

Lyndhurst and District Community Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Community Centre, Lyndhurst, on
Friday 22 March 2019 at 11.00 am

59 people were in attendance.

The Chairman, Rob Dewing, welcomed members to the meeting. He said that 2018 was a year in which we were presented with significant challenges but also made a lot of progress to address those challenges and secure a better future. He said that the roof had necessitated considerable urgent repairs which Mike Weston would report on later in the meeting. These had caused us to dip into our reserves and had turned our normal annual surplus into a small annual loss. We had experienced a fall in room hire income so one of the first tasks for our newly appointed Treasurer was to carry out a full financial analysis of our income and costs which highlighted we needed to cut our costs, increase our income and cash in some of our investments.

Rob paid tribute to those trustees who had to leave us due to work or family commitments – Pat Dixon, Lisa Kaljura and Mark Rolle. He reported that John Howell, Chris Willsher, Malcolm Holmes and Sara Shelton had joined as new trustees with John Brown replacing Monica Langston as Treasurer. He paid tribute to Monica who had been involved with the Centre since 1983 and served as a trustee through the late eighties and nineties, eventually becoming Treasurer and working with John Charlesworth to turn the Centre round in the early and mid 2000s. However, during the past year Monica has found it difficult to endure lengthy trustee meetings and finally stood down in November last year. We have prepared a lovely tribute which will be presented to her shortly. He thanked John Brown for taking over as Treasurer and said he had already made a big impact on developing our financial controls and cost reductions in our BT and energy bills.

The Chairman then continued with the formal part of the AGM.

APOLOGIES were received from 23 individuals and groups.

MINUTES of the previous annual general meeting were read, agreed and signed.

MATTERS ARISING. There were no matters arising. It was proposed by Mike Harland and seconded by Brian Hadleigh that the minutes should be accepted.

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

John Brown referred to his report which had been distributed to today's attendees. A full copy of the accounts (8 pages) was available if anyone wished to see this. The summary on the back page gave an account of all we did last year. We had two problems, the first being a decline in meetings' income particularly in the summer months. However, we now have a marketing group of Trustees who are making efforts to improve the occupancy levels by reviewing the activities for both young people and other age groups to try and achieve more use of the rooms. We had been presented with a backlog of maintenance from previous years – roof repairs, plumbing repairs especially the central heating, decorating the Beech Room, repairing the partition doors and lots of plumbing work in the toilets. We replaced a lot of equipment including crockery and utensils and that combined with a smaller income accounts for why we have a deficit rather than a surplus but we have to deal with it and we have to make changes to turn it around. The kitchen is now more efficient with a replacement dishwasher and boiler. There are new chairs in the Beech Room (thanks to everyone who had sponsored the purchase of these) and cushions for the hard chairs especially for film nights (another kind donation). We have renegotiated our gas and electric contracts to reduce our costs. We have £92K in reserve but the roof is our main concern and we must make sure we have sufficient money for this in case we have to repair or replace it. It is essential to have these reserves. We cashed in part of our investment in September because the market was relatively high and we wanted money in the bank to cover repair work. The Chairman thanked John Brown for all his hard work especially the savings on utilities.

CENTRE OPERATIONS REVIEW

The Chairman referred to the staffing changes in the Centre. One of the decisions we made was to change the balance of roles on the administrative and operational fronts. Alana moved to a more operations focussed position, while the office is run by Jackie and Nicky, with Alana, Robbie and Sarah providing operational activities. We've effectively taken out the role of office manager and now rely on greater trustee involvement in management decisions. The new responsibilities have worked out well and on behalf of the trustees he thanked the staff for their tremendous support and flexibility during this time of change. He paid tribute to the fantastic volunteers, many having recently come on board to help us in many ways. These include staffing reception, catering, book sales (with special thanks to Mike and Shirley Lord who have been tireless in their efforts in improving book sales by 40% in the past year), admin, room set up and helping at film nights. He paid tribute to the highly successful Sponsor a Chair campaign conceived and led by Christine Brown. Christine has also been instrumental in leading our marketing group and has carried out some thorough analysis of the room hire rates.

