



THE BIRCHAM CENTRE

(Reg: 242536)

Annual General Meeting

Monday 9th August 2021

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held on Monday 9th August 2021 at 7.30pm at
THE BIRCHAM CENTRE

TRUSTEES PRESENT

Les West (Chair), Stuart Lane (Vice Chair), Julie Smith, Barry Barker, Louisa Dreisin, Sam Garnham, Ian McGilvray, Gill Long, Roisin Howard, Polly Brockis (Centre Manager).

APOLOGIES

Trustees - Carl Lamb, Bob Boothroyd

Public – Sue Taylor (Archive volunteer, Brenda and John Palmer. Kind email of support from the Palmers read out .

MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD 7th September 2020

Approved, and signed by Les West.

MATTERS ARISING at the 2020 AGM

No matters arising

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Brenda Green, Ann Middlemas, Clare Kenvyn,

CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS and ANNUAL REPORTS

Welcome to the 2021 annual meeting which reports on the activities of the Bircham Centre for 2020. It was a difficult and strange year, with the Centre being closed for large parts of the year, in line with government guidelines. During these periods all our income streams ceased as much of what the Centre does relies on providing a place for people to meet and take part in community activities. The Centre lost over £3,000 per month from the charity shop and hiring of rooms while the building was closed. Although the grants offered by the government helped to alleviate some of this, trustees had to draw on reserves to cover core running costs and it will take several years to replenish them to the same level. However, we are thankful that we had reserves to see us through the year. Most of our staff were furloughed during the periods that the Centre was closed. During the periods that the Centre was able to open, the staff worked hard to support the many clubs and community groups who use the Centre. This was important as many local and vulnerable people told us how much they missed the activities the Centre offers and how isolated many of them had felt during the lockdown periods. During the past year changes had to be made to the Centre and the way we operated to ensure a safe environment for all, in accordance with safe working guidelines. This required risk assessments to be completed, additional safety measures put

into place and PPE provided. The Centre was awarded the 'We're Good to Go' certificate by Visit England.

As we all now emerge from the pandemic experience (that has been one of the biggest peace-time threats to so many sections of our society), the trustees are working hard to reconnect with community groups and individuals and to introduce some new initiatives.

Following last year's annual meeting, we welcomed four new trustees: Gill Long, Roisin Howard, Bob Boothroyd and Carl Lamb, who brought our number of trustees up to eleven with one vacancy. I thank all the trustees for all they do to support the work of the Centre in so many different ways.

On behalf of the trustees, I also thank Polly for all that she does as Centre Manager and in supporting the staff and users of the Centre, often going far beyond her contractual duties. It has not been an easy year and many people have a lot to thank her for.

Our thanks also to Robert, our caretaker, for his care of the building and to our cleaners, Sammy, Tina and Hayley. Also, to Tom from Eves Hill Veg Company who cares and maintains the garden so beautifully. We are blessed with a number of volunteers who work in the shop, archives and garden. Our particular thanks to Brenda, the shop manager and to Ann, who leads the archive team. Without these dedicated helpers the Centre would struggle to undertake all that it does.

For most of the year, the trustees met via zoom, in order to continue to undertake the necessary work involved in managing the Centre. This was an interesting experience, and one that was managed in a much better way than the Handforth Council in Cheshire!

During the year, the trustees reviewed a number of policies and finalised our 'Aims and Objectives for 2021 -2026' and our 'Working Plan for 2021' all of which can be found on our web-site. During the year, the trustees also renewed the Memorandum of Understanding for the Reepham Archives and the Bowls Club in addition to the lease for the bowling green.

Fundraising

During the year, the trustees continued to fundraising and were successful in obtaining the following grants:

£9,998 from the National Lottery 'Awards for All' for help with core running costs and a contribution towards the kitchen refurbishment

£3,000 from The Geoffrey Watling Trust towards the new kitchen units

£9,515 from the Norfolk Recovery Fund towards core running costs, entrance works and community engagement following the reopening of the Centre

£445 from Reepham Rotary for new storage cupboards for users of the Centre

£250 from Broadland Community Grant for additional storage on the first floor.

£300 from Broadland Community Grant for the Reepham Bowls Club

£400 from Reepham Town Council for new fence at the Bowling Green

TOTAL £23,908

In addition, during 2020 we received an unexpected legacy of £5,000 from Mrs Hemming's estate, for which we are very grateful. At that time the trustees agreed to contribute £700 to the archives in addition to our annual £300 support. These sums went towards the new shelving in addition to resourcing necessary surveyors reports.

Maintenance of the building

The building sub-group, which oversees the maintenance of the building is led by Ian McGilvray, and includes Stuart Lane and myself. Looking after a grade II historical building is a major responsibility and needs constant attention.

