
Brighton & Hove Social Welfare and Educational Trust Ltd

Minutes of Annual General Meeting
held on Thursday 22nd October 2020
online using Zoom at 7pm

There were 20 organisational members of the company present (represented by 21 people)

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| 1. Albion Hill Residents Association | 11. Hereford Court Residents' Association |
| 2. Alnoure Academy | 12. Highcroft Lodge Tenants' Association |
| 3. Brighton & District Bangladeshi Association | 13. Ingram Crescent Residents' Association |
| 4. Brighton & Hove First Ladies | 14. Leach Court Tenants' Association |
| 5. Coldean Independents | 15. North Portslade Residents' Association |
| 6. Coldean Residents' Association | 16. Robert Lodge Residents' Association |
| 7. Craven Vale Community Association | 17. Salaam Football Club |
| 8. Essex Place Tenants' Association | 18. Sussex Syrian Community Group |
| 9. Euro Mediterranean Resources Network | 19. Sylvan Hall Residents' Association |
| 10. Hangleton Community Association | 20. Warwick Mount Tenants' Association |

Individual members of the Company present

Directors: Rob Berry, Muriel Briault, Barry Hughes, Ann Packham, Chris El-Shabba, Jason Williams

Staff: Dani Ahrens, Kate Chapman, Judy Goss, Kate Page, Mireille Shimoda, Rebecca Luton

Chair: Judy Goss; *Minutes:* Rebecca Luton

1. Chair's introduction

Judy welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming, especially in this exceptional year where we need to hold our AGM online instead of in person.

She introduced Rob Berry, Chair of the Management Committee, and all the Resource Centre staff.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from 7 organisational members:

1. Christian Arabic Club
2. Clarendon and Ellen Residents' Association
3. Knoll Community Association
4. Lupus Brighton and Hove
5. Nettleton Court and Dudeney Lodge Tenants' and Residents' Association

6. Woodingdean Tenants' Association
7. Woods House Residents' Association

Apologies were received from 2 directors:

Awel Harun Abdo – Oromo Community in Brighton and Hove
Sohna Sosseh – Brighton and Hove First Ladies

Apologies were received from 1 Resource Centre worker:

Alan Gray

There were no individual apologies.

3. Welcome from Chair of Trustees/Directors

Rob acknowledged that it has been a tough year for everyone including the Resource Centre, and that this year has highlighted how important the Resource Centre is to local communities and groups.

Rob thanked the Management Committee and staff for their wonderful work to keep the Centre's services going throughout the recent crisis period, and congratulated staff on the level of financial security with which we will be going into next year.

He also thanked the Resource Centre's member groups for their ongoing support of the Centre and their amazing work helping their communities.

4. Minutes of B&H SWET Ltd Company AGM 10th October 2019, and matters arising

There were no matters arising. The meeting approved the minutes of last year's AGM. There was one abstention and no objections.

5. Finance and Fundraising Report (Annual Report and Financial Statements year ended 31st March 2020 and financial position)

Finance Report 2019-20

Dani reported on the Resource Centre's finances for the year 2019-20.

Extracts of the accounts had been mailed to all members along with their invitation to the meeting, and the full accounts had been available to view on the Centre's website.

Over the year the Centre had income of **£197,445** and expenditure of **£213,511** with a net expenditure of **£16,066**, most of which was covered by grant funding carried forward from the year before.

The breakdown of income and expenditure was much the same as it has been in recent years, and at the end of March 2020 we had **£46,102** in the bank.

By the end of March we were in lockdown, most of us were working from home, and we had closed the equipment service. We had already lost £1000 worth of bookings at that point, and had no real idea what was coming next.

Finance Report 2020-21 (current year)

The Covid-19 crisis has had a major impact on our income from services. Based on the

figures for the first half of this year, we are projecting that our income from services for the year will be around £30,000 lower than last year.

Because we could see this coming, we decided right at the start of the crisis that we would need to put some staff on furlough. We worked out how many staff hours were covered by our grant funding, and used the furlough scheme to cover the wages of most of the remaining hours. This has meant we have been able to continue to keep everyone on full pay throughout the year.

