



**MINUTES of the Tenth Annual General Meeting
held at 5.00 p.m. on 29th October 2019 in the Crowborough Community Centre.**

Present:

Chantal Wilson (Chairman) & 8 other directors

75 members

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1. Apologies for absence were received from WDC Chair Cllr. Pam Doodes, Crowborough Mayor Cllr. Greg Rose and CTC Cllr. Martyn Garrett.

2. Previous minutes

- 2.1. A resolution was put to the meeting, proposed by Susanna Way and seconded by Hilary Lyon that the minutes of the Annual General meeting of the charity held on October 25, 2018, be approved and this was carried unanimously.
- 2.2. Action 2018/2.4 re increasing the membership fee. The marketing group has been carrying out exploratory work and is tasked with creating a proposal for meaningful membership which will be put to the members.
- 2.3. Action 2018/3.9 re CCC audio-visual equipment. See the Chairman's report below.
- 2.4. There were no questions.

3. Chairman's report

- 3.1. Before giving her report, the Chairman thanks all those user groups who had taken a stall at the preceding afternoon Exposition in the main hall, and noted the the flowers decorating the Centre had been kindly donated by the Crowborough Flower Club, having been produced during their activities at the Expo.
- 3.2. The chairman started by thanking all those Community Centre users who took a stall at this evening's mini-expo to showcase their activities. No-one in Crowborough now has an excuse to say they didn't know what goes on here. For those who did come, they will have been impressed by the amazing range of activities which would have been beyond wildest dreams 7 years ago when this Centre opened.
- 3.3. In this context, the chairman noted the astonishingly generous donation of audio/visual equipment from the Church of Scientology which we received just before Christmas last year.
- 3.4. The CCA had identified that some of the theatre lights in the main hall were old technology, very expensive to run, and had expensive bulbs with a short life. We applied to Tesco and Crowborough Town Council for grants and although both applications were successful, (for which we thank them), we still didn't have enough to buy the new lights. We then applied to the Church of Scientology for a grant to cover the rest, knowing that they routinely support local community organisations. Imagine our astonishment when their chairman suggested that the Church of Scientology would replace all our lights for us and send a team to install them. He was as good as his word and the result is around us now. Not only were all the lights replaced and greatly enhanced, but the installation team identified that our projector needed to be better and that, also, was replaced with the splendid professional projector we have today. And all that without filling in a single form!

- 3.5. Many of you will recall that the acoustics in the main hall weren't as good as we had hoped when the Centre was built. An action (3.9) was raised at last year's AGM to consider how it might be improved. The Scientology team ran a test on that as well, concluded that we needed an acoustic wall at the end of the hall, had it made in LA and shipped it over here. It consists of panels but perfectly colour-matched to the other walls.
- 3.6. Artists now have much better facilities than before and the Centre is attracting them to book the facility for their shows. Lee Hurst, the comedian, had already played one sell-out show, had sold out another one in February and has booked again for March.
- 3.7. As well as comedy, singing shows are becoming more frequent. The wonderful Spinettes were to perform a Christmas charity concert here in support of the Alzheimer's society on November 22 2019. Thanks to a very happy co-incidence, music promoters Alpha2Zeta have taken offices in the Pine Grove Enterprise Centre, seen the facilities here, and booked the tribute acts they promote for several concerts here. The chairman urged everyone to support these concerts and come and enjoy the entertainment now on offer.
- 3.8. What all this means is that Crowborough residents now have the opportunity to go to high quality entertainment events on their doorstep at very reasonable prices and without the hassle or cost of travelling. The CCA now is fulfilling its charitable aims and objectives in a broader sense and is delighted at being able to do this.
- 3.9. No CCA chairman's report would be complete without reference to the Gallery Café in the Community Centre. The CCA took over direct running of the café in April 2018 and we employed an executive chef, Alexandra Armstrong, to run it. Alex brought imagination and flair to our menus and used locally produced, seasonal ingredients to ensure that our café was distinctive and offered healthy and nourishing home-cooked meals.
- 3.10. Sadly, Alex left in September this year (2019) but in her 18 months with us she developed a very high reputation for the café and trained her staff so that they could sustain her ethos. The CCA is really proud of our café team and how they have pulled together to run the café following Alex's departure and give an excellent service to our customers. As a team, they have taken ownership and gone the extra mile. Thank you, café team!
- 3.11. Acknowledging that the café is such an important part of the Centre which is enjoyed by so many people, we need to do all we can to ensure its success. One area that has given us some difficulty is sharing the café kitchen facilities with users. Whilst in principle maximising the use of the Centre's facilities sounds a good idea, in practice it turns out to give us significant concerns in meeting food hygiene standards. We experience issues of food being left out, fridge doors not being closed and significant breakages. This creates cost and inconvenience and works against us achieving a 5-star food hygiene rating which we believe is an important aspiration.
- 3.12. With these important issues in mind, I'm afraid we will have had to withdraw use of the downstairs kitchen by Centre users. Our management staff will work with each group to find a satisfactory solution for each group so that their needs are met for providing drinks. The café area will, of course, continue to be available to groups to use as breakout space. The CCA Board understands that this change may appear unsettling to some groups but we assure them that we wish to make the transition as easy and seamless as possible.
- 3.13. Another subject without which no chairman's report would be complete without is parking and the development on the Mead House site. Wealden has declined to pay for the 5 additional parking spaces on our land so we now have to consider how to achieve them. Wealden is adding another 29 spaces in the car park on the other side of Pine Grove but 6 will be lost in the process, so the net gain is 23. Whilst this is a step in the right direction, it does fall short of our original hopes, but please be assured that the CCA will continue to work with outside agencies to optimise the parking at the Centre as much as we can.
- 3.14. On a more positive note, as most of you know, Basepoint took over the operation of the Enterprise Hub in April and the town council moved into the other end of the ground floor of the building immediately next to us. It is splendid to be able to welcome our new neighbours, creating a civic hub which has long been dreamed of.
- 3.15. So, we have had an exciting year with, as usual, never a dull moment. The CCA would like to thank the whole CCC staff team (and they are a wonderful team) for always going the extra