During 2020 we decided to continue with planned repairs, carrying out works to the boundary wall with Pudding Pie Alley and undertaking major works instigated by the requirement to treat damp.

The book room for the sale of secondhand books and new beverage area are the wonderful result of considerable work. These major works were carried out by N F Coverdale Ltd. We had to take on specific works to the porch when a serious water ingress and damp problem was discovered just

as we entered a lockdown. Thankfully NRF supported us with funds towards this emergency requirement

Les West
Chair of the Board of Trustees

SHOP AND BOOK ROOM REPORT

The last year has been a difficult one for Brenda and the volunteers in the shop and they deserve a big thank you for all their hard work but mainly for the way they have carried it out with a smile and a positive attitude. It has also been difficult in the book room with Richard Fox resigning in February due to other commitments. Thank you to Richard for all his hard work and also to Sam Garnham for helping when the books initially set up outside in the marketplace.

After the first lockdown in March 2020, the shop moved to the Art room so that we could have a one-way system entering via the front doors and leaving the shop through the garden for the reopening in June 2020. Upon reopening there were obviously restrictions, and the bookstore was closed a great deal of the time due to renovations. The book room opened in November and has been very well received with all books, DVD's and CD's in one location. Thanks go to Ian, Stuart and Les for all their work in getting the room open and to Kerri's Pine for supplying a number of bookcases at a discounted price. We were all closed again during the second lockdown in December 2020 and did not reopen until April 2021 when the shop moved back to it's original room and the book store began being used on a regular basis.

Tuesdays became our day for accepting donations as everything needed to be left in decontamination for 72 hours before it could be sorted out. Sadly, some of the volunteers decided not to return due to the pandemic but it has been great to see so many of our regular customers coming back. We have been lucky with the amount of donations received. Unfortunately, apart from The World of Books none of the other charities have returned to take our unwanted donations so we are having to make other arrangements in disposing of these items.

Due to the pandemic the market traders decided to stop setting up on a Wednesday so it was decided to move some tables into the square on Wednesday and Saturday mornings if the weather permitted it with a display of books and gradually more items from the shop. There are still customers who are not confident about coming into the shop but are happy to browse outside.

Obviously, our takings have been greatly affected by the lockdowns and this is evident in our yearly financial report with the shop only taking a third of what they had achieved previously. Over 2020 the shop takings were just short of £9,000 whereas it was £25,500 in 2019. The bookstore fared slightly better taking £1,863.00 in 2020 compared with £3,333.00 in 2019, due mainly to being outside and adding shop stock when Brenda wasn't looking to add to the book takings

A big thank you to all our volunteers, to the trustees who assist in different ways, to the Shop Manager, Brenda for all the time she gives to make the shop such a success and a big

thank you to our Centre Manager Polly for all her help and ideas in making Brenda's job so much easier.

ARCHIVE REPORT

The first three months of 2020 were extremely busy with many visitors to the Archive. The first lock-down began in March 2020, which limited access to the Archive Rooms. Volunteers worked from home sorting files, entering items on Omeka, rationalising the administration files and emails and updating the website.

The Autumn period was filled with the courses run by the two Community Archivists, Robin Sampson and Laura McCourt. Restrictions were eased for a brief period before Christmas when the second lock-down was imposed. Since the New Year nearly all work done by volunteers has taken place in their own homes.

Reepham Archive Rooms.

The Reepham Archive was established in The Bircham Centre seven years ago in 2014. A new Memorandum of Understanding, between the Bircham Centre and the Reepham Archive, commenced on 01 January 2021.

There were many plans for 2020-2021 which have been put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the Bircham Centre was closed to volunteers and the public for much of the year considerable progress has been made in the Archive.

Activities during the last year have included:

- the planned courses organised by the Norfolk Record Office:
 - these were initially delayed and then held over 9 weeks by Zoom
 - all the volunteers attended these courses and several other Zoom courses run by Scottish Archives - these gave us a good grounding on best practice and practical ways to run the Archive
 - sadly the archivists were not able to visit the Archive as originally envisaged but it is hoped they will be able to do so before the end of this year
- installing new Archive quality shelving
- the regular submission of articles to 'Reepham Life'
- opening to the public two days each month and at other times by appointment, when permitted
- regular volunteer working sessions in the Archive, when permitted, and at other times by Zoom from home
- the monthly volunteer meetings by Zoom
- clearing the back-log of items to be 'box listed' - this is the 'first sort' of items that have been donated to the Archive and are still to be entered on Omeka and then filed
- assistance in selecting and supplying photographs and copy for the '2021 Reepham Life' calendar
- replying by email to queries received from the public
- scanning all the Reepham Society publications - these have been/are being added to Omeka
- work is in progress sorting all the Reepham Society and their History Group's papers
- further research on BC founder, Samuel Bircham, and his family

Activities 'on hold' due to the pandemic:

- Archive Teas
- Oral History – recording the memories of local history

- working as a group in the Archive to put into action the lessons learnt from the high-quality guidance given by the Norfolk Record Office

Volunteers.

