

Lyndhurst and District Community Association
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Lyndhurst Community Centre
THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2025 at 3 pm

50 people in attendance (a register of attendees was recorded at the door).
Minutes taken by Jenny Green, Secretary

Welcome from Chair

The Chair, Rob Dewing, welcomed members and guests to the meeting and said the afternoon timing of the meeting appeared to be popular. He said the past year had been a busy year thanks to our fantastic local community. Our range of activities has continued to grow through the year, both in room hire, the children's library, and our charity shop and we have made a modest surplus on the year despite carrying out a major roof and insulation project, and the appointment of a new Centre Manager. Our thanks go to Lyndhurst Welfare Charity and a generous donation from an anonymous couple to enable the installation of two new projectors, one in the Linden Hall and the other in the Pine Hall. He then continued with the formalities.

Apologies for absence

There were 7 apologies from individual members and 7 apologies from affiliated groups.

Minutes from the Annual General Meeting held on 28 March 2024.

Proposed by Chris Willsher and seconded by Jacqui Reeve.
Agreed unanimously as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

ANNUAL REPORT

Financial Report

Dawn Callow, treasurer, presented her report which had been distributed with the agenda.

The report covers the 12 month period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024.

Total income was £255,613 in 2024, £81,915 higher compared to 2023. Our main sources of income come from room hire, our charity shop and What's On magazine and fundraising events.

Income from room hire was £98,539 in 2024, £10,608 higher than in 2023. The charity shop raised £35,558 of income, compared to £30,017 in the prior year. Fundraising income of £12,899 raised from quiz nights, skittles, Christmas Fun Day, Boxing Day run and 100 Club was £4,137 higher compared to the income of £8,762 in 2023.

In 2024 we received a government grant of £32,994 from the New Forest District Council for building work and a legacy of £27,550 very kindly received. Total expenditure in 2024 was £233,057 increased by £81,465 from expenditure of £151,592 in 2023. We spent £68,765 in the year to replace roofing and improve the energy efficiency of the community centre. The NFDC capital grant of £32,994 contributed towards this investment. Our staff costs increased by £18,138 to £90,433 in 2024. We invested in our staff including the appointment of a new centre manager. In 2024 we incurred £15,472 of repair costs, including £1,208 which has been utilised by our maintenance provision. Total repairs were £1,297 lower than 2023. Our energy and water costs have decreased by £5,846 to £14,026 in 2024, reflecting the ebbing down of the energy price rises experienced in 2023 and we benefit from our energy efficiency measures.

Reserves policy – All of the Association's funds are unrestricted funds (sometimes referred to as free reserves). During 2024 we reviewed and updated this policy to increase our buffer of normal expenditure from 3 to 4 months. Our reserves policy is as follow:-

- To provide a buffer so that normal expenditure can continue for a period of 4 months in the event of major disruption in the Centre's stream of income; Trustees calculate this to be £36,000 at current levels of expenditure.

Approval of accounts

Proposed by Rob Dewing, seconded by Mike Weston.

Agreed unanimously.

Centre Operations' Review

Mike Weston reported on this item and said he could not remember a year such as the past when we had achieved so much with a £100k spend on the building to make it secure. We now have a clear ten-year plan for the rank and order in which items should be replaced. With the aid of projected photos, he explained the major work which had been undertaken on the roof together with the refurbishment of the solar panels and measures to minimise heat loss throughout the building. This had been a £73K project and thanks were recorded to New Forest District Council for their grant of 50% of the funding for this work. He outlined the following upgrades:

Thermal imaging – Cathy Cook of West Solent Solar Co-operative had helped us to prioritise the energy loss throughout the building.

Secondary doors in the Linden Hall - these had been installed in front of the shutters to minimise heat loss from the back store.

Extra insulation in the boiler room - a smaller drying radiator and extra insulation had been added.

Hive Smart controls for central heating – removal of old thermostats from each room and new system fitted allowing temperature to be controlled from a distance from a tablet or smartphone. Staff can operate these from home to ensure wastage is kept to a minimum.

Lighting upgrade to LED – grants from NFDC and West Solent Solar will reduce costs and provide better lighting in each room with dimmer switches. This work should be completed by the end of March.

Emergency lighting replaced – this work should be 100% compliance by the end of the month.

Kitchen air circulation devices have all been replaced.

New metal door to Food Bank – thanks to Lyndhurst Welfare Charity.

