

AGM Trustees Report November 23

Introduction

On 24st November 2023, we will hold our sixth AGM and once again reflect on our mission and performance, and consider options for the way forward.

Overall, we are pleased to report that once again, we have made solid progress in achieving our mission as well as dealing with some considerable management challenges. Our financial performance has been strong, and attendance and membership continues to increase steadily.

This report provides a summary of our work over the past year and information on our performance as a local charity. It will form part of our Trustee Annual Report to the Charity Commission which may be published on their website.

Our mission

Primarily, we promote and enable inclusion in order to prevent loneliness and isolation. To do this we operate and maintain safe and friendly spaces with facilities and resources. This enables members to engage, participate and share interests in arts, crafts and making activities as a means for social interaction. As far as reasonably practical we ensure that our spaces and activities are open, stimulating, accessible and affordable to all.

As many of us have no doubt experienced at some time, loneliness and social isolation can impact on health and well-being outcomes particularly in later life. Recent research¹ confirms a strong connection between loneliness, isolation and their impact on health and well-being outcomes. Sheds are an important if not essential way to counter isolation for some people, and we should not underestimate the value of the work we do at BH-Shed for our community.

Our Organisation

At the beginning of the year activities at the workshop and Kiln were continuing much as before with attendance steadily increasing. Reconfiguration work was drawing towards completion at the Kiln and as a result membership for some activities grew rapidly. By February it was clear that whilst both venues were well established, organisational problems were emerging. Whereas Shed members had close connections to the Charity's core mission, only a few Kiln members had shown interest and the load on Shed members in terms of volunteering work had become seriously unbalanced. It also became obvious that the Kiln groups favoured a different direction to that of the Shed.

This possibility was foreseen and it was always intended from the offset that the Kiln might be handed over to a new management team when groups and new activities had developed. In March, the Trustees decided that BH-Shed should if possible now hand over to a new team. In April, the Trustees informed members that they were looking into splitting the venues and asked Kiln groups to form a new charity to run the Kiln. After consideration, the Kiln groups decided to form a new charity called Burgess Hill Creative Community, and take over the building lease. Although this was a significant change, the handover process went smoothly and the one organisation has now become two separate entities which both continue to be very successful at least for the time being. The Kiln has been a remarkable success and it is great that it is able to continue and make a significant contribution to our community. We thank the Group Leaders for their groundwork, for taking on the challenge of a new charity and wish

them every success in the future.

The Shed and Kiln projects have only been possible by the considerable volunteering efforts of members and we thank everyone involved for the significant contribution they have made to our work and community.

Way Forward Post Kiln

Today, we are once again focusing on our activities at the workshop and enhancing our mission and scope of activities. Perhaps a key reason why Makerspace activities failed in the Kiln was because they were set up in the wrong working environment or were not promoted in the right way, or maybe they would have been more successful if they had been set up alongside the workshop. This was something we did consider before the Kiln project but were unable to implement because West Sussex County Council (WSSC) who own Burnside would not co-operate on space and opening times.

Since the decision to discontinue the Kiln project, we went back to WSSC to ask for the use of the 'Green' room adjacent to our workshop which is now unused by them. Initially they refused giving unsubstantiated reasons. We believe that even if WSSC objections had any merit at all, which we dispute, they are insignificant compared to the cost burden of outcomes from loneliness and isolation on society. We have therefore provided more information to WSSC and asked them to reconsider our request. They are looking into the matter again.

It is our view that in the face of such overwhelming evidence indicating such a strong connection between isolation and health outcomes, Sheds are not a 'nice to have', they are essential. It is time that all Councils provided more support rather than work against us.

Obviously with the additional space opportunity at Burnside still pending, we need to consider other options and actions. We have tentatively explored other space options including hiring spaces, taking on a smaller shop unit or other rented space such as the Scout Hut. Unfortunately, space is a premium in our area and finding the right place is not straightforward and will probably be expensive. The space we are looking for will ideally allow us to do other activities rather than more woodwork. This could include other arts and crafts, hobbies, games or interests and we would like to restart the Makerspace too. We are willing to consider any idea that would enable us to enhance our mission.

To move forward, we must begin to promote our work much more rigorously throughout the community and especially to all political parties and councils with the aim of getting more support on appropriate space, either as real space or financial support to rent other spaces. We should also consider external sponsorship and help from local businesses and the community.

One way to do this is to run open days in the workshop and target invitations, for example GP practices and Health Agencies, or local businesses, etc.

