

Hebden Bridge Community Association

AGM 26th March 2022 (for the Financial Year 2020/2021)

11.00am

In attendance

Jane Morris, Co-Chair of Hebden Bridge Community Association, introduced the meeting and welcomed all members, visitors, volunteers and staff to the meeting.

{Jane's Co-Chair is Eileen Cann, who is in attendance at the meeting}

1. Apologies

7 apologies for absence had been received from Members of the Association.

Apologies were received from Joanne Brierley (our Auditor from Cresswells)

In attendance:

Staff (&Members): Graham Mynott

Directors (&Members): Jane Morris, Julia Woodhouse, Eileen Cann, Alan Gardner, Damien Woolliscroft, Rachael Swindlehurst (co-opted during the year and being proposed as a Trustee at this AGM)

Members: 11 other members in attendance (per signing in sheet available)

Those present (18) meet the Association's quorum of members in attendance for general meetings (including AGMs).

2. Minutes from last years AGM (10th April 2021)

- The minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting. Proposed by Geoff Tansey, seconded by Richard Needham.

3. Matters Arising

Graham Mynott (Director) reported on the following items:

- *The Old Building*
Graham is going to talk to this item under the Chair's Report (Agenda Item 4).
- *Calderdale Council's 10-year lease ended 31st March 2020.*
Calderdale MBC are still holding over on the lease. Discussions have just restarted (literally: the meeting was on 25th March !). No clear timeline at this point.
- *Member Engagement*
Graham is going to talk to this item under the Chair's Report (Agenda Item 4)

- *10th Birthday Celebrations (celebrating 10 years since the Town Hall was formally opened)*
We will be celebrating on Saturday 25th June 2022 – please put the date in your diary and look out for further details in the next few weeks.
- *Building Refurbishments*
Graham reported that in 2020-2021 we completed a wide range of planned refurbishments across the building:
 - We completely replaced the flat roof membrane outside the Terrace Room – we suffered a leak into the Waterfront Hall after Storm Ciara in February 2020, and this was one of the post-event remedial works required
 - We replaced another section of our roof-line coping stones – this one being above the Courtyard. We also undertook some works to the guttering around the same area following a small leak into the top-floor corridor
 - Another round of redecorations were also completed – including in the Hall after the water ingress
- *Use of the Town Hall for blended meetings*
There was a question about this at last year’s AGM. We have had several examples during the year of successfully delivering blended meetings in the Waterfront Hall. The Quakers being the most notable example – with people in person and online joining the meeting. We are exploring options for how we might upgrade the AV system in the Hall to enable a wider range of possible uses including direct recording from the AV system.

4. The Chairs Annual Report- Jane Morris

- Jane noted that this is the first in-person AGM since April 2019 – the meetings in 2020 & 2021 were held virtually as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Jane commented generally on the high levels of tenant occupancy, which along with maximising the usage of furlough support, the various Government grants and success in securing additional grant funds, like those from Power to Change, have enabled the Association to have a strong financial year despite being closed to the public for just under 6 months.
- Jane commented on the significant changes in both the staff team and amongst the Trustees during the year 2020/2021 and thanked all who have left....but equally looked forward to the possibilities and potential with new Staff & Trustees in place. In particular noting that, in presenting Rebecca Blackwell as a prospective Trustee to this meeting, we have replaced the skill-set we lost at last year’s AGM with Amanda Ward’s departure from the Board.
- In the period since the end of the FY 2020/2021 the Board have re-visited and refreshed the Strategic Aims of the Association. A single sheet of these was available at the meeting. The headlines are not greatly changed from those set before but the specific objectives have been refreshed and will drive activity during 2021/2022.
- Jane finished by all the Staff team and all the Volunteers for all their contributions to the Town Hall over the last 12 months.

Directors Report- Graham Mynott

Graham reflected on the Directors Report and drew the meetings attention to some specific aspects:

- Graham updated the meeting on the Architectural Heritage Funded work. This is a Project Development Grant which will run through to August 2022. We are working with 3 consultants: Anita Hollinshead who is undertaking a community consultation for us (Anita is in attendance at the meeting); Rob Chambers who is a Conservation Architect; and Marc Collett who is undertaking Business Planning for us (Rob & Marc were not able to attend today). There will be another push on community consultation between now and the 10th Birthday celebrations on 25th June and it will close shortly afterwards. We are planning to have an exhibition in the Town Hall during August which will include all the plans for the old building and will be presenting back to the community the consultation responses, and we will be participating in Heritage Open Days again in September
- Graham reported on discussions with Hebden Bridge Partnership. They are winding the Partnership down and will be handing some residual responsibilities over to the Association. Anthony Rae, Secretary of the Partnership, was also in attendance at the meeting and spoke briefly on this too.
- Graham also highlighted that we have a goal this year to increase our member engagement. We currently have 319 members and have a level of engagement through member mailings with a good % open rate, but the community engagement element of the AHF funded project and our own strategic priorities this year will push us to seek improvements. A concern was raised from the floor about our reach beyond the Town Hall and widening our connections: these are things we plan to improve going forward.

