

ARKENSTALL VILLAGE CENTRE

Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL Meeting held on Tuesday, 17th May 2022

Present: J Shippey, (Vice-Chair), A Biggs, J Cornwell , L Dolman, D Fenner, D Ireland,
G Keene, E Langley, N Miller, S Shippey, S Waller

Action

- 1 **Apologies...**
...for absence were received from: G Wilson (Treasurer), A Wilkerson, S Money, S Findlay, D King, W Newall
- 2 **Minutes of the last meeting, 20th July 2021, ...**
...were approved and signed as a correct record.
- 3 **Matters arising - None**
- 4 **Acting Chair's Report (2021-22) - given by JS**
It is no overstatement to say that this has been a difficult year for the Centre: it has been a difficult year for everyone.
We began the year as the country was coming out of lockdown. We had managed to keep the Centre open for exempt groups – mother and baby, and supervised sporting activities for young people – by following the guidelines, with only one hiring group at a time, reporting advice, social distancing measures and hand sanitisers, so, as restrictions were lifted, we were able to open our doors wider. As the year progressed we found we had lost some of our long-term bookers (like the Auction), retained several (some of whom, like the Art Groups, changed their bookings to make social distancing easier), and gained some new ones because we had remained open when their regular venues had had to close. And I'm happy to report that we issued invoices for over £2,400 for May this year, which is back up to pre-Pandemic levels.
When the Centre first opened, 50 years ago, the principle was that the regular income from hirings and other rents should cover our regular running costs, and that fund-raising income should cover improvements. For some time now our fundraising income has been considerably reduced in line with the diminishing number of events which we organise, and over the last two years, in spite of our best efforts, our regular income has also been well down. In this difficult context I would like to commend our Treasurer who has sought out and secured Government financial support, which has enabled us to continue to meet our running costs, including the support our Caretaker and Cleaner on 100% of their salaries.
Unfortunately, as the Government grants have tailed off and our hiring income is not yet back up to full speed, we have had to access some of our invested reserves to meet the important and urgent maintenance needs of what is now an ageing building. However, we hope we have now eradicated the Main Hall roof leaks, we have repaired the Main Hall heaters, and we have fixed the problems with the Library electrics. We have also brought the Centre into the 21st century by installing high-speed internet, and our new booking system – which is being operated by James, the Caretaker – is working well and is integrated with our website.
CCTV in the car park is installed and running – the one-year review reported that the recordings had been required following two incidents. Anecdotal evidence has shown that anti-social behaviour has not stopped completely, but there have been no incidents reported to the police so no further access to the recordings have been requested.

Fundraising events have not really been possible because of the unpredictability of the imposition of restrictions. Our attempt to have a Winter Concert as a Pantomime substitute raised no interest – however there is a pantomime on the horizon for 2023. And we have had two fundraisers since the Covid restrictions have been lifted: A Jolly Good Yarn, which was a lot of work, but which was successful both financially and socially; and a film showing which was reasonably well attended under the circumstances and which made a small profit.

It is clear to see that this has been a difficult time for the Centre, and with the changing wants and needs of the local community, it is becoming obvious that we are in a time of transition. While we can be optimistic about an increase in income from hiring, maintenance costs are going up rapidly, and the original plan of meeting the costs of improvements through fundraising seems unachievable. To address this, a review of the management of the Centre has been instigated. It is to look at our business model to examine how it can be updated to ensure the viability of the Arkenstall Centre into the future.

- 5 **Treasurer's Report and Adoption of Annual Accounts (2019-20 and 2020-21).** JS
GW was absent, JS (acting chair), talked through the accounts [see *attached*], and what was proposed for next year, where surprisingly the AC may break even! It was agreed that the accounts would be circulated and those present would notify the Treasurer of their approval or otherwise.
- 6 **Appointment of Independent Examiner** – JS is to ask GW who the independent examiner is and then appoint him/her again through e-voting. JS
- 7 **Election of all representatives** – all Organisational Representatives were prepared to continue for another year. All Public Representatives were re-elected.
- 8 **Date of Next Meeting: 16th May 2023 at 7.00 p.m.**