
The Reddings & District Community Association

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

MINUTES OF THE 55th A.G.M. HELD AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE ON THURSDAY 11th April 2024

For the record there were a total of 12 persons present at this AGM. (Less than 2023)

This comprised 7 Trustees, 1 Trustee partner, 1 Volunteer, 1 Local resident 1 Ex-Trustee, 0 from user groups and 1 Local Councillor.

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

1. Apologies. – Councillor:- Nigel Britter

2. Introduction & Welcome – Paul Barnes

The Hon. Secretary introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the 55th AGM and explained that Doug McGregor (chair) had resigned in December 2023 from ill health and he was sad to announce that Doug had died on 12th February

just a month after his wife Barbara on 13th February. Barbara had suffered after a long illness but never complained and kept going and always had a cheerful greeting.

Both were deeply involved with the community centre in its early days and returned in 2000 when the new building was being completed and Doug became Chairman until his resignation in December 2023.

Barbara was a qualified nurse who we understand used to be part of the team running health clinics at the first community centre and Doug was an Army fitness instructor which took him and Barbara around the world We shall remember Doug as a proud Scotsman, for his humour and his shell suit which came out for the annual Fete and the races he organised.

Barbara we will remember for her willingness to get involved and support Doug sometimes with despair, but also her great knowledge of the history of The Reddings being brought up here in what was then a small village.

Her Family, the Flints were also great collectors of local history and Jesse her father wrote his own memories of which we have copies.

Doug's first recorded involvement on committee was in 1985 and he became Chair in 2008. (15 years served) We shall always remember both Doug and Barbara with great affection and sadness at their passing. Doug's family are holding a celebration gathering here later in the year.

In memory of them both and what they did for the community the trustees are going to purchase a bench inscribed with their names to remain here at the centre.

The Hon. Secretary then introduced Adrian Writing as the new Chair.

Adrian was chosen by the committee in February 2024 after Doug's resignation.

Adrian has long been associated with the Centre through Drama, The Fete and as a Trustee.

2. Chairs Opening Address

Adrian reiterated the concerns all Chairs have expressed since the new Centre was built, about the lack of local interest when it comes to help to run the centre, not with the events put on but in the day to day challenges that have to be faced and it has been a difficult time in allocating the tasks previously undertaken by the resignations of two long standing Trustees.

Because of this the operational management of the centre will change and it will take a little time to see if these changes work and ensure that we are able to meet all the legal and social obligations we were set up to provide to the community.

To help with the everyday maintenance that crops up we have engaged a Caretaker from the local area which should make reporting problems easier and quicker to be dealt with but apart from that most contact should be made via reddingsbookngs@gmail.com

2. Treasurers Report - Tim Browne

1. See Page 4 of the Annual Summary which sets everything out.

3. Bookings / Entertainments Report – Laura Thomas

The past year has been very busy as always, with an increase in parties and events, and the centre continues to be well reviewed. We have been happy to welcome several new user groups this year, and the variety of activities has become more diverse which will hopefully attract a wide range of ages, backgrounds and abilities.

H and N Events, a charity events organiser, have held a very festive Christmas Wonderland event before Christmas which included many craft stalls, sweet treats and Father Christmas even made an appearance. It was well attended and enjoyed by many locals and family members, getting us all in the festive spirit whilst picking up all those stocking fillers. Helen and Nigel have just held several Bingo nights but the advertising needs to get to more local people for them to take off. They have just held a spring fair and have many other events in the pipeline, so just keep an eye on our website www.reddingscommunitycentre.org.uk in our up and coming events pages.

Another substantial new user is Kingdom Academy of Performing Arts, who teach several children's and adult dance classes. They are booking the small hall on Wednesdays and Sundays from 3pm until 10.00pm. This is a fantastic revenue generator as we have recently endeavoured to contract a self employed part time caretaker, and this revenue will go towards the cost of this.

Nicky Harvey has brought a new user group to the centre, with her Art Classes proving very popular. She holds these on Thursdays in the small hall, from 2.30pm to 5.15pm, with occasional Saturday workshops. Also, a mums exercise class where they can bring their babies called 'Sweaty Mama', has gone from strength to strength and is enjoyed by our local new Mums.

Jim from Pilates 4 U is having a break at the moment, but he intends to return to us in September on Tuesdays from 6.30 to 7.30pm in the main hall, so it will be lovely to welcome him back.

The new website appears to be working well, please just let us know if you want us to advertise your event or put a page on the regular users to advertise your group. The Hallmaster booking site has had a few teething problems but is going great guns now. We moved over to bookings and invoicing in September last year, and having the two systems moving over took a great deal of transferring bookings and parties, with a few panics and cancellations during the fraught change over, so many thanks for all the patience and support from our regular users.

