

**Lymington Community Association**

**New, Street, Lymington, SO41 9BQ**

**Registered Charity 1188765**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 6:30pm**

**The Gates Hall, Lymington Community Centre, New Street, Lymington**

1. **Welcome** by the Chair of the Lymington Community Association.

**Present** Trustees - Lucie Lewis (Acting Chair) LL), Caite Healy (CH), Norman Browne (NB), Malcolm Ross (MR), Lesley Dawson (LD), Peter Allen (PA), Judy Ruffell (JR) and Judi Turner (JT). Rachel Smith, Centre Manager (RS)

30 LCA Members present.

2. **Apologies** were received from Pam Capon, Anne Corbridge, D Smith, Chris and Hilary Knox.
3. **Minutes** of previous 1<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting were confirmed, accepted, and signed by Lucie Lewis.

4. **Welcome and Introduction – Lucie Lewis (Acting Chair)**

As Chair of the Trustees, I am pleased to introduce you to the other Trustees who are here with me today. Norman Browne, Malcolm Ross, Lesley Dawson, Peter Allen, Judy Ruffell, Peter Wagstaff, Caite Healy and Judi Turner.

As the Board of Trustees, we are very proud to be involved with the Community Centre and to be part of supporting all that it offers to Lymington, Pennington and the surrounding areas. We see the Centre as a critical contribution to local families and their lives.

We greatly appreciate all that Rachel Smith, the Centre Manager and her team of staff do to keep the doors open and keep the Community Centre the welcoming place that it is.

We are also immensely grateful to all the volunteers who help in the Kitchen, Café, Bar, Books Corridor, Maintenance, Grounds, Gardens, Tidal Boutique and other roles within the Centre. We always need more volunteers so please come and help us, however little time you can give.

During this last year, the effects of Covid have gradually reduced and many aspects of the Centre have returned to normal with membership continuing to grow. The Centre now has a sense of buzzing activity when you visit and the range of courses that are offered are extensive, not only our own courses but those run by Brockenhurst College and the New Forest Academy of Dance. The Pre School is also thriving, and we now support Dementia and Parkinsons Groups and our recently opened Tidal Boutique is proving successful. Room Hire is very busy, films and theatre production

are well attended, weddings, wakes, parties, and children's parties are now in the diary with increasing regularity.

We may be on the road to recovery but we still need support with funding for projects and the ongoing Centre Development. Donations and legacies are needed to help us maintain our path forward.

Recently NFDC Have granted us planning permission for the demolition and reconstruction of the Malt Café and relocation of the kitchen and we are very grateful to the NFDC and Lymington and Pennington Town Council for their ongoing support. Future works will also include reconfiguration of the toilets and a 'Changing Places' facility, which Peter Wagstaffe will expand on later this evening, which has led us to a new 'Spend a Penny Appeal' fundraising campaign, which Rachel will talk to you about later.

**5. Presentation of Financial Report for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 – Caite Healy, Treasurer**

I would like to begin by personally thanking my co-trustees, the Centre staff team and volunteers for their invaluable support and professional contribution to the Centre as we have emerged from Covid. I would like to thank SKS Westlake Clarke our Auditors for their support in producing the year end Accounts and advice across the year. We are delighted to have Sanjay Sonay and Ravi Patel with us tonight.

As Hon Treasurer I am particularly grateful to our new accounting team, including Jessica Porter, our new Bookkeeper and Lizzie Finnimore our new Finance Manager for helping us keep the reporting up to date and timely for Board meetings. The Board is very confident in our new accounting team.

Following Laura Buck's retirement last year we have recruited Jade Bell as Bookings Assistant and we are working on a digital bookings and database system that will support the Centre and streamline a lot of time consuming manual processes including Membership subscriptions. Rachel and I have seen this system in place at the Community centre in Ringwood and are optimistic about the benefits.

Our reporting this year represents the second accounting year of the new CIO. Summary of year results are as follows: As the Pandemic receded, the war in Ukraine commenced. The scary prospect of unaffordable utilities costs for the centre loomed over the middle of '22 and Rachel and I had some sleepless nights looking at potential unaffordable energy costs to run this old building. To date our worst fears have abated. Nonetheless, cost control remains a major focus for the Manager and the Board in the inflationary climate we face.

We were very fortunate to benefit from a few exceptional legacies in 2020 and 2021, 2022 did not benefit from the same good fortune, nonetheless we have continued to progress our activity income post Covid and whilst regrettably we did not balance our books for the year end Aug '22, we had the reserves in place to cover our losses.

