



**MINUTES of the Fifteenth Annual General Meeting
held at 7.30 p.m. on 26th September 2024 in the Crowborough Community Centre.**

Present:

Trustees: Chantal Wilson (Chairman), Janet Somers (Treasurer), Russell Wakefield (Secretary), Peter Ellefsen, Clive Wilson; and Kirsty Cairney (CCC Manager)

Board Advisors: Rosemarie Simmons, Bob Brown

Guests: Cllr N Whittle (CTC Deputy Mayor), Cllr M Garrett (CTC), Cllr David Hedges (CTC), Cllr Paul Goddard (CTC) & Cllr Andrew Wilson (WDC)

A total of 15 members were in attendance in person and 1 proxy form had been received

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Nus Ghani MP. Cllr M Street (CTC Mayor), Cllr N Waller (CTC), Cllr KMoss (CTC), Cllr J Howell (ESCC), Frank Lees (trustee), Angela Suter (trustee), Jane Clark (trustee), Katie Parsons (Always Accounting) and others.

2. Previous minutes

- 2.1. There were no questions nor matters arising from the 2023 AGM
- 2.2. A resolution was put to the meeting, proposed by Cllr Natalie Whittle and seconded by Jim French that the minutes of the Annual General meeting of the charity held on September 28th, 2023 be approved and this was carried unanimously.

3. Chairman's Address

- 3.1. I have written a comprehensive report on 2023 in the published accounts but I would like to take the opportunity to highlight some points now.
- 3.2. As I say every year and will continue to say, this AGM is the AGM of Crowborough Community Association, not Crowborough Community Centre. The CCA is a charity working for the good of Crowborough and it does so mainly by running this building for our community to enjoy. But running this building and keeping it in good order and fit for purpose is expensive and the trustees and other board members of the charity give huge amounts of voluntary time to ensuring that the Centre does not run at a loss. This is why the CCA runs fundraising activities to help boost the Centre's income, which is what happens in most village halls. So, please, support our fundraising activities whenever you can.
- 3.3. Of course, our wonderful staff are also part of the equation. They are not just employees, they are part of a committed team with one common goal – to provide a service to the community at the most reasonable cost possible. I think you will all agree that our staff always go the extra mile to help our users and for that I thank them very much.
- 3.4. I would also like to thank our small but perfectly formed group of volunteers who carry out a range of tasks to help the staff and thus save the Centre money. The CCA is very grateful for their help and kindness in giving up their time.
- 3.5. The CCA trustees have become somewhat concerned about the drop in CCA membership as we would like to feel that we have a strong membership base throughout the community, which used to be the case. We understand that there is no obvious way at the moment to renew membership unless you attend the AGM. However, anyone is at liberty to renew

membership or become a new member by paying £5 tonight or at any time at the CCC office. If you know anyone who used to belong but has let membership lapse, please would you encourage them to join. I hope everyone here tonight will join and lead by example! The trustees will be discussing what processes we can put in place to make it easier for people to renew membership or join for the first time.

- 3.6. Having emphasised that this AGM is of the CCA for activity in 2023, I would like to mention a new initiative which is neither specifically CCA nor 2023. The CCC has developed a Friends of Crowborough Community Centre which people can join specifically to support CCC and express their commitment to it. We suggest a donation to become a member and you will be kept informed of what is going on at the Centre. So, please, as well as joining the CCA and having a say in the CCA's activities, please consider becoming a friend of CCC and making a commitment specifically to its future. You will hear a little more about it in the CCC manager's report.
- 3.7. The trustees have also decided to try and make the CCA more visible in the community and we have taken a stall at the town council's Christmas Cracker event on November 29th. Please look out for us there!
- 3.8. I would like to end by re-iterating my huge thanks to the trustees and other board members of the CCA and to the staff team at the Centre for their continuing incredibly hard work to keep this Centre as the hub of the community where community activities and community spirit can flourish.

4. Report by the Centre Manager

- 4.1. We initially started the year with the loss of a large regular booking – Barclay's Bank. Barclay's took the decision to stop running their community bank sessions, and instead travel around in a van to see customers. This summer we then received the news that ACRES, which ran a number of classes here, were closing down and would not be continuing from the autumn term. The loss of these two organisations of course had a significant impact in our occupancy rates, but thanks to hard work by the staff team, we have been able to bring in additional bookings to make up for this.
- 4.2. Interestingly we have had an increase in bookings from East Sussex County Council, for various meetings, and the NHS for clinics and meetings. In addition, we have been pleased to welcome some new regular weekly bookings from -
 - Sing & Tonic
 - Jewel Performing Arts
 - The Right Tuition Company
- 4.3. It has also been great to see some of our existing regulars grow and add more sessions to their bookings here, showing how the organisers and their customers benefit from this facility. Some of these include -
 - Black Cat Yoga
 - Bellydance with Michaela
 - Baby Sensory & Toddler Sense
- 4.4. In addition to regular (weekly or monthly) bookings, we have had some great one-off special events this year. MD Events have hosted two fantastic tribute nights, and have booked more for 2025. We also welcomed two musical performances from GP Music Productions. These, along with a variety of dance shows, theatre performances, quiz nights, school discos, engagement parties, anniversary celebrations and birthday parties have showcased what a wonderful asset our Main Hall is for the community.
- 4.5. We have continued to grow our weekend bookings, with our Children's Party Package still particularly popular. This demand for weekend bookings means we are often having to carefully coordinate turning rooms around quickly to allow us to accommodate as many people as possible. As a lot of our regular users are term-time only, we often find ourselves

quieter over the summer months. However, this summer we enjoyed the buzz of a few children's activity clubs, including The Little Sewing School and SO Circus Workshops.