Hallmaster is an online bookings system which allows community centres and halls to manage their hires and bookings, allowing regular users and occasional users to request a hire through their secure site. The booking is then confirmed or declined by the Bookings Secretary, which is then invoiced for payment either by Paypal or bacs payment. We have invested in the invoicing package too and this is paid for by a monthly fee, for which they provide the service, back up and keep safe all the data, and provide training for any new Bookings Secretary, if any one wants to volunteer for the role? This has now replaced the original online bookings site. In the future, Hallmaster offers more add-on options that could allow new keyless entry systems, which would be a great option if this could be adopted, but we need to research this well.

We held a very successful Horticultural Show and Fete in August, which was well attended and enjoyed by all ages. Emma Thomas successfully secured a government grant for new banners, games and 4 new gazebos, so with the new smart look and plenty of sunshine the day went off very well. The music was provided by Pippa Monstad who sang Disney and the Adult Band Practice who are regular users. Stalls such as The Lego Walk of Fire, BBQ, Cake Stall, Bottle Tombola, raffle, stalls and children's races were very popular.

Also, the Horticultural Show, organised by Bridgette Sansom and James McClean, was well supported and BMW covered the costs of printing the entry forms.

I just want to thank Paul Barnes for his enduring support and constant good advice that I would have been lost without. He will be sorely missed but I wish himself and Pat, his ever supportive better half, a very happy and content 'retirement'. I can sincerely say the centre would not be such a wonderful community resource as it is today without his passion for our community, meticulous planning, care and maintenance over the 35 years of dedicated volunteering he has given. He is a rare find indeed and we are all indebted to him.

In the coming year we hope to continue to promote the community centre to residents of the Reddings and beyond, to secure the future of the centre and provide a focal point for the local community.

4. Secretary's Annual Report – Paul Barnes

In January 2023 the Trustees were aware of the increase in building costs, where material and labour costs increased significantly due to world-wide influences, which brought about the need to revalue the building for insurance purposes and not wait for the annual renewal in June.

The centre was revalued at £2,245m including fixtures fittings and an inflation contingency, and was a significant increase on 2022/23 figure which valued it at £776,250 which itself had been increased annually by our insurers (Allianz) to align with their own adjusted valuation. Our insurance premiums have subsequently risen from £1,892 to £2,053 but in the circumstances although an extra expense it is a reasonable increase.

The revaluation was undertaken by the same firm of surveyors who were involved when the building was constructed in 1999/2000 giving historic context to the construction to achieve an accurate rebuild cost.

2023 has seen a marked increase in weekend activity, mainly for children's parties nearing the capacity of pre-Covid but generally at the same level for regular users where we have lost some groups and gained others. Profit has been somewhat deflated by the large increase in utility costs and for comparison, in 2022 hall hire income was £29,346 and this year it has increased to £33,443. Up by £4,097. This has been achieved through use only, as we have not increased the hire rates as we expected and reported last year.

Overall our accounts are reporting income this year of £39,159 against expenses of £45,280 giving a paper loss of £6,100. However this does not reflect the true trading position for occupancy and income levels from the hires.

Non-recurring costs of purchasing 4 Gazebos for outdoor activities in the summer months and a new BBQ and deposit costs for a Solar PV system to reduce our CO2 footprint and reduce our electricity costs are also included. The deposit for the solar panels is included in this year accounts and the remaining cost will be paid in the 2024 accounts.

If we remove from expenses, the depreciation (£6,658) and the major non-recurring expenses (£5,800 Solar deposit) + (£975 Gazebos) we see the profit from hires is circa £7,400

We expect the Solar panel system to increase income when the local network infrastructure is upgraded as it also has the capability to expand and more than double the output which could generate sufficient power above our needs to export back to the National grid, with little oversight or expense.

We were lucky to have BMW support us to cover the £300 cost of printing for the annual Fete & Flower show who also generously provided showroom cars to promote a competition on the day of the Fete.

This was negotiated by past residents of The Reddings who although having moved away from the area still feel a strong connection with the Community and the Centre. We are fortunate to have their continued involvement in this and organising the Horticultural show and fete events.

Laura Thomas has spent considerable time developing and liaising with a commercial bookings system developer which was operational online in September. This system has been developed along with a new website to update the image of the Community centre to try and attract new users.

It replaces the system that was designed specifically for us with Laura and husband taking on major roles in getting it to a workable standard. It has been a wonderful tool to reduce the workload on bookings and has been our go to source for a variety of reference purposes.

Unfortunately improvements and advancements in technology made it increasingly difficult to keep the system going apart from the time spent to keep it operational.

Laura has also set up a “Friends of The Community Centre” “WhatsApp” group which has resulted in some local residents volunteering to help at events and is a step forward in liaising with the local community. Three volunteers have expressed interest in becoming Trustees but were still uncommitted at the end of the year.

As reported last year Playgroup and Mothers & Toddlers have continue throughout to provide an important role for younger members in the community and does not appear to be affected by the close proximity of a major child care organisation of which we once feared might have a detrimental impact.

We have yet to see the full impact of the financial pressures through cost of living increases and hope that government initiatives on childcare will come through to sustain these valuable resources at the centre.