For the accounting year ending Aug 2019 our net monthly operating Income averaged £23k and our overheads averaged £19k - a healthy monthly surplus which did hold us in good stead when the rainy days of Covid came.

In 2020 our income reduced to £16k pm, in 2021 net income reduced further to £12k- effectively halved. We had some reduction in our overheads but the reduction in costs were not on a par with the fall off in Income.

I am happy to report a return to pre Covid net income for the year end Aug 22, our income averaging £22k, however the upward trend in our costs has outstripped this averaging £25k pm. So we are reporting an operation shortfall for the Aug '22 year end. We have acted in relation to the costs and are already seeing income growth in areas such as the Malt Cafe, the Tidal Boutique charity outlet, and the great news in the Government's budget of further support for the Preschool.

You will have heard from Lucie's report of the numerous initiatives to expand our activities and regenerate income and I am pleased to reassure you that our current income streams since September, our new financial year are year to date covering our costs and contributing a small surplus to the development funds.

Our general fundraising efforts continue. You are aware since 2018 we have embarked on a level of fundraising way outside our comfort zone as a Community Centre. Great generosity has emerged amongst our membership and the organisations that have stepped up to support us and of course - we had what in accounting terms I refer to as " the intervention of Angels -" the amazing legacies recently gifted to us. The efforts continue to raise the substantial funds required to continue with our C70 Development ambitions which Pete will expand on.

Our balance sheet position reduced by £21K in 2022, mainly reflecting increased costs that were not covered by our activity's income. We are happy to repeat and report that this position is reversed for the current year to date.

Though the challenge of future development and operational costs escalating with high inflation is a concern for the Board, I conclude by confirming that the LCA is in a strong financial position and can meet all its financial obligations.

## **6. Members questions on the Report**

- Elizabeth Chell – Asked for the academic year was there was a deficit to August 2022. CH Said there was an operational loss of upwards of 35k for the year. This

was reduced by the reclaim in depreciation net deficit so there was a loss of £21k. We are seeing a recovery and we have put in the necessary cost controls.

- Café Development – Continuing with the contract and seeking funding, we are looking for the intervention of angels.
- James Hoare asked if seasonality affected the Centre. CH reported that the business did tend to be seasonal having Brockenhurst College and the Pre-School through term times only.
- Miggi Sharp asked for an update on Direct Debits. CH Said that we are looking to install Lemon Booking system and we hope to be able to put this in place. This is a hot topic for the Assoc.

## **7. Adoption of Financial statements for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 as presented**

7a. Sanjay Sonay from SKS Westlake Clarke reported that they had audited the Accounts and found everything to be in order and congratulated the Association on their Accounts. CH asked for the adoption of the Accounts as Audited by Westlake Clarke. Lucie Lewis proposed, seconded by Lesley Dawson. Accepted unanimously.

### **7b. Agreement to review auditors to the Lymington Community Association –**

CH proposed that the Board undertake a review of the auditors and this was seconded by Judi Turner. This was agreed and would be arranged.

## **8. Trustees: Existing – Remaining on the board**

Lucie- Jayne Lewis

Norman Browne

Malcolm Ross

Lesley Dawson

Peter Allen

Proposed by Caite Healy and seconded by Malcolm Ross. Unanimously agreed.

**Election of** – Judy Ruffell and Judi Turner – proposed by Caite Healy and seconded by Malcolm Ross. Unanimously agreed.

## **9. Celebrating 70 Development Update – Peter Wagstaffe**

Peter Wagstaffe gave an overview/update of the development of the Celebrating 70 Project advising that the Lift works had been completed and that the next phase of works to be undertaken would be the removal of the Wellington Staircase, with the installation of two new toilets on the first floor and the re-configuration of the existing downstairs toilets to include a “Changing Places Facility”. The next phase would be the demolition and re-construction of the Malt Café.

## **10. Fundraising and Events – Rachel Smith**

Rachel went through a presentation which detailed the forthcoming fundraising events which included the Model Railway Exhibition, the Picnic in the Park and launched the “Spend a Penny” Campaign to raise funds for the new toilets.

## **11. Any other business**

Elizabeth Chell mentioned the issues of heating and energy costs to the Community Centre. This needs to be considered with the works. RS responded by advising that the Association had employed a company called Worldwise who were reviewing all the possible ways of reducing energy costs for the Centre with the development. She also advised that both herself and Lizzie Finnimore were reviewing all existing costings and trying to get the best deals where possible. Actions had been put in place asking users to be mindful of the increase in costs and turn off lights/heating etc where at all possible.

## **12. Closure of meeting**

The members were thanked for their support and the meeting closed.