



## Minutes:

### **The Trees Community Association Ltd**

### **Board Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 Willingdon Trees Community Centre (Large Hall)**

#### **1. Introductions and apologies**

##### **Present**

- Cllr Colin Swansborough – Trustee, Chair & Treasurer
- Andy Millward – SCDA Community Services Programme Manager
- Rev Merriel Woodward – Trustee
- Lisa Playford – SCDA Senior Development Worker
- Fr Adam Ransom – Trustee
- Cllr Sammy Choudhury - Trustee

##### **Apologies**

- Mary Wright – Trustee

##### **Absent**

- John Rollison – Trustee

#### **2. Minutes of the last meeting, matters arising and declarations of interest**

Colin thanked everyone for attending. Lisa reported apologies have been received from Mary. There were no declarations of interest. The Minutes of the last meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020 were agreed as accurate.

Colin referred to the action points of the last minutes and asked for an update:

Action 1 – completed. A draft website has been built and a preview is on the agenda today.

Action 2 – completed. The Hearing Resource Centre visited and reported our system was outdated and the type that is usually seen in smaller spaces. They were unable to complete a full check of the hearing loop due to a missing plug! This has now been remedied and another visit is to be rescheduled.

Action 3 – carried-forward. Trustees and key volunteers are to be registered on the free ESCC online safeguarding course and Michelle Reid from SCDA to deliver a session on child protection.

Action 4 – carried forward. A refreshed constitution is to be drafted for board consideration prior to community consultation.



Action 5 – carried forward. Advertising to attract a new Trustee for the role of Treasurer locally, on social media, with 3VA and Eastbourne Volunteers is to take place during Spring.

Action 6 – completed. A small, socially distanced community/volunteer event is planned for October.

Action 7 – completed. A new commercial dishwasher has been purchased and installed.

Action 8 – completed. An application was been made to the EBC Devolved ward budget to help with the cost of the dishwasher - £500 awarded.

Action 9 – completed. AGM advertised to key partners by e-mail and community members through posters and social media a month prior to the meeting.

Andy suggested looking at Coop Spaces to Connect and Adam suggested also looking at hearing charities for funding for a new hearing loop.

*Action 1: Hannah to arrange a date for the Hearing Resource Centre to revisit to test and give advice and training on hearing loop. Once Tier 2 Covid restrictions are relaxed.*

*Action 2: Lisa to investigate potential funding to replace hearing loop after recommendations received from Hearing Resource Centre.*

*Action 3: Lisa to register Trustees and key volunteers for the online ESCC Safeguarding course. By the next meeting.*

*Action 4: Michelle Reid from SCDA to deliver a training session on Child Protection. Once Tier 2 Covid restrictions are relaxed.*

*Action 5: Lisa to draft a refreshed constitution for review and comment by Board. By the next meeting.*

*Action 6: Lisa to advertise for new Trustees, including for role of Treasurer, locally on the Noticeboards and our social media, plus through partners such as 3VA and Eastbourne Volunteers. By the next meeting.*

### **3. Centre Update**

Lisa provided an update on Centre activity to the Board (see Willingdon Trees Community Centre Update December 2020). The headlines were:



- Following Government guidance the Centre was (again) temporarily closed between 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 for all but the essential services such as the Eastbourne Foodbank and the Help Point.
- We have come out of this lockdown and into Tier 2 (High Alert) Covid restrictions. We have updated our risk assessments and are liaising with regular hirers to provide advice on what activities can restart and the safety measures required. Sweaty Mamas and Swoove exercise classes have resumed, Church on the Trees worship (not café), Weightwatchers, YMCA youth club and construction scheme courses have resumed. Our gardening club has restarted, but most of the TCA lead activities will resume when we are back to Tier 1 (medium) Covid risk level.
- We had 667 visits during October and compared to 2438 in February pre-pandemic. Occupancy from regular hirers is down from 50% pre-pandemic to 8% and average income from venue hire is down from £1608pw to £358pw. We have lost two of our key regular hirers due to the required social distancing measures making the space unworkable for their activities.
- Help Point – Funding in place until the end of December, but the plan is to continue the service as long there is the need and apply for any relevant funding opportunities as they arise. 29 volunteers have provided assistance to 78 households to date. Currently we have 15 volunteers providing ongoing support to 25 households. Recent requests have focused on befriending and these are being incorporated into the wider SCDA befriending project, Join Together. The Help Point is having a positive impact on our profile locally and within Eastbourne.
- We managed to hold a low-key, socially distanced community event just before the most recent lockdown came into effect. The ‘Pumpkin Patch Pitstop’ aimed to promote the Centre, build volunteer team spirit, make links to local businesses, and provide a free and fun activity for people in our neighbourhood to build community cohesion. 14 volunteers were involved in the planning and delivery, 125 community members attended and feedback was very favourable.
- Other activities we have been working on since the last meeting include activity packs for Help Point/Friday Club members, craft activity packs for Crafty Trees club members, outdoor free jumble sales, outdoor playgroup sessions and the gardening club. Potential new activities that funding bids are being submitted for include a school holiday family café, multi-sports sessions and small grants for struggling families.
- Recent successful funding bids include £5,000 for adult literacy and £5,000 for community skills courses, both from Sussex Community Foundation.



## 4. Finance

Colin provided the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

The balance sheet showed £30,442.92 in funds and the Profit and Loss showed £12,318.53 in profit.

Colin said he was pleased the position was looking reasonably stable for the charity in the short term whilst awaiting the outcome of the application for funding to the National Lottery to help with running and project costs over the next few years.

## 5. Website Preview

Lisa provided a preview of the new draft website to the Board. They liked the simple, clean design and bright images of the Centre. Lisa to send the link for the site (<http://willingdontreestrees.org.uk/wp/>) to Trustees so they can 'road test' it and provide feedback before the site goes live. Lisa advised two community volunteers have been tasked with reviewing and providing feedback on the website. Lynda Clements, the SCDA Communications Officer, has also been asked to review and provide feedback.

Andy asked if there was functionality to add 'bolt-ons' for payments and bookings later on to future proof it. Lisa will check with the designer, Andrew Perry. Adam mentioned that a social media policy was also required in the key documents section.

Lisa advised that a training session was also being planned for herself, Hannah and our digital media volunteer Emma so we'd be able to keep the site updated ourselves moving forward.

*Action 7: Lisa to send the new website link to Trustees so they can 'road test' and provide feedback prior to it going live. By the next meeting.*

*Action 8; Lisa to check 'bolt ons' available for the new website to future-proof it for payment and booking functionality. By the next meeting.*

*Action 9: Lisa to arrange website training session for herself, Hannah & Emma. By the next meeting.*



## 6. Any Other Business

Merriel advised the Board that she would be leaving the area and her role with the charity in the coming summer. She will be sad to leave us and we will miss her enormously!

Colin and the other Trustees thanked Lisa and Hannah for doing a good job in continuing to support the local community over the period of closure. They are pleased with how things are going and confident we can meet the challenges and build the Centre up again.

### Action Summary

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