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## **West Hill and District Community Centre - Open Meeting and AGM – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Meeting held in the Centre plus attendees on Zoom 7pm opening

### **Notes from the meetings**

#### **Open Meeting**

**Present 60 people Zoom 14 people Apologies 14 people**

Opened with welcome by Mary Philips

- Explanations regarding Covid arrangements, CCTV in operation and other housekeeping matters.
- Thoughts with people of Ukraine
- Introduction to the committee and to Steven Manwaring , director of Hastings Voluntary Action who acted as Chairman for both meetings

Matters discussed were around the issues of the renewal of the lease for the Centre by ESCC (due for renewal in March 2023), the condition of the present building and the need for greater involvement by the community, either as individuals to augment the present committee and trustees, to join working parties or help practically. This could include the involvement of other interested groups jointly or to take over the Centre.

Steven – very good to see so many people in an actual meeting plus to have participants on Zoom. He was optimistic that Hastings was always up for a challenge and he noted that this was a good time to be thinking of the future of the Centre. It was not in a position of crisis but in transition and it was important at this point to have a conversation around how to develop and run it in the future.

Mary (plus others) explained the main issues around the structure of the building, its day to day organisation and future prospects

- The building is timber framed and has a flat roof, which has caused problems although a new warm roof has been fitted, and a new French drain has also been fitted to address the problems with damp that has affected walls and frame.
- There was a break-in, vandalism and a fire set a while ago but the insurance covered the repairs and it was done to a high standard. A new alarm system and CCTV has been fitted and key safe for easier access by groups hiring the Centre.

- There had been issues over insurance cover and ESCC had assisted until a new company could be found to give the appropriate degree of cover.
- The electrics are covered by E.On Next but their service has proved to be inadequate as there has been more than a year wait for new meters and there had been issues with having the radiators turned on, etc.
- The Centre has been able to function because of the services of very helpful local tradesmen who have managed to do the necessary repairs and maintenance.
- The building is at a stage where it is usable and safe but it is time to start considering a replacement.
- The Centre is well used by a variety of local groups but no parties are held at the moment as a result of Covid and the availability of volunteers to open/close and clean the venue for these types of events. The Centre lost money during the period of closures for Covid from hiring fees but was saved by grants from Hastings Borough Council.
- A Business Plan was produced in 2020 (this is available to read) and an application to be a CIO was successful in 2018.
- There are funds to see the Centre through the transition but not to fund a rebuild
- ESCC have indicated that they want to work with the committee/trustees and anyone else who will take on the building/running the Centre as a joint venture and keep it as a community space. The Energy Rating would need to be improved. There could possibly be the potential to sell part of the asset to get funds.
- It was pointed out that all the people involved were volunteers and there was no funding at present – finances are obtained from the hire of the Centre.
- At present there is not a licence for alcohol at events and there is a curfew time of 10.30pm to show respect to the neighbours. We need more help if we are to do more at social events.

Steve – the money is there to cover the transition period and there is time to plan for the future of the building and its future use. To renew the lease, ESCC would need to know that arrangements were in place for the Centre to move forwards as a thriving community asset. For this to occur there would need to be help to refurbish or rebuild with people involved in supporting the necessary developments. There needs to be more people involved as trustees, committee members or in other ways and he opened up the meeting to invite questions and give people the opportunity to raise questions and volunteer to help.

Q . How many years would ESCC envisage for a lease? 25 years? Can we be confident that the Centre will not be taken back without consultation?

A. Julia Hilton – confident that ESCC will allow a 25 year lease. Possibility that if sold to a community group that some money should return to ESCC.

Mary – ESCC appear to not be interested in developing the site. There could potentially be a community asset transfer with the building given to a group/charity or there could be fund raising to pay for refurbishment and the running costs.

Steve – number of options to be carefully considered to identify the best option as some bodies offer finance or community funding but that would need to be later after an agreed lease in place, etc

Qs. Can we knock down the present building and rebuild with a straw bale/eco building? Are there appropriate funding streams available for such builds? Can someone buy the building to continue as a Community Centre? Do we need to keep the same footprint? Are there sources of funding to cover employing someone to do a particular job?

A. Steve – appropriate design important for sustainability of the Centre. There must be architectural merit in a replacement building. Help needed to create plans and access funding to fit with aspirations for the Centre. The building is in a Conservation Area – this has been an issue in the past when options were discussed with Sports England (Edwin Rew). There is insufficient funding available at present to refurbish or rebuild – have enough to ‘just get by’. Funding can be raised from the Government without buying the property. It may be possible to access Match Funding. Funding can be for a rebuild or refurbish. It would need a good long term vision and good security of tenure. It would be important to identify which funding bodies are appropriate and concentrate on those only.