Performance

Our overall performance as a charity is assessed against the following criteria:

Membership levels - the number of people (our members) we help

Attendance levels - the level of attendance achieved

Benefits - the benefits to members and the community arising from attendance

and involvement

Value to community – the value provided by our volunteer efforts

Sustainability – our ability to finance operations and manage continuity risks

Membership

In March 23, membership was approaching 200 with a split of 30% men and 70% women. At the end of July, all memberships terminated requiring all members to rejoin if they wished to continue. We are pleased to report that most members signed up in August and today we have just over 50 members which is in line with normal levels for the Shed.

As always, we currently depend entirely on our volunteer members who give up their valuable time to keep our venture alive. Without them we would not be able to offer sessions. I am sure we all want to thank our fellow members for their many fantastic and significant contributions that keep us going.

Attendance

Overall attendance figures for the Shed were up by more than 50% and it seems that members are visiting the workshop more often than previously.

Benefits to Members

We are currently conducting a survey and interviewing members on a one to one basis to obtain information on the benefits members have gained through BH-Shed. This is ongoing, however initial indications are that members are fully satisfied with activities and arrangements, and their well-being has improved. We will be providing a report to members when the survey is completed.

Value to Community

During the year we continued to contribute to community events. Early in the year we ran 'Shed Loads of Fun' in the Kiln for parents and children and shortly after supported a St James Hospice Garden Open Day where members were able to meet the public and sell some products. In August we once again took part in MSDC at World's End Rec.

Shed Loads of Fun and MSDC away days were co-hosted with Dr Richard Robinson from the Brighton Science Festival. His enthusiasm and ideas were very helpful for both events. As well as his time, he donated £400 which we have put aside to help fund future events. On behalf of us all, we give our thanks and appreciation for his help and donation.

We continued to make products to help community interest groups such as Swift Boxes and up until August we hired the Kiln premises to the BH Repair Cafe, BHCCM and Burgess Hill Artists. Some of our members also participated and supported these events.

Voluntary Value

We also calculate the value of our work in terms of voluntary value. This is the equivalent value of our voluntary work that enables us to operate. This includes the workshop manager, admin effort, supervisor effort, maintenance and repairs, attending training courses, managing accounts, applying for grants, attending external events and running events like Shed Loads of Fun.

This value is equivalent to the amount of work a council would need to do and fund to run a place like the Shed, or reconfigure and run the Kiln.

At the moment this value is around £100K per annum. In addition, the Kiln project required effort to reconfigure the Kiln building, negotiate the lease, deal with procurement, set up the organisation and admin arrangements, start up the groups and manage activities, etc. This was estimated at £150K. Therefore in round terms the overall voluntary value is in the order of 7 years at £100K, plus £150K for the kiln making a total in the order of £850K.

Thanks to all volunteer members that have contributed to this staggering amount.

Sustainability

Our current financial status is good (see 'Finances' below and Appendix A: Treasurer's Report). The income from membership and session charges more than met outgoings this year and our reserves grew considerably to a healthy level. However, now we are operating as a Shed alone, future income levels will be much lower and more sensitive to cost increases.

Currently we have a fixed cost of rent, insurance and running costs, and if we add the cost of certifying the dust extractor and the rent increase to use our workshop 5 days and use the green room as well, our current membership fee of £30 per member will not be enough. Therefore we must either: increase income from other sources; increase membership fees; or use our reserves. We have about 18 months left on the current Burnside lease and we may need a good level of reserves if WSCC decides not to provide us with new lease.

In summary, we are likely to continue for the next few years, however after that is uncertain.

Trustees

Our trustees are all long serving volunteers who not only contribute as members, but also look after strategic and governance aspects. (NB. BH-Shed does not employ or pay anyone for work except specialist contractors when necessary.)

The following are current Trustees:

David Bailey

David Hayes

Eric Palmer Co-chair

Ian Lucas Co-chair

Jasmine Patel

Tim Penn

Trustees stand down at the end of three years on a rotation basis and may be re-elected. This year Ian Lucas and Jasmine Patel are standing for re-election. The remaining board unanimously recommends their re-election.

We are sure members would wish to thank the Trustee team for their valuable inputs and for having the courage and tenacity to help us through some difficult periods, and keep us on a steady course.

Succession

From previous correspondence you will be aware that we are seeking to increase the number of trustees on the Board. I am therefore nominating members Graham Mason and Tony Ryan to become trustees and this is seconded by Ian Lucas. Both candidates

fully meet the requirements to become trustees having already made many voluntary contributions to our work. They have agreed to stand for election at the AGM. We may consider other nominees if these come forward in time for the meeting.

External Stakeholders

We extend our thanks to two very important stakeholders: West Sussex County Council and New River who have both leased premises on favourable terms. Without them we simply would not be able to operate.