At the other end of the spectrum the Over 60's group is still strong but there has been a decline in some activities but Yoga, in its various forms, Dancing and the Heart 2 Heart exercise group are still well attended.

We have organised Quiz and Halloween nights and have interest from other charity organisations using the centre who put on a promotional event at Christmas which was well intended and who hope to follow this up, bookings allowing, with many more events.

The variety of activities and interests show we continue to meet our Charity Objectives serving the community.

Our management model, of being run entirely by volunteers, has been the modus operandi since the R&DCA was formed in 1969, and has helped to keep our costs down to the benefit of the community but is a model that is now becoming unworkable seemingly due to the time pressures on family life giving little spare time to dedicate to the community.

At the end of 2023 we were down to 5 Trustees who have stayed on as out of loyalty and a desire to see the continued survival of the centre although 3 live outside the area.

We have advertised again for volunteers on Social Media and by continued display of a large banner at the entrance and have had some new success but unfortunately although welcome they are only able to limit their involvement to a supporting role and welcome as it is, it does not address the managerial & governance shortfall.

We will be further depleted in numbers as our Chair for the last 20 years, Doug McGregor resigned on 6th Dec due to ill health and also our Vice Chair/Hon Secretary, Paul Barnes, is stepping down at the AGM on 11th April having made known his intention at last year's AGM.

Whilst we have been seeking new trustees we have also put feeler out to local resident for interest in a paid position as caretaker which has not been successful. This was followed up with advertising it as a paid position which has also been unsuccessful.

This therefore presents the same picture as reported last year but we are hopeful that the interest from the “Friends Group” will have a positive result.

There is no doubt that having to employ a Caretaker will impact on our bottom line next year.

Fortunately good governance over the years has given us a healthy bank balance and the R&DCA can afford to support the role for some time but hopefully the possible income from the surplus power generated by the solar panels will go a significant way to reduce our costs and support paid positions in the near future.

As the date of our AGM allows a limited but prudent view of the likely performance of the R&DCA during 2024 we are encouraged that two of the “Friends” group, Lyndsay and Rebecca who are local to the centre and were volunteers, have agreed to become Trustees and also an existing trustee Adrian, will become the new chair so the basic structure exists to take the activities forward with renewed enthusiasm.

Our reporting procedure to the Charity Commission will result this year in us lodging our annual return as normal but as our income had fallen below the £25,000 threshold it will not be necessary to present our Independent Financial Statement.

We continue to get compliments about the venue, its' location, it's 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.

It is therefore in all users' interests for anyone who values the survival of the community to step forward and help.

On a personal note I am also standing down after doing this role for the last 32 years so this will be my last report to AGM but what my report doesn't adequately say is that without the support of all the volunteers and trustees who have committed to being Trustees over the years this centre would not have survived.

It was the foresight of the original local founding members that recognised the need for a local meeting place and in those early days it was the hub of the community activity with many groups participating, a health centre venue, an entertainment centre all well supported.

The continuation of this through the support of successive volunteers shows what can be done but its future success is reliant on the original values being continued and this looks to be reassured with the commitment of the continuing trustees who are all volunteers although success seems to indicate to people that this is a professionally run facility and makes them too demanding.

I would like to thank my wife for her understanding & support over these years in putting up with all of the things my role has involved me in and we are now both looking forward to doing things just for us.

I also think it deserving to extend this thanks to all previous and current trustees and partners who have supported the centre and myself over the years.

Thank you and goodbye.

5. Election of Officers – Paul Barnes

In line with the two year cycle adopted by the Trustees none of the management trustees are due for re-election. However as a reaffirmation all trustees were asked to confirm their willingness to continue which was duly received.

A block vote was taken for existing Trustees to continue and this was unanimously upheld

A vote was held to verify the trustees appointment of Lyndsay Rodenhurst who is a local resident and this was unanimously upheld

A nomination from the floor was received for Emma Thomas (Collins) to join the committee as a governing trustee and seconded by Laura Thomas.

It was explained that Emma was a local resident who had also grown up in the area and had been helping as a volunteer for some time. There was a unanimous show of hands

Her appointment will be recorded with The charity commission when the Annual Return is submitted.

8. Any Other Business

1. PB asked our local councillor, Mike Collins, if there was anything he would like to say which affected the Community Centre.

There was nothing of particular note but he took the opportunity to advise and make all aware that the Council elections in May would, because of local parliamentary boundary changes, would bring part of Fiddlers Green into the same ward as Benhall and Reddings, and at this election it would be different in that 2 councillors would be appointed this time and then revert to normal afterwards.

2. PB regretted that despite all his lobbying, the road leading to the centre still leaked large quantities of ground water and the hedge along North Road West with Aldi still had not been reinforced despite being a planning condition.

9. Close of Meeting

The Hon Secretary closed the meeting by saying, Not only are we grateful to our volunteers but mainly we are grateful to our partners who support us and put up with all the time we devote to keeping this centre going. Thank you all for coming tonight.

Meeting ended at 8.10pm

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