Q. Which other community groups are interested?

A. To be investigated further as part of future developments but the groups must be ‘Not for Profit’

There was a plea from Cllr Julia Hilton (and Cllr Claire Carr) that there should be a forum for the opportunity for Community Centres to work together to share expertise and strengthen all their futures.

Cllr James Bacon commented regarding the need to appeal to the diverse community and a suggestion to engage with schools to see what vision the students have for the future of the Centre – this would help drive forward the development and involvement of parents and families.

Summing Up – Steve – what is needed to ensure the future success of the Centre?

- Volunteers with financial expertise
- Volunteers with expertise in applying for grants and funding
- Volunteers with practical and surveying skills to keep an eye on the maintenance and care of the Centre
- Need people to form Working Parties with vision and creativity to drive forward ambitious plans for the building and all other practical aspects
- We won’t get a new lease unless there is the impetus with interested and committed group(s). There needs to be early dialogue with ESCC as they have stated they want to work collaboratively with the group(s) involved from the early stages onwards.

Break – some participants left

## **West Hill & District Community Association AGM**

1. Chair – Steve Mainwaring HVA
2. Present past and new members plus on Zoom (40+) Apologies 14?
3. Matters arising from AGM 2021 – covered in the Open meeting
4. Trustees report (Linda Jeal) – sent out and copies available in the room for new members – accepted

### **West Hill & District Community Association. Trustees Report for Annual General Meeting 2022**

- Welcome to everyone interested in the WHDCA and WHDCC.
- Corona virus update: Continuing to implement Covid Risk Assessment. Regularly checking government rules.
- AGM 2022 16<sup>th</sup> March 7pm at WHCC and also there will be an option to attend on Zoom – to receive the link for this please contact [info@westhillcc.com](mailto:info@westhillcc.com). There will be the opportunity to present the accounts and discuss the future of WHDCC & WHDCA.
- ESCC Lease – This expires on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023. A business plan has been submitted to ESCC Property and Estates (January 2020) but despite many attempts to clarify the situation regarding the future of the Centre and the potential plans that ESCC may have for the future of the Centre, we have had no reply in writing or any confirmation of their intentions to support the continuation of the Centre as a community facility. Most recent contact made 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Extension or renewal of the lease may cost money for fees and a solicitor.
- Thanks to the hardworking volunteers who have kept the Centre running under difficult circumstances. There is a cleaning rota in place – thank you very much to those involved.
- Bookings: Centre is busy during the week and groups now wanting weekend slots. The Committee agreed not to accept party bookings at the moment – to reconsider later. There was an anonymous complain about noise when a drumming group was present but the situation has had a satisfactory resolution with strategies in place to reduce noise impact.
- Security good - Keypad and fobs in use to facilitate entry by hirers. Key distribution logged and instructions for use given to hirers. Security and fire alarms are tested weekly.
- Insurance – all up to date BHIB/Access (Building and Public Liability) – taken over initially by ESCC but now transferred – Manor Insurance. Trustee insurance in place.
- Maintenance:  
The WHDCA Maintenance Plan is being implemented.

- i) E-On- No word from them. The Electrical Certificate work not signed off but heating is on. Thanks to Roger Pallant for fixing that. The electricity certificate nearly completed.
- ii) Exterior door hooks – not done.
- iii) Small gap in one window panel filled but more have been noticed. Dave Upton will fill.
- iv) The West wall and Porch Canopies have been renovated. D.U.
- v) Ron Gray has cut back brambles and repaired lighting tubes.
- vi) French drain installed to improve drainage and prevent potential damage to structure.
- vii) Professional window cleaner did the outside windows and fascia. Thanks to Pat for organising.
- viii) Evidence of a mouse found; Hirers reminded to dust the floor & not leave food on the premises. Gap behind the piano- temporary cover.
- ix) Graffiti: HBC responded very quickly & painted over-MP sent thanks.
- x) The roof has been recovered and insulated to improve the fabric of the building. Some slight damage to part of the roof after the storms in February – repair is done.
- xi) 3 CCTV cameras replaced. Quote waited for 2 more.
- xii) Ongoing issues with parking by Torfield parents, etc. Car Park signs- Thanks to Pat for research – various options under consideration – further discussion needed.
- xiii) Clock fell off wall and has been replace.
- xiv) Electricity Bills: Lots of credit but propose that we keep it there for now- review next meeting.
- xv) Possibility of sitting a Community Composter in the grounds to increase the spread of such facilities around the town – to follow up with a visit to present faculties and discussions with group operating the scheme.

- Finances: Gay Brown & Jo Buxton
- Trustees. At present: Mary Phillips, Linda Jeal & Jo Buxton. Mary Phillips retiring and new trustees sought. Minimum 3, maximum 10.
- HOTRA: Mary continues to be a member on behalf of WHDCA.