mile to make sure this community centre is successful. We aim to serve our community and to make the use of the Centre affordable to our groups and societies, but this is not as easy as it might seem, so we very much welcome our professional hirers who are beginning to make significant contributions to the Centre's income.

- 3.16. The Chairman also expressed her thanks to the Board, all of whom are volunteers, and those other volunteers who help in the background, for the amazing skills and time commitment they bring to running the Centre.
- 3.17. The Chairman finished by looking forward optimistically to the busy Christmas period and then to flourishing in 2020.

4. Report by the Centre Managers

- 4.1. The centre report was given in the form of an illustrated presentation.
- 4.2. Being open all hours 6 or 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. till late and with a wide range of tasks to accomplish; Staff to manage, Rooms to set up, Building to maintain, Cleaning, Invoices to pay, Budgets to prepare, Food to buy, Clients to listen to (really, we do!), Shout loud enough and hope you'll hear! (marketing) and other Regulatory things, we try to improve the efficiency of our working.
- 4.3. One innovation this year has been the introduction of a cloud-based system so that we can log on anytime, anywhere with new workflow options to save time and manage the payments and bookings.
- 4.4. This year the Crowborough Community Centre has attracted exciting new acts which fully utilise the outstanding facilities of the hall. The comedian Lee Hurst performed here in September to a sell-out crowd and has since booked two more repeat performances for his Comedy Club and we have a number of new bookings for Tribute bands with Adele coming up in November.
- 4.5. We have a full programme of entertainment planned for 2020! Including more tribute bands such as Kylie, Elvis, Michael Bublé, Abba; and in addition the Rocky Horror Picture Show
- 4.6. And... The Jive Aces! Lorna said how pleased everyone was that the Jive Aces were putting on a Charity Event in the Main Hall in May with all profits going to CCC funds.
- 4.7. Last year the CCC invested in the talented chef Alex Armstrong to train our staff and set us up. In August Alex handed over to our cooks, Janet and Natalie to provide the regular café service (8.45 – 15.00) and also deliver Basepoint weekly breakfasts, monthly networking lunches and Fun Friday events, and weekly cooked business breakfasts to BNI.
- 4.8. In addition, we cater for special events of which we have had to large events this month.
- 4.9. Lorna thanked Alex for the great legacy she left behind and said the Café was in a good place in terms of both staff and business. The thought the café had 'hit its stride' with a big jump in the number of people using the facility. She had received excellent feedback after back-to-back events for 90-plus people.
- 4.10. There have been requests to extend our opening hours and this has been trialled, but the hours between 15.30 and 18.00 were not covering costs. We welcome any volunteers who would like to support the café in extending opening hours until a regular trade is established .
- 4.11. Our Friday lunch club is attracting new members and the café, and we are in the process of recruiting a backup cook and café assistant to help with the increasing trade as we attract more members with the 25% off Voucher Scheme proving popular.
- 4.12. In summary, we have a high quality community venue with excellent environment and facilities, and first Class Main Hall facilities. It is an actively managed venue with full-time support and room set up. We offer a competitive hire tariff, Free Wi-Fi, Parking and a Café.
- 4.13. We have positive sales growth, active marketing plans to support future opportunities and our big plans!
- 4.14. Brian & Lorna concluded by thanking all the wonderful staff, the board of trustees and the centre's generous benefactors, but in particular he thanked the CCA members and all those who use the centre.