We give thanks and appreciation to three external groups that regularly hired our Kiln premises: The Repair Cafe (Anne Eves); Summerhaven (Janice Henwood) and Burgess Hill Community Crafter's Market (Jo Homan).

This year we also received grants from Burgess Hill Town Council (BHTC) and Sussex Community Foundation (SCF). BHTC provided funds to repair and upgrade the Kiln floor. The SCF grant enabled us to purchase Leather, Sewing, Makerspace and Weaving Equipment. We thank these organisations for their continued support to our ventures.

We also thank the public for donations throughout the year.

Finance

A summary of our finances is provided in Appendix A: Treasurer's Report. This shows net income was over £14K which is £4K more than last year. Income made up from members' subscriptions and fees (£18.1K), sales and donations up from £4.5K to £5.9, and rental and other income up by £0.6K to £2.6K. The main expenditure of £12.5K included £3K for equipment and materials, £7K general expenses which included £2K donated to BHCC to help with start-up costs plus credits for outstanding membership subscriptions. We also paid some of the costs to repair the Pottery Kiln and buy additional weaving equipment.

With the income generated this year, our reserves now stand at a healthy £43K. This is a considerable achievement given that over the past three years we have created and kick started the Kiln without any impact on our reserves. Overall, this is another very good performance.

Following the organisational changes, Treasurer Nigel Greg decided to stand down to take a new role in another organisation. He continued up until the end of September in order to finalise and handover accounts. His last set of accounts is shown in Appendix A: Financial Report. Nigel has not only overseen our accounts he also helps other organisations. He has helped us set up new payment methods, co-ordinated and organised daily transactions across all groups, and also provided financial advice to the Board. For his significant voluntary contributions, on behalf of the trustees and members we express our thanks and appreciation and wish him every success in his new ventures.

References

1. 'Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation 2023', (Introduction) The US Surgeon General's Advisory on the healing Effects of Social Connection and Community, **Dr. Vivek H. Murthy** 19th and 21st Surgeon General of the United States

Appendix A: Financial Report

BURGESS HILL SHED			No (if any)		CC16a
Receipts and payments accounts					
For the period from	01-Oct-22	To	30-Sep-23		
Section A Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	424	-	-	424	430
Sales	5530	-	-	5,530	4,557
Session Fees	14480	-	-	14,480	9,116
Member Subs	3567	-	-	3,567	3,785
Grants		7,100	-	7,100	6,616
Other	2590	-	-	2,590	1,713
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for	26,591	7,100	-	33,691	26,217
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	26,591	7,100	-	33,691	26,217
A3 Payments					
Equipment & materials	3072	4,600	-	7,672	3,482
Training Courses		-	-	-	-
Insurance	761	-	-	761	655
Premise Hire	750			750	750
Premises refurbishment	841	2,500	-	3,341	6,742
Legal & Prof Expenses		-	-	-	-
Postage		-	-	-	-
Gen Expenses	7121	-	-	7,121	4,143
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	12,545	7,100	-	19,645	15,772
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	12,545	7,100	-	19,645	15,772
Net of receipts/(payments)	14,046	-	-	14,046	10,445
A5 Transfers between fund					
	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year ended	29,169		-	29,169	18,724
Cash funds this year ended	43,215	-	-	43,215	29,169



Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01-Oct-22

To

30-Sep-23

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	424	-	-	424	430
Sales	5530	-	-	5,530	4,557
Session Fees	14480	-	-	14,480	9,116
Member Subs	3567	-	-	3,567	3,785
Grants		7,100	-	7,100	6,616
Other	2590	-	-	2,590	1,713
		-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	26,591	7,100	-	33,691	26,217
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	26,591	7,100	-	33,691	26,217
A3 Payments					
Equipment & materials	3072	4,600	-	7,672	3,482
Training Courses		-	-	-	-
Insurance	761	-	-	761	655
Premise Hire	750			750	750
Premises refurbishment	841	2,500	-	3,341	6,742
Legal & Prof Expenses		-	-	-	-
Postage		-	-	-	-
Gen Expenses	7121	-	-	7,121	4,143
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	12,545	7,100	-	19,645	15,772
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	12,545	7,100	-	19,645	15,772
Net of receipts/(payments)	14,046	-	-	14,046	10,445
A5 Transfers between funds					
A6 Cash funds last year end	29,169			29,169	18,724
Cash funds this year end	43,215	-	-	43,215	29,169

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank and cash balances	43,215	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	43,215	-	23/10/2023



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name
Burgess Hill Shed

On accounts for the year
ended

30 September 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1168743

Set out on pages

1

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 30 09 2023

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Lynne Adams

Date:

8 May 2024

Name:

Lynne Adams

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Address:

32 KENDALL COURT, HAYWARDS HEATH RH16 4SX