- we welcome Charles Butcher, Sue Taylor and Jenny Harding
- we said farewell to Barry Barker and Jolyon Booth
-

Donations received include:

- new laptop from the NRO team
- cuttings and photographs from the Betts, Dye, Grant and Bishop families
- aerial photographs from Mike Page
- donation from Reepham Life Calendar and sale of calendars

Plans for the coming year include:

- development of the on-line database
- submission of articles for 'Reepham Life'
- preparation of photographs and copy for the 2022 Reepham Life Calendar
- re-opening to the public – regular open days, archive teas, as and when volunteers are available
- regular volunteer training meetings and work sessions
- on-going work cataloguing and entering items on Omeka
- meeting our commitment to collect, conserve and make available all the items held in the Archive

We would like to thank:

- the Bircham Centre for its continuing support and for all it does to make the Archive a useful community asset
- Polly Brockis, The Bircham Centre Manager, for all her help and assistance
- the Archive volunteers, without whose help nothing would be done

The Archive volunteers would also like to extend their thanks to all our generous supporters for their time, gifts and funds. We are inspired by your interest to improve all aspects of the Archive and are committed to make all the records we hold accessible to as many people as possible.

Stuart Lane
Vice-Chair

HEALTH AND SAFETY, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL REPORT

2020 was a difficult and complex year for operation and finances. As we came out of lockdowns we had scheduled building works to complete and then emergency works required on the porch floor. Return users, hirers and volunteers were tentative and remain so to date. Accessing supplies because of the global pandemic and Brexit became difficult. Due processes and systems have all been reviewed and reworked numerous times. The shop moved and returned to its original room, systems for acceptance and quarantine of donations put into place. The library put in place a revised access route. Many of the other charities and organisations we had worked with have been required to change systems or ceased to operate in their pre pandemic form. The people who took our over stock (PACT, Break), those who took items to support the homeless (The Benjamin Foundation, The Mathew Project) etc these services are no longer with us and we feel their loss practically and personally.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

During lockdowns I came to site weekly to test alarms, check security, facilitate NCC library inspections. My lone working was assessed, only accessing cellars and attics when a second person was on site. Government guidance and best practices were constantly reviewed and followed. One way systems and revised cleaning rotas put in place prior to re-opening of each area. Huge thanks must go to our cleaners for their work to keep us safe through 2020. Works to Pudding Pie Alley and the main entrance floor were instigated for H&S reasons, scheduling, and obtaining permissions, ensuring these areas remained safe, obtaining supplies, and ensuring these were securely accepted and isolated took considerable effort from all involved. Risk Assessment for the various spaces and events were drafted and amended as per evolving guidance and regulations. Supplementary conditions of hire and COVID response information provided for all users. Going forward H&S responsibilities return to the trustees.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Income for the year is shown as £28,300 compared to £57,700 in 2019 - just less than half the previous year! This lack of income was limited sales and hires due to lockdown and is actually bolstered by a legacy of 5K and furlough.

Expenditure came in 10K down on last year, we tightened our belts where we could but that still left us showing an 18K deficit. Telecoms was higher than previously as we had installed a new Wi-Fi system prior to the pandemic. Health and Safety increased for obvious reasons and general maintenance reduced because of lack of access and use.

Bottom line shows a 30k deficit. This is after the inclusion of grants (various government grants and certain ongoing project grants) minus the expenditure of the significant building works that were undertaken in the year.

We were supported by many grants through 2020, the administration of such is complex and time heavy but we would not be in the current position without them. Our sincere thanks go out to all the many bodies who have shown faith in our projects and helped ensure our longevity.

In 2019 Trustees agreed to utilise 20K of the reserves fund towards works to fix damp issues – the residual building costs coming from grant awards. It had also been agreed that necessary boundary wall repairs should be scheduled. The later had to wait for the Spring weather of 2020 and cost 10K.

In simplistic terms I round that circle with the thought we ended 2020 30K down but have more than 30K of works completed. The boundary wall is safe again, we have a fabulous new book room and beverage area. We ended the year with 46K in the COIF account, the reserves policy is there to cover one year of operation should it be required, we remain in a position to do that. We were also able to retain all staff a major achievement for 2020.

We have a small amount of restricted grant income from Norfolk Recovery Fund which we have had authority to carry over to October 31st 2021, this is now specifically to help community re-engagement.