Fuel hopper refurbishment – freeing up space for Lyndhurst Village Decorations and Lights.

Hilary Nicholas proposed a vote of thanks to Mike Weston, seconded by Rob Dewing.

Centre Manager's Report

Rob Dewing introduced the new Centre Manager, Sharon Lawless, who said she had been in post for seven months and was thoroughly enjoying her new role. She thanked all of the volunteers who had worked so hard to maintain the Centre and its activities. With the aid of photos she outlined some of the events which had taken place throughout the year.

Culture in Common – Alvorado, a Brazilian Band, Tango Calor, an Argentinian Trio and Cycle Cinema which had brought life to the Linden Hall with children and adults cycling to power up the film 'Mary Poppins'.

Christmas Fun Day – this event had been a great success with many children coming to see Father Christmas in his grotto with the addition of stalls and games throughout the Centre.

Children's Library – this is going well with loyal volunteers staffing the library and encouraging children to read.

Fairs and Markets – held regularly at weekends which bring the general public through our doors.

Food Bank – an important role in the life of the village for which we thank the ladies who run it.

Holiday workshops for children – successful Hallowe'en workshop with crafts and dressing up. We plan to hold more of these during the school holidays.

Soundwaves – a new session for mothers and babies during which they can relax to music and poems.

Contactless machine – situated in the foyer for donations.

Rob Dewing thanked Sharon for organising the activities for us.

Report of Activities

Rob Dewing addressed this subject and said it was great to see a wide and growing range of activities at the Centre from our Youth Group to the Community Club lunches and weekly coffee mornings. Our room usage has continued to grow modestly though there is still some way to go and our new Centre Manager will help us to develop this further. The charity shop has continued to grow thanks to the hard working team of volunteers led by Margaret Weston. The additional income from this venture, started speculatively in 2022,

has been a major contributor to our annual surplus over the past two years, enabling us to rebuild our reserves and undertake the major roofing project. Whilst this was generously supported with the grant, we still had to fund 50% of the cost ourselves which ate deep into our reserves. Fortunately this was offset by a legacy gift of similar size, so overall our reserves have been able to grow modestly.

During the year we welcomed Sharon as our new Centre Manager but prior to this we said goodbye to Jackie our assistant administrator. He thanked our lead administrator Nicky for her staunch support throughout this period of transition. During the year we have switched to 100% usage of our online booking system and we are still working on further improving our use of this system. He paid tribute to the superb team of volunteers all of whom make a huge difference for the Centre and of course our forty or so What's On deliverers.

Our youth group, The Den, has also continued successfully serving a younger sector of the community with 10 to 18 teenagers regularly attending for a range of activities including table tennis, basketball and other games plus more unusual activities such as a visit from Crazy Creatures with a range of live creatures, and even a trip off site to visit the police station. Thanks were recorded to the leaders of this group.

Fundraising events have become an important part of our calendar with quizzes run by Chris Willsher and David Balfour and Culture in Common events as outlined in Sharon's report,. For the future we will continue to grow these types of activities and add new ones. In the near future, we have our Abba night and Big Village party with tickets available for both events. All of these will contribute to our fundraising as we are very conscious of the need to concentrate on building our reserves as before too long we are going to need £200k to replace the Linden Hall roof and refurbish the Pine Hall roof.

Rob concluded his report by thanking the members for their support and paid tribute to the fantastic team of staff, trustees and volunteers who make it all possible.

Election of Officers

Election of Chair – Rob Dewing. Proposed by Mike Weston, seconded by Keith Partridge
Agreed unanimously.

Thanks were recorded to Jerry Rickcord who has served as our treasurer and has now decided to stand down.

Election of Trustees en bloc -

Dawn Callow (treasurer), Jenny Green (secretary), Chris Willsher, Mike Weston, Margaret Weston, Graham Reeve, John Howell, Sara Shelton, Mark Rolle.
Proposed by Neville Green, seconded by Dave Croucher. Agreed unanimously.

Election of Independent Examiner

Alan Nicholas

Proposed by Keith Partridge, seconded by Mike Weston. Agreed unanimously.

Any other business

Hilary Nicholas enquired about the expansion of the charity shop. Rob Dewing explained this had been discussed at the last trustees' meeting and we are currently working on plans to extend the shop into the Oak Room.

Keith Partridge asked if we could have a drinking water facility in the kitchen. Rob Dewing said we would certainly look into this.

Rob Dewing thanked everyone for attending and called the meeting to a close at 3.50 pm.