We have reviewed the pricing of our activities, and increased our marketing efforts. He thanked Peter Sheath who had retired from table tennis activities after an involvement with this for many years and reported that Malcolm and Lottie had stimulated great enthusiasm for the table tennis. He then introduced trustee, Mike Weston, to talk about the building and its maintenance.

Mike referred to Alana, Robbie and Sarah now known as the COPS. We have now installed CCTV which is of great benefit. With the aid of slides, Mike highlighted the problems with the roof and the water ingress issues where a number of repairs had already taken place in the kitchen, Linden Hall and Library. He showed the newly refurbished Beech Room with its new ceiling tiles, new chairs and carpet and the Oak Room which has had a reconditioned floor. The Maple Room has been converted into a small office with computer and filing cabinet for the COPS. We have installed new overhead projectors and upgraded the public address system between the Linden and Pine Halls. All electrical equipment has been tested. We have flushed out the heating system which is now much more efficient. The kitchen has undergone an upgrade thanks mainly to Lisa Kaljura and Christine Brown and we have been awarded a 5 star rating for our hygiene. We have installed new wooden dragons to try and encourage better vehicle parking and purchased blackout curtains for the Pine Hall to improve film nights. Rob Dewing thanked Mike Weston for his presentation and achievements in the Centre throughout the year.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman – Rob Dewing – proposed by Pat Wyeth, seconded by Neville Green.

Treasurer – John Brown – proposed by Mike Weston, seconded by Mike Harland.

Secretary – Jenny Green – proposed by Dave Croucher, seconded by Brian Hadleigh.

Trustees – Dave Croucher, Mike Weston – proposed by Nicky Williams, seconded by Neville Green

Trustee – Christine Brown – proposed by Mike Harland, seconded by Rob Dewing

Trustees who had been co-opted during the year - Chris Willsher, John Howell, Malcolm Holmes, Sara Shelton – proposed by Pat Wyeth, seconded by Mike Harland.

Accounts Examiner – Brian Hadleigh – proposed by Mike Harland, seconded by Dave Croucher.

FUTURE OF THE CENTRE

Mike Weston spoke to this agenda item and emphasised that it was important to have a quality business plan to take the Centre through to the next decade and on until the Centre is 100 years old. He said we had already drawn up a draft plan and significant data collection regarding the building has proved this needs further research. Civil engineers are unhappy about the state of the Linden Hall. We can learn from other centres such as Lymington and Brockenhurst. It is a common occurrence for centres to need an upgrade. Lyndhurst is at a disadvantage due to poor design and roof material. The key message is that we need to have a good plan to get the best result rather than a quick fix. We need to adopt a fundraising strategy over the next three years.

We invited members last year to provide us with a wish list and some of the items put forward were a small gym with changing rooms, showers and toilets; a dance and music room; light and heavy craft room; new enclosed porch and many other ideas. He asked the audience for any good ideas. He said he wanted to return to the AGM next year with a provisional drawing and ideas. Mike continued by stressing the need for the correct team members for the Big Project. We need to produce a model with photographs to assess what can be achieved. Approximately 0.5 to 1.5 million pounds is required for the project. We need to seek out people in the community who have the skills and can help with this project eg retired architects and draughtsmen.

Rob thanked Mike for the amount of work he had put into this project and his fellow trustees, especially Christine, who had worked on the marketing of the Centre.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Julie Harding said she had used the Centre and wanted to thank the staff for all they did. It is by far and away the best Centre in the area. She said she would very much like become a trustee.

Mike Lord thanked the Chairman for his comments about the books and to everyone who had donated and purchased books.

Sandy Whittaker encouraged members to come along to the Centre for the Community Lunch. Mike Harland asked if more could be mentioned in the What's On regarding this facility.

Jacqui Reeve asked if we had considered sending the What's On out electronically. Rob Dewing replied that we are looking at the use of MailChimp for this and collecting e-mail addresses.

Betty Palacio asked whether Mr. Selfe had been forgotten as he was the founder of the Centre. Mike Weston replied that we had asked Angela Trend to formulate a history of the Centre.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12.05. There followed a light lunch which gave the audience an opportunity to look at the display boards and socialise.