



**MINUTES of the Twelfth Annual General Meeting
held at 7.30 p.m. on 28th September 2023 in the Crowborough Community Centre.**

Present:

Trustees: Chantal Wilson (Chairman), Janet Somers (Treasurer), Russell Wakefield (Secretary), Angela Suter. Peter Ellefsen, Jane Clark and Kirsty Cairney (CCC Manager)

Board Advisors: Rosemarie Simmons, Bob Brown

Guests: Cllr M Street (CTC Mayor), and Cllr K Moss (WDC), Cllr M (CTC)Garrett

A total of 24 members were in attendance in person and 4 proxy forms had been received

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Frank Lees (trustee), James Partridge (trustee), Katie Parsons (Always Accounting) and 15 members

2. Previous minutes

- 2.1. There were no questions nor matters arising from the 2022 AGM
- 2.2. A resolution was put to the meeting, proposed by Russell Wakefield and seconded by Angela Suter that the minutes of the Annual General meeting of the charity held on August 11, 2022 be approved and this was carried unanimously.

3. Chairman's Report

- 3.1. The CCA took the decision in 2022 to change its status to Charitable Incorporated Organisation instead of being registered with both the Charity Commission and Companies House. This status is relatively new and would have been the one chosen had it existed when the CCA was registered in 2010. The change in status means there is no longer a requirement to report to Companies House thus simplifying our processes and saving cost and time. The change of status and the consequent change in constitution were approved by the members of the CCA at the AGM last August.
- 3.2. The trustees were pleased that, despite people's continued nervousness about wanting to gather in social situations, the end of year financial position was satisfactory. There was extensive discussion about our charging tariffs, being mindful that many of our groups still had reduced numbers and were beginning to feel the effects of the cost of living crisis. It therefore seemed prudent not to change our tariffs and trust that this would be an incentive for people to book rooms. We were grateful for the government Omicron grant at the beginning of the year which helped ease financial pressures.
- 3.3. In order to ensure maximum efficient, timely and accurate invoicing, the trustees decided to change the booking system to the more widely recognised Hallmaster system. The system is easier to use and has many additional functions, particularly in relation to Quickbooks, our accounting system, and in allowing us to raise invoices automatically from the booking system. Our invoicing is now much more consistent than previously and we are able to monitor late payers more easily.
- 3.4. Knowing that the community centre is running on a very tight budget, the trustees considered various means of increasing income other than room hire. The marketing group identified scope for marketing the centre for children's parties, particularly in the main hall on Saturday afternoons. The centre manager said she was able to run some fairs, such as wedding and

Christmas fairs, based on her previous event-organising experience. It was agreed to market children's parties on a single price package and to run occasional fairs in order to boost income.

- 3.5. The trustees were also aware that the large commercial kitchen is an asset which has not been fully exploited since the café closed at the beginning of the pandemic. The community centre has the facility to host large parties including catering but this has not been happening as we no longer have catering staff. It was therefore decided to develop a list of approved caterers who would be familiar with our kitchen. This should make it more attractive to hire the centre for those people who wish to run large parties.
- 3.6. Further work was carried out by the marketing group to develop ways of helping the community centre to recover from the pandemic. Two streams of work emerged from their deliberations. One is to develop the centre as a recognised entertainment centre and the other to develop a support group of volunteers. The board prioritised developing a group of volunteers as there are many tasks which could be done by suitably trained volunteers which would relieve pressure on paid staff and allow more tasks to be undertaken.
- 3.7. The trustees are aware that many people, including regular users, believe the community centre is owned and run by a council. We need to constantly reinforce the fact that Crowborough Community Association is an independent charity which has to support itself and the running of the community centre without external funding. Recruiting a group of volunteers should have the added benefit of reinforcing our status and be better understood by the public.
- 3.8. Having emerged from the pandemic and the need to focus on daily matters rather than strategic ones, it was possible to embark on a methodical rolling policy review. This will ensure good governance and be ongoing. We also undertook a fundamental review of our terms and conditions of hire. We used the standard model, adapted for our particular circumstances, developed by Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE), the national body to which we belong via our membership of Action in rural Sussex.
- 3.9. As a charity embedded in the local community, it is important to be aware of how the CCA can interact with the community as well as hiring out space for groups to pursue their interests. In March we hosted a classical concert to raise money for Ukraine. The quality of the musicians was greatly appreciated and the event was a great success. The 10th anniversary of the opening of the community centre coincided with the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee and we held a "Big Lunch" to celebrate both. This brought together a cross section of the users of the community hall and trustees. We also responded to the national appeal for "public" spaces to be "warm hubs" to help those who were having difficulty paying to heat their homes. Having first sought guidance from ACRE, we welcomed anyone who wished to sit in our café area during opening hours. Tea and coffee were made available, along with books, magazines and toys and blankets which could be taken away.
- 3.10. The CCA would not function without human input from so many sources! We were very sorry that Roger Bishop resigned as a trustee. He had been an excellent communications director and a fervent supporter of the community centre and everything that the CCA stands for. However, we are so pleased that he will continue to contribute by being a member of the marketing group. I would like to thank the whole marketing group for doing a great deal of varied work behind the scenes which greatly assists the smooth running of CCA board meetings. I would also like to make special mention of John Bath, our caretaker, who works so hard behind the scenes to ensure that the Centre is maintained in excellent condition.
- 3.11. Following her probationary period, we were delighted to confirm the permanent contract of our centre manager, Kirsty Harman (now Cairney). It is thanks to her initiative and implementation that we ran several very successful events during the year. However, even she cannot achieve all she does without the support of our very loyal and experienced team of duty managers and zero hours staff.
- 3.12. We are still so fortunate to have an excellent board of trustees, each of whom works on his or her own initiative to ensure the efficient running of the charity. Each offers an enormous amount of professional expertise and it is remarkable that at a small local charity has such a