Linda Jeal (WHDCA Trustee). 28/2/2022

5. Treasurer's annual accounts - sent out by email and copies available for new members. There were many expenses last year related to maintaining the building plus Covid requirements. HBC grant was very useful. Accounts accepted.  
[..\WHDCC Accounts Signed\[6170\].pdf](#) or  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16g32EMEUURpmxJuy80AaKKiaJFwytRgw/view?usp=sharing>
6. WHCC buildings and grounds – maintenance and bookings – covered previously in Open meeting

7. Future of WHDCA and WHCC – covered in Open meeting – many people expressed an interest and a further meeting will be organised to discuss further with interested people (less formal with chance for individual discussions)
8. Election of Trustees – Many grateful thanks to Mary Phillips who has done so much to drive forward developments and offer amazing support to the Centre. She has to step down as required by constitution. Jo Buxton and Linda Jeal to remain. New trustees Anthony Davis (Proposed Linda Jeal/Second Sue Banks) \*\*\* Others are considering if they could also commit to this role. New venue for meetings to be sought as larger venue needed)
9. Election of Committee Members – the existing committee are to continue to support the transition and two new members joined June Pratley and Sue Banks (proposer Linda Jeal/Second Mary Phillips). Others have offered help and the development of working groups, etc to be considered soon.
10. Amendments to the Constitution to be postponed and date of next meeting to be arranged later to enable the inclusion of volunteers willing to help.
11. AOB - none

\*\*\*\* ADDENDUM TO WHDCA AGM MINUTES HELD ON 16<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022.

To WHDCA Trustees & Committee,

Following the AGM Jim Ralley expressed a wish to become a Trustee of the West Hill & District Community Association to help and support the future of the Centre.

He has a wealth of experience and uses to Centre regularly. He wrote:

*"I'd love to offer my support to join a working group to figure out the future of the centre.*

*As you mentioned in the meeting, what's needed right now is people who can scope out the work that's needed and make a clear plan for the future.*

*In my day job, I work with the UK government, NGOs, and companies to move groups of people through complex decision-making, research, and learning processes.*

*I'd be delighted to bring these skills to the working group, to support project management, process design, and help folks make decisions.*

*I've also done lots of work with bringing in the voices of stakeholder groups and would recommend that we do some kind of large survey with residents in the West Hill area to get a broad range of views.*

*Also keen to become a trustee if you're still looking for more people to join."*

(proposer Mary Phillips/Second Linda Jeal).

WHDCA Trustees and Committee members were contacted electronically to vote on this All returns are positive so:

Jim Ralley has been duly accepted as a WHDCA Trustee and the appropriate documents are being prepared. Yours, Mary Phillips (WHDCA)

MP & JL 28/03/2022

**WEST HILL & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

**BALANCE SHEET**

**YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

## WEST HILL & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

### Accountants Report to the Members :

The Treasurer has approved the financial information for the year ended 31 December 2021, and has acknowledged responsibility for it, for the appropriateness of the accounting basis and for providing all information and explanations necessary for its compilation.

We have not verified the accuracy or completeness of the accounting records or information and explanations that have been given to us and we do not, therefore, express any opinion on the financial information.

We can confirm that the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet annexed, are in agreement with the books and records provided to us.

DAVID J WENHAM & CO  
Chartered Accountants



..... March 2022



**WEST HILL & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION****YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021****INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
<b>Income:</b>		
Hire of Centre		12,659.00
Grant		16,906.92
		<hr/>
		29,565.92
 <b>Expenditure:</b>		
Security Alarm CCTV Maintenance	516.00	
Advertising & Promotion	-	
Administration Expenses	44.44	
Cleaning & Washroom Materials	287.19	
Insurances	1,134.46	
Mobile Phone	-	
Miscellaneous Expenses	90.20	
General Rates - H B C	30.00	
Repairs & Maintenance	2,024.27	
Utilities : Electricity	865.29	
Water	150.90	
Telephone & Broadband	708.24	
Accountancy	300.00	
	<hr/>	
		6,150.99
 <b>Net Income after Expenditure</b>		<hr/> <b>23,414.93</b> <hr/>

**BALANCE SHEET As at 31 December 2021**

Cash in Hand		21.82
Lloyds Bank Account		54,813.35
 <b>Total Assets</b>		<hr/> <b>54,835.17</b> <hr/>
 Represented by:		
Reserves brought forward	31,420.24	
Net Income for the Year	23,414.93	
	<hr/>	
 <b>Total Reserves carried forward</b>		<hr/> <b>54,835.17</b> <hr/>

The above Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 December 2021 are in agreement with the books and records, and give a fair view of the Association's affairs.

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J Buxton Treasurer

01... March 2022

