



**MINUTES of the Fifth Annual General Meeting
held at 7:30 p.m. on 21st October 2014 in the Crowborough Community Centre.**

Present:

Chantal Wilson, Chairman

6 other directors

32 other members

1. Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence were received from the mayor of Crowborough, Cllr Ron Read, Cllrs Di. Phillips, Quentin Burch and Beverley Johnston, and from Linda Ives, Jane King, Ann Marriner and Malcolm Place.

2. Last minutes;

A **Resolution** was put to the meeting, proposed by Andy Lyon and seconded by Sheila Couston that the minutes of the Fourth Annual General meeting of the charity held on the 22nd October 2013 be approved and this was carried unanimously.

3. Chairman's report:

The Chairman outlined the history of the community centre, saying that is the principal activity of the charity and said how gratifying it was that it was now so actively used by such a wide spectrum of Crowborough people.

Two years ago when the Centre opened such extensive use was only a dream, but that dream had turned into reality. The centre was now truly the centre of the community.

She thanked the staff, users and the Board members, all of whom give a great deal of expert voluntary time, for their contribution to this success.

4. Report from the Commercial Director:

- Chris Jones reported that the Centre was going from strength to strength. Bookings for 2014 would exceed £115,000 which was 15% up on last year and in excess of the 2014 optimistic target. With the figures being so much in excess of those in the original longterm budget, a new 3 year plan was in preparation.
- Room utilisation was regularly reviewed; in October there were 280 bookings for 770 room hours producing an income of over £10,000.
- Wednesdays and Thursdays were the busiest with Friday being quieter. Weekend bookings were fewer in number but bigger.



- The demand has changed from the smaller rooms, which was originally the case, to the hall and the large meeting room.
- There is a very wide range of activities being undertaken.
- The café was making progress and now producing income for the Centre.
- The Centre is managed by Lin Lucus assisted by 8 duty managers, 3 volunteers and a caretaker.

The point was made by a member that although performance exceeded everyone's early dreams, not enough was being put aside for a rainy day because there are high staff costs to cover. Money might also be needed for unforeseen eventualities or if WDC developed the adjoining buildings or failed to keep the car parks in good order. Chris responded that it was recognised that the CCA needed to be more imaginative in raising income to help avoid future pitfalls.

Another member asked if the names of all members of staff and volunteers could be placed on the website and this was agreed. It was also agreed that the daily menu of the café should be shown on the website.

5. Finance Director's Report:

- Richard Wilkinson reported that the statutory accounts for 2013 had been finalised and approved by our "examiners", Russell New. Copies were on the website.
- The final instalments of the construction costs of the Centre had also now been paid with funding provided by the town Council, which was thanked for its generous contribution.
- Income and expenditure were both broadly in budget although income was above expectations. A recent lightning strike had cost approximately £7,000 in damage to systems but this had been met by insurers.
- 2014 is expected to produce a contribution to the sinking fund of about £25,000 and in 2015 the Centre should be fully self-supporting.
- A **Resolution** was proposed by Richard Wilkinson and seconded by Frank Lees that the accounts for the period ending 31st December 2013 and the reports of the charity's trustees and of Russell New Limited as independent examiners be received and this was passed unanimously.

6. A **Resolution** was proposed by Janie Hooper and seconded by Hilary Lyon that Russell New Limited be appointed as the examiners of the company for the year ending 31st December 2014 and this was passed unanimously.

7. A **Resolution** was proposed by Hilary Lyon and seconded by Alan Cornish that the directors be authorised to set the level of Russell New Limited's remuneration and this was passed unanimously.

8. Election of Directors:

The chairman explained that under the charity's constitution, the longest serving one-third of the directors was required to resign at each AGM. This year those resigning were herself, Chantal Wilson, Sheila Couston and Frank Lees but being eligible, each was offering themselves for re-election. A **Resolution** was therefore proposed by Andy Lyon and seconded by Alan Cornish



that all three should be re-elected. This was carried unanimously except for one abstention.

9. Any other business:

- The Chairman took the opportunity of AOB to update the meeting on the current proposal by Wealden District Council to use the adjacent office buildings that they formally occupied as offices, together with the car parks surrounding it, as the site for a new construction of 80 flats for people over 55 years old. This was despite the Local Plan, adopted by WDC and approved in March 2014 designating the offices and car parks in planning terms for commercial use. Their marketing was therefore in complete disregard for their own approved Plan.

The CCA had met with some proposed developers and were told that there were no new community elements in their plans; access to a replacement library would be through the entrance foyer for the flats. This was considered completely unsuitable. The developers were certainly not offering any incentive to the CCA as adjacent owners who would be substantially prejudiced by the construction and the loss of some available car parking spaces. In particular, the financial viability of the Centre, in which the tax payers of Crowborough had invested £2.7m, would be put in doubt.

The CCA was fighting this whole scheme and, through an independent Community Interest Company which it had formed, had instead made an offer to WDC to purchase the building to use it for offices on short-term, “easy in and easy out” terms. The CCA was working with a successful national operator of such schemes which had similar office buildings in some local towns.

The CCA would keep members informed.

- A member asked the management of the Centre to take note that the monthly jazz evenings, run by the café, were making it difficult for other users, and particularly the chess club, to use the centre on those evenings. Chris Jones responded that the CCA was in discussions with the cafe for them to move from the area outside the café to the main hall which should result in the occupiers of the lower floor meeting rooms being unaffected by the noise.

10. There being no other business, the meeting was closed.