Finally, Graham thanked the staff and volunteers that support the Town Hall daily. There is no way that the building could run without the volunteers who support the front desk and help the smooth running of the building. Volunteers are the face of the building for most people who visit the Town Hall. We have between 20-25 volunteers at any one time filling 15 slots a week and we could not operate without them. Our staff team similarly, are fantastic, and every week go beyond the call of duty to make the building work.

5. Financial Update - Graham

Graham highlighted some of the issues that have led to our financial reporting for the year via a short presentation:

- The Town Hall was closed between November 2020 and May 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic so trading performance is inevitably affected.
- On the main points: overall income from charitable activities is up by 6%. There has been strong unit occupancy by tenants throughout the COVID period. Room hire income has not yet recovered to pre-COVID levels overall and it's a similar picture in the Café (including bars, meeting and event catering) – however in terms of both room hire & the café, trade has been strong when we have been open.
- Costs have increased by 5% - staffing costs in particular look much higher but there has been a different treatment of furlough payments between the financial years compared. Savings were achieved on running costs because of the Town Hall's closure. The continuing programme of improvements in the building means that our depreciation has increased again.
- The HBCA accounts showed an operating loss which was more than offset by the grant support during the year giving a healthy net surplus.

- In the Café there was an operating surplus which will mean a substantial donation to HBCA in 2021/2022. The Café will be retaining some of the profit from 2020/2021 to increase its future resilience: this does mean the Café will pay Corporation Tax. This is intended to be a single event, not a regular occurrence.
- Overall, Graham commented that these surpluses are a significant achievement in considering the wider picture.
- On the Balance Sheet we see a more normal year – the current assets have increased because of the surplus and restricted funds being held for a range of projects (this is matched by increasing current liabilities).
- One slide detailed the overall loan picture of the Association showing the current loan terms and the ongoing reduction of long-term liabilities as payments are made to the new Calderdale loan (commenced in February 2020).
- Full sets of accounts are available on our website.

Business Strategy

- The challenge of 2021/2022 is managing the COVID recovery period with much lower levels of Government financial support. We need to return trading to pre-pandemic levels
- There are significant cost pressures ahead: national living wage, energy costs and inflationary pressure on purchases will all have an impact. However progress in YTD has been good and we are confident we will achieve surpluses in both HBCA & the Café once again.
- We want to maintain a lovely building and keeping standards high.
- The next phase for the old building, heritage and celebrating our 10 years since the grand re-opening will dominate this year

There were a number of questions raised.

Our level of reserves was discussed. Graham advised that our General Fund balance of £1.87m is misleading (because it masks the treatment of the ERDF grant) and a truer picture is our cash balance (£275k).

A question was raised about our investment in carbon reduction – this is a goal of the Association as part of the old building project, but will require additional grant funding to deliver greater changes in the whole Town Hall.

There was discussion about underlying Café profitability and around whether expanding opening hours would help including later into the afternoons, Sundays and Bank Holidays (we are not consistently open on Bank Holidays). These have all been discussed internally previously. Opening on Sundays is a long-term goal of the Association but Graham noted that opening more will mean higher staffing costs and that actually generating income from longer opening days / hours is by no means certain. The Association will continue to explore these options.

There was discussion about Member Events beyond the AGM. Graham advised that these are part of the plans for 2022 – details will be circulated through the members mailings.

There was discussion about the Tourist Information Centre and what role the Town Hall can play in filling the gap. Graham advised this is a live discussion but noted that any delivery from the Town Hall could replicate the former TIC offer.

6. Ordinary Resolutions from Trustees & Members

None had been submitted prior to the meeting.

7. Questions & Discussion

No additional questions raised beyond the discussions arising from the Finance Report.

8. New Trustees

Graham referenced the papers circulated prior to the meeting:

- Two existing Trustees – Will Lake & Jane Morris – reach the end of their first 3-year terms but were re-standing for election.
- The Trustees are proposing 2 new Trustees:
 - Rachael Swindlehurst, who has a background in brand marketing & events management, was co-opted to the Board in November 2021 is now being proposed to the AGM. Rachael lives locally.
 - In addition, following a recruitment process, the Trustees are proposing Rebecca Blackwell to the AGM . Rebecca is a Chartered Accountant. Rebecca lives just over the hill towards Keighley.

The meeting universally accepted all the nominations.

We are always on the look-out for new Trustees.

9. Any Other Ordinary Business

None was raised.

Jane thanked the meeting for their attendance at the end of another successful year.

The meeting finished around 12.30pm