We have also applied for emergency funding from Sussex Crisis Fund, who gave us £5,000, and from the National Lottery Coronavirus Community Support Fund, who gave us an amazing £58,405. This is short-term funding and has to be spent by 12th February 2021.

About £20,000 of the Lottery funding will go towards wages, helping to keep us afloat once the furlough scheme finishes at the end of this month. That means we can keep any money we make from our own services this year, to give us something to take forward into next year.

The rest of the Lottery funding will be spent on equipment that will allow us to provide services that are safe and useful in this new situation—screens and better ventilation for the building, computer equipment and software so that we can work with groups remotely and from home, new hire equipment to help groups organise safe activities, and (if we have enough money left) some new equipment for the print room. We are also going to replace our aged central heating boiler.

The future

Thanks to these actions, we are currently expecting to start 2021-22 with **£67,821** in the bank.

It is very hard to know what next year will bring. Groups have been using our print service pretty steadily, and we are hoping to start offering some equipment for hire soon, but we are expecting income from both these services to stay low while the crisis continues.

We have been talking to the council throughout. We know that they are doing what they can to support the community and voluntary sector—they have been very flexible with our funding so far, and they are currently considering how they can best support communities all over the city who have been so vital in helping people get through this.

Overall, we think the Resource Centre has done as well as we could hope to do, financially, and we will keep doing what we can to keep the Centre afloat and working to support groups.

The meeting approved the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2020. There were no objections or abstentions.

6. New Members

5 new membership applications had been approved by the management committee at meetings during the past year.

Since the committee's last meeting, a further 2 applications had been made by:

1. Sussex Indian Punjabi Society
2. Very Local Food Hubs

Both groups met the criteria for membership.

The meeting approved all new applications.

Judy welcomed all new members.

7. Election of Trustees/Directors for 2020-21

Judy explained that, at their last meeting on 2nd September, the Management Committee had discussed the practicalities of holding our AGM online. After careful consideration they felt it would be too complicated to hold a full election at an online meeting. They considered the legal obligations of the charity and company, and decided that the best option, given the exceptional times we are living in, would be for the Management Committee to continue for another year, until the AGM in 2021. They passed an extraordinary resolution to this effect.

A copy of this extraordinary resolution was mailed to all members with their AGM invitation, and has been available on the Centre's website.

The current Management Committee introduced themselves, or were introduced in their absence:

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| 1. Awel Harun Abdo | Oromo Community in Brighton and Hove |
| 2. Rob Berry | Coldean Residents' Association |
| 3. Muriel Briault | North Portslade Residents' Association |
| 4. Chris El Shabba | Robert Lodge Residents' Association |
| 5. Barry Hughes | Sylvan Hall Residents' Association |
| 6. Ann Packham | Ingram Crescent Residents' Association |
| 7. Sohna Sosseh | Brighton and Hove First Ladies |
| 8. Jason Williams | Hereford Court Community Association |

Judy thanked the Management Committee for their service and hard work, over and above the norm in the past year. We particularly appreciate their willingness to continue for another year.

The meeting agreed for the current Management Committee to continue for another year, until the AGM 2021. There were no objections or abstentions.

8. The work of the Resource Centre

Kate Page gave a report on the work of the Centre.

It has been a year like no other. Until February, it was business as usual, and our services were consistent, steady and in demand. Then suddenly, everything changed. The Resource Centre team came together to think about what groups needed from us in these new and difficult times and what we could provide.

Lockdown meant there were some immediate and dramatic changes. There were some things we just could not do:

- Keep our drop-in service and equipment hire open
- Have all our staff working from the Centre
- Keep the same number of hours going into service provision.

There were some things we had to do:

- Make the Centre and services safe for staff and users
- Fundraise to secure the future of the Centre

There were a lot of services we could, and did, still run:

- A telephone and email enquiry service four mornings a week
- A doorstep collection print service
- Online information resources
- One-to-one support for our member groups
- Support for B&H council tenant and resident meetings

Advice and information

Although we have had to shut our physical doors, we are still open four mornings a week for email and phone enquiries. In deepest lockdown, this meant a single worker being in the Centre by themselves, but we have gradually been able to build this up. This has remained a busy and important thread of our work.