high quality board. I want to thank each of them for the remarkable support they give to me and the community centre staff and highlight how valuable and appreciated they are.

4. Report by the Centre Manager

- 4.1. The last year has been a positive one for CCC. We have had a number of new regular groups and activities join us, which has widened the variety of activities that take place here, including the following –
 - Baby Sensory & Toddler Sense
 - Crowborough Pop Up Markets
 - Bethany Raey Performance Academy
 - Aerodance
 - Anadil Bridge Yoga
 - Pilates with Jana
 - ESCC Bumps 2 Babies
 - ESCC Family Hub
 - NHS Diabetes Clinics
- 4.2. In addition to this we have had Barclay's Bank open their Community Space, following the closing of the high street branch. Every Wednesday they make use of Meeting Room 3 to be able to provide banking services to the public. This service seems to be well used by the community, and is a beneficial regular room hire income for the Centre.
- 4.3. We have held host to some great musical events, dance shows, theatre performances, quiz nights and even some wrestling! Along side these large events we have also seen a great number of private parties and celebrations. From school discos, engagement parties, anniversary celebrations and birthday parties, CCC has been enjoyed by so many people. Our Children's Party Package has been incredibly popular, and we are already taking these birthday party bookings for 2024.
- 4.4. I wrote in my report for the 2022 AGM that there had been a focus on utilising our spaces on weekends, and that has truly come to fruition in the last year. There has been a significant increase in weekend bookings, often having to carefully coordinate turning rooms around quickly to allow us to accommodate as many people as possible.
- 4.5. CCC has also put on our own calendar of events, all of which have been fantastically popular. Our first Christmas Market in 2022 was so successful that we already had people booked for 2023 in January! Our first Health & Wellbeing Fair in April 2023 was very well received and we are holding another on Saturday 30th September 2023. 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.
- 4.6. The Jive Aces joined us for a wonderful fundraising event, and really got the party going. They kindly donated their time (and talent!) in support of this not-for-profit community centre, and helped us raise some vital funds that go back into the running and maintenance of the building.
- 4.7. We truly embraced the community spirit with the coronation of King Charles in May 2023. Over 80 guests joined us in the Main Hall to watch the coronation ceremony and procession on the big screen, and enjoyed a fabulous buffet and bubbles. It was heartwarming to see everyone come together for such a special occasion, and so many shared memories of Queen Elizabeth's coronation too. I organised this event myself, and it was delivered with the help of the hard working Duty Manager team, of which I am very proud.
- 4.8. The CCC team have worked incredibly hard over the last year, to aid in the growth and development of the Centre. They are passionate, dedicated and quite simply the place wouldn't run without them! We are now delighted to also welcome the CCC Volunteer Group as part of our team. We launched the volunteer group just last month, and they have already

helped with a variety of tasks – from leaflet distribution to physically helping clear rooms, it will be exciting to see this develop over the coming year.

5. Finance report

- 5.1. The CCA Finance Trustee addressed the CCA accounts for the year ending 31/12/2022.
- 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 £155,000, compared to £126,000 for 2021. For the first few months of the year lettings remained at a reduced level due to the after effects of the Covid Pandemic, however these picked up later in the year. There was also a reduced level of support from Covid and other grants. Costs were maintained at £225,000 compared with £214,000 for the previous year giving net expenditure of £(70,000). A significant proportion of the expenditure is depreciation on the buildings and fixtures and fittings of £82,000.
- 5.4. I would like to thank our centre manager, Kirsty, for her continuing hard work on financial matters (as well as all her other duties!) 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 Jane King that Always Accounting Ltd be appointed as the examiners of the company for the year ending 31st December 2023 and this was passed unanimously.

7. Setting the Examiner's Remuneration

- 7.1. A resolution was proposed by Janet Somers and seconded by Jane Clark 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 Angela Suter, Russell Wakefield & Janet Somers, and being eligible, each was offering themselves for re-election. A resolution was therefore proposed by Kate Moss and seconded by Carol Place that all 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. Difficulties were noted with accessing the Centre's website when using a mobile device. This was the first report that the Centre Manager was aware of but would investigate. [Post Meeting Note: It is believed that the problem has been resolved]
- 10.2. It was noted that some users had experienced difficulties in fitting larger child-buggies into the lift. The Centre Manager noted that the Duty Managers are always available to provide help in such circumstances.
- 10.3. There was no further AOB.

The meeting was closed at approximately 8.00 pm

Summary of Actions:

None