The Bircham Centre would like to thank Ian Boldero & Co for financial support and work in auditing our accounts and hereby appoint them as the examiner for the next financial year. All agreed.

Going forward the Treasurer role is to be covered by qualified volunteers. We do not currently have a trustee able to undertake the role, however it will remain on the list of trustee responsibilities.

Polly Brockis
Centre Manager

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Brenda Green asked for an update on the request to position a war memorial at the centre. Les West responded and explained that all local stakeholders (District and Town Councils, Church) had been contacted and the siting discussed. The Bircham Centre building is a designated War Memorial. The Bircham trustees have engaged in detailed consultations and voted to accept a memorial stone in the front section of the centre. They will redesign the area as a memorial garden; not just to those lost in the wars but also recognising losses such as those through COVID at this time. The exact siting is to be further investigated due to damp ingress issues for the building. The design and siting would still need to obtain planning permission.

Polly Brockis passed on public thanks for the Norfolk Day event held at the centre, with recognition of Gill Long's hard work.

Clare Kenvyn stated that all had done a fantastic job to keep things going, learning new skills to do so through the pandemic. Further explaining that the centre is really appreciated by those who use it.

Ann Middlemas thanked the trustees, Polly and all current and new volunteers for the support given to the Reepham Archive

NOMINATIONS FOR TRUSTEE'S FROM NOMINATING BODIES AND PUBLIC

No new nominations or public wishing to stand

Meeting formally **CLOSED at 8.10pm**



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name

THE BIRCHAM CENTRE

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31.12.20

**Charity no
(if any)**

242536

Set out on pages

1 & 2

(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 DD / MM / YYYY.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

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

**Independent
examiner's statement**

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 the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn 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:

Date:

6.4.2021

Name:

IAN G. M. BOLDERO

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

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT (ICAEW)

Address:

IVY HOUSE, MARKET PLACE, REEPHAM,
NORWICH NR10 4LA.

The Bircham Centre

Income & Expenditure for the Year ended 31st December 2020

		2020	2019
<u>Receipts</u>			
Tea Room	-	88.39	
Hirings	3,171.10	6,827.00	
Office rent	-	6,380.00	
Library rent	2,736.50	2,736.50	
Library cleaning	1,495.00	1,495.00	
Furlough received	3,228.62	-	
200 Club	1,308.00	1,620.00	
Shop	8,979.99	26,421.01	
Book sales etc. (Red Box)	1,863.63	3,333.38	
Donations received	202.94	4,079.07	
Legacy	5,000.00	-	
Insurance claim	-	2,775.02	
Centenary events	-	670.00	
Calendars	80.00	90.00	
Interest on deposits	148.62	393.97	
Art Gallery	2.00	18.50	
Archive Room	108.00	797.58	
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		28,324.40	57,725.42
<u>Payments</u>			
Cleaning	7,879.01	8,157.33	
Insurance	3,941.99	3,756.76	
Water	373.89	518.92	
Electricity and telephone	5,245.57	4,289.00	
Accountant's report and payroll	420.00	420.00	
Rates	646.40	1,057.76	
Administration	14,076.52	13,023.02	
Repairs & maintenance	6,941.46	11,052.42	
Health & safety	2,266.17	1,616.27	
Garden maintenance	1,901.50	1,091.76	
Centenary events	-	9,585.08	
Legal & Professional Fees	760.00	-	
200 Club	633.40	725.00	
Tea Room	28.34	85.67	
Archive Room	1,824.08	659.86	
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		46,938.33	56,038.85
Deficit (Surplus) before special building work	(18,613.93)		1,686.57
Less:			
Special building work	42,028.15		3,486.67
Bowling club	850.00		
Volunteer co-ordinator / projects	3,744.82		
	<hr/>		
	46,622.97		
Add Grants	34,888.95		500.00
	<hr/>		<hr/>
Deficit	(30,347.95)		(1,300.10)
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The Bircham Centre

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2020

	2020	2019
HSBC Current Account	5,230.86	10,400.80
COIF Deposit Account	<u>45,808.44</u>	<u>69,625.18</u>
	51,039.30	80,025.98
Debtors & prepayments	33.00	1,394.27
	<u>51,072.30</u>	<u>81,420.25</u>
General Fund B/fwd	81,420.25	82,720.35
Less deficit for the year:	(30,347.95)	(1,300.10)
General Fund C/fwd	<u>51,072.30</u>	<u>81,420.25</u>



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name

THE BIRCHAM CENTRE

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31.12.20

**Charity no
(if any)**

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**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

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

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

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Signed:

Date:

6.4.2021

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IAN G. M. BOLDERO

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
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