5. Finance report

- 5.1. The CCA Finance Director addressed the CCA accounts for the year ending 31/12/2018.
- 5.2. The accounts have been approved by the board, signed off by the independent examiner and filed with the Charities Commission and Companies House. They are available on the website.
- 5.3. The main items of note are that the CCA generated income from operations of £189,962 which was increased by the generous donations of cash and in kind of £204,250 giving total income of £394,212. Costs amounted to £271,526 [including depreciation of £66,510] giving net income of £122,686. While this is a healthy picture it has only come about because of the generous donation.
- 5.4. We have had a high level of expenditure on repairs and maintenance as the centre's assets inevitably age and as a result, we have transferred an additional £23,600 into designated funds to cover other such expenditure in future.
- 5.5. A Resolution was put to the meeting, proposed by Russell Wakefield and seconded by Janet Somers that the Accounts be approved and this was carried unanimously.

6. Appointment of examiners

- 6.1. A Resolution was proposed by Janet Somers and seconded by Chantal Wilson that Taylorcocks Limited be appointed as the examiners of the company for the year ending 31st December 2019 and this was passed unanimously.

7. Setting the Examiner's Remuneration

- 7.1. A Resolution was proposed by Russell Wakefield and seconded by Janet Somers that the directors be authorised to set the level of Taylorcocks Limited's remuneration and this was passed unanimously.

8. Election of Directors

- 8.1. The secretary 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 Chantal Wilson and Frank Lees, and being eligible, each was offering themselves for re-election. A resolution was therefore proposed by Tony Holcombe and seconded by Hilary Lyon that both should be re-elected. This was carried unanimously.
- 8.2. During the year, Peter Ellefsen had ceased to be the director nominee of Crowborough Town Council and had been co-opted as a director in his own right. As a co-opted director, he is required to resign at the end of the AGM but being eligible, was proposed for election by the members at this AGM. A resolution was therefore proposed by Tony Holcombe and seconded by Hilary Lyon that he should be elected. This was carried unanimously.

9. Appointment of Additional Directors.

- 9.1. Gareth Owen-Williams was introduced as the new director nominee of the town council.

10. Any other business.

- 10.1. Questions from the floor centred on parking and road safety issues at and around the CCC. Chantal thanked the Centre staff for dealing with the issue on a daily basis, particularly now that the Mead House building site is causing significant additional traffic and parking disruption.
- 10.2. Question from the floor asked whether there was any possibility of using the Basepoint car park, particularly in the evenings. Chantal said that discussions on this issue with Basepoint had been 'pleasant' but that there was no official agreement.
- 10.3. Susanna Way asked about the zebra crossing that Abbey Homes, developers of the Mead House site, are obliged to install across Pine Grove. Chantal reported that Abbey were holding out to the letter of the agreement which does not oblige them to install the crossing until the first resident has moved in. Chantal had put pressure on both WDC and East Sussex CC to step in and pay for the crossing to be installed much earlier but without success. This was particularly disappointing because, as Chantal pointed out, both councils had benefited from the sale of the land and WDC had additionally received some £440,000 in

CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) payments from Abbey. She wondered “who had got a grip of joined up thinking” on this issue?

- 10.4. Susanna asked whether anything could be done by CCA members and Chantal suggested contacting the County Council as individuals, pointing out the dangers of not acting more quickly on the crossing issue.
- 10.5. Another question from the floor queried the “exact number of additional parking spaces we are going to end up with” out of the Wealden scheme to replace the 99 lost to the Mead House development.
- 10.6. Chantal explained that the original proposal was 42 – and this was the figure used in the planning application for the Mead House development – but that now the total number of new spaces would be 29 but that the net gain would only be 23 as some existing spaces were being lost in the rearrangement. Chantal also reported that WDC had now refused to pay for five additional spaces on CCC’s land even though they had earlier indicated that this may be possible.
- 10.7. It was pointed out that contractors for both the new car parking spaces being built and Abbey employees and contractors were also using the existing Long Term parking spaces in the Croft Road car park. Chantal explained that there was nothing we could do to about this as it was not a condition that contractors parked within the Abbey site.
- 10.8. Clive Wilson offered a detailed explanation into how the 42 spaces were proposed by Wealden DC ahead of the planning committee meeting that approved the Abbey development and of how that had now become 23 spaces.
- 10.9. Another question from the floor asked whether it could be ensured that new residents in the Abbey development would not use the additional car parking spaces. Chantal replied that we had not control over this.

The meeting was closed at approximately 6.00 pm

Summary of Actions:

None