- 4.6. We have also held a number of our own events, as fundraisers for the centre. In March we collaborated with The Crowborough Players and hosted a fantastic quiz night – we'll be doing the same again on 4th October! The profit from quiz night tickets sales and bar income is divided between CCC and TCP. We added something new to our Health & Wellbeing fair in April, with a series of talks on a variety of topics from local experts. It was a great event, with a particularly welcoming atmosphere, and so we are welcoming even more stall holders to our next one on 12th October. Finally, our hugely successful annual Christmas Market will be back on 23rd November, with some excellent local creatives selling their festive products. These fairs benefit the Centre by generating income from the stall hire fees, and appealing to a range of people who may not have visited us before, as well as providing sales opportunities for small local businesses.
- 4.7. The Jive Aces joined us once again for a special fundraising concert, kindly donating their time and talent to help us raise funds for the centre.
- 4.8. In my 2023 report for 2022 I mentioned the initial launch of the CCC Volunteer Group, who have continued to help the centre over the past year. Our volunteers have helped us man particular events we have run, distributed posters and leaflets, serve refreshments at events and even helped with cleaning tasks. I am sure this will continue to grow, and we appreciate the support from our volunteers.
- 4.9. This year we established Friends of Crowborough Community Centre (FCCC), with the aim of creating a group of local people who support the centre. For a small annual donation, both businesses and individuals can show their support for this vital not-for-profit community asset.
- 4.10. One of our volunteers is also linked with Green Transition Crowborough, and so we have offered to support one of their recycling initiatives – we now house a specific recycling bin for Pringles tubes in the foyer. We also offer Brighter Crowborough a space to store their litter picking equipment, and keep a donation point for Crowborough Food Bank. CCC is conscious that these small acts can really help support our wider community groups.
- 4.11. We had one major change to our staffing this year. Steve, who very much seemed part of the furniture and was adored by so many of our users, decided to retire. Both the CCC team and our regular users were sad to see him go, but warmly welcomed Lizzy in his place. Lizzy hit the ground running and quickly became a wonderful part of our team. All of the CCC team have worked really hard this year, with many busy days and room turnarounds. It's easy to forget how physically demanding the job can be, especially at busy times. Yet they all juggle this with the administrative side of the role too, ensuring that everything runs smoothly. A real well done to the CCC team.

5. Finance report

- 5.1. The CCA Treasurer addressed the CCA accounts for the year ending 31/12/2023.
- 5.2. The accounts have been approved by the board and signed by the independent examiner. They are available on the website.
- 5.3. The CCA generated income of £177,000, compared to £155,000 for 2022. This was the first year since the Pandemic when lettings returned to a more normal footing and there were no Covid support or other grants. Costs amounted to £236,000 compared with £224,000 for the previous year giving net expenditure of £(59,000). A significant proportion of the expenditure is depreciation on the buildings and fixtures and fittings of £76,000. Expenditure also reflected a significant increase in energy costs following the ending of favourable fixed price contracts.
- 5.4. I would like to thank our centre manager, Kirsty, for her continuing hard work and the independent examiner, Katie, for producing the accounts swiftly and efficiently.
- 5.5. No questions were raised on the accounts.

6. Appointment of examiners

- 6.1. A resolution was proposed by Janet Somers and seconded by Peter Ellefsen that Always Accounting Ltd be appointed as the examiners of the company for the year ending 31st December 2024 and this was passed unanimously.

7. Setting the Examiner's Remuneration

- 7.1. A resolution was proposed by Janet Somers and seconded by Bob Brown that the trustees be authorised to set the level of Always Accounting Ltd's remuneration and this was passed unanimously.

8. Election of Trustees

- 8.1. The secretary explained that under the charity's constitution, the longest serving one third of the trustees was required to resign at each AGM. This year those resigning were Peter Ellefsen, Frank Lees & Clive Wilson. Frank had decided to retire whilst recuperation from an illness but Clive and Peter were offering themselves for re-election. A resolution was therefore proposed by Chantal Wilson and seconded by Rob Clark that both should be re-elected. This was carried unanimously.

9. Appointment of Additional Trustees.

- 9.1. No trustees had been co-opted during the year.

10. Any other business

- 10.1. There was no AOB.

The meeting was closed at approximately 8.00 pm

Summary of Actions:

None