favourable during lockdowns as we did not incur any charges.

We have not been able to secure anywhere near the same deal for our new contracts which come into force on 1st January 2022 but at least we are thankful that we were contracted with a secure provider and have renewed with the same as none of the other providers were offering any competitive deals.

We are extremely anxious for sight of the first fuel bills of 2022 in case we need to further reassess our hire charges over and above a general increase we are currently considering.

During 2021 with the changing Covid-19 guidance and the availability of Trustees, it was necessary to keep re-arranging dates for our annual AGM. Towards December it was determined that it was getting too near our normal AGM date to make it viable so has been deferred until March/April 2022.

Our reporting procedure to the Charity Commission in 2020 resulted in us lodging our annual return as normal but as our income had fallen below the £25,000 threshold it was not necessary to present our Independent Financial Statement. This year's (2021) income is also below the reporting level so we will again only submit our Annual Return (a brief summary of finance, trustees and objectives)

Although not available on the Charity Commission Website, a copy of the 2021 Independent Financial Report is available for download on our Website. Also available to download are the Financial Statements for years 2019 & 2020.

Needless to say our normal annual events, Horticultural Show and Fete and Drama produced Pantomime have had to be set aside for the second year running. Hopefully the level of Covid-19 infections will have reduced in 2022 such that we can again reintroduce these along with a celebration for the Queens 60th Jubilee although it will be understandable to expect public caution of large gatherings to continue and we will need to re-assess these events as necessary.

Due to the uncertainty of income stream and duration of the Pandemic, maintenance has again been kept to the minimum with only essential works being carried out.

We shall pick this up again when the income forecast becomes more favourable and after consideration of the viability of employing a caretaker or reducing the number of private parties as referred to above.

To help our energy consumption and costs, It is hoped we can make use of the large roof area to install a substantial solar panel array for the generation of electricity of which any surplus can be fed into the national grid.

If it can be achieved this would bring us a steady income stream to offset our own expected increased energy costs.

We continue to get compliments about the venue, its' location, its setting and the standard to which it is maintained but this is not without the dedication of its Trustees who have freely given their time to preserve the sense of community upon which this Association was first formed.

However as a note of warning, and one that is hard to contemplate after the successful history of the centre, if no-one steps forward to help in running the centre and take on a management role then it will be necessary to consider closing the centre as one of the options but one that would be the result of having exhausted all other options.

It is therefore in all users interests for anyone who values the survival of the community to step

8. Any Other Business

1. There were no questions raised on any matters relating to the community centre management or its finances.
2. The subject of the Queens Jubilee event was raised which led to the opportunity to introduce two new volunteers who were offering to promote and help organise the event. They had come forward after reading about the need for local volunteers which was advertised on a local digital platform and had attended a meeting in February specifically called to discuss the Jubilee event.

Emma Thomas (new volunteer) said she has made contact with Asda and Aldi for Jubilee donations and also with CBC for a grant towards the Jubilee event. She was looking into submitting an application for a further grant for the centre from CBC and would need to submit before the cut off date.

3. PB said there was a need to reduce the outgoings in Utilities and asked all users to be vigilant and turn off lights and heating when not required.

4. Little Pioneers Child Care run by the Co-Op has made contact with regard to using the Centre as a safe assembly point in case their own facility next to the new Aldi was compromised. They have since made contact with Playgroup, who are the most likely group to be affected, and have agreed a strategy.

5. A point of interest was raised to advise that GCG were proceeding with a Transport Hub on the Park and Ride site which was bound to increase traffic in the area.

9. Close of Meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting thanking all the Trustees for their hard work throughout the year and also those taking the trouble to attend the meeting.

Meeting ended at 8.30pm

End of AGM Minutes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.V. Barnes', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

P.V.Barnes - Honorary Secretary

Signed as a true and accurate account of the meeting