We have been learning a lot, along with our user groups, about how to cope with the challenges of this unique situation, and have been sharing this learning via our online resources. Our website has pages on funding sources, which we have kept up to date with regular changes, and we have new information resources on:

- Video conferencing technologies
- How to organise online events and activities
- Managing emergency group finances.

The information pages of our website have been viewed by 969 different people in Brighton & Hove between April and September.

Print service

The new situation has emphasised the value of printed information and the Resource Centre's role in providing this. Printed material is a vital alternative and addition to online resources, particularly to prevent the exclusion of people without internet access. There has been a strong demand for our print service and we have been able to run it safely through phone/email discussions and doorstep collection.

Between April and September, we provided printing services for 77 groups, including:

- Newsletters to reduce social isolation and share vital information with people who do not have internet access
- Publicity for neighbourhood based mutual aid groups
- Signage, training materials, safety manuals and recipe books for food projects
- Patterns and instruction materials for sewing projects making scrubs and masks
- Activity packs for children and older people isolated at home
- Lots of our usual flyers, posters, surveys, reports, etc.

We have continued to give our member groups the close attention and expertise of our staff team; advice on design and layout; help with wording, thinking about how best to get their message across; and support with connected issues, via phone and email.

Before this crisis, a lot of our print for non-members was done on a DIY basis with people dropping in to the Centre to use our machines. We have had to adapt this to a 'no contact' service, which we do via email and doorstep collection. We hope in the long term to reinstate the DIY service but it is not yet clear when we will be able to do so.

One-to-one support services

One of the things people value most about the Resource Centre is getting expert help with that practical problem holding your group up. It could be keeping accounts, communicating with your members, raising money, writing policies, or producing a newsletter. The Resource Centre has skills we bring to any practical problem: we are good at listening and experienced at finding practical solutions, and our focus is always on helping the group achieve their aims. In the past, groups would have come into the Centre or we would have visited them at home. We have had to adapt to use phone calls, Zoom or WhatsApp and this has been successful. But we have really missed seeing groups in the Centre, and we are pleased to say we can now do some one-to-one sessions in the Centre.

Overall, we have done work for 92 different groups since the crisis began. There are two areas in particular that have been important during this time:

- Help with remote communication, learning zoom
- Help raising money for emergency support

Since April 2020, the Centre has helped with 24 funding applications. 12 of these were successful or partially successful and the remaining 12 have not had a response yet. Altogether, groups have raised over £60,000 for their own emergency response work. For example, Sussex Syrian Community Group raised £10,000 from the Sussex Crisis Fund, to support the basic needs of Syrian refugee families struggling to afford food and cover their bills due to the economic impact of the crisis.

Resident meetings

We have continued to support resident meetings throughout the crisis, and have helped groups to adapt to the new situation. We have helped people learn to use Zoom and run Zoom meetings, and we have organised online meetings and provided our usual minute-taking support. We have been able to help Resident Association representatives to keep communicating and having their voices heard by the Council during this period.

Upsides and the future

We can always learn something from every situation, and this year has reminded us of the amazing things that people do when faced with the most difficult of circumstances. We have seen so many groups rise to the occasion, to provide essential support and food to their areas and communities, for example, Craven Vale, Robert Lodge, The Bevy Pub, Sussex Syrian Community Group, and Salaam FC. We have seen new groups spring up to provide mutual aid and support all over the city, and we have been reminded how important community activity is: our city wouldn't be the same without the energy, commitment, enthusiasm and sticking power of small community groups.

The last six months has shown us that the Resource Centre can continue to provide useful resources even in very difficult circumstances. We have moved on since the start of lockdown, and we are now:

- Offering one-to-one sessions at the Centre;
- Having more staff working in the Centre;
- Looking at ways of getting our pool of equipment used safely.

We know we are not at the end of this crisis yet, and there are new challenges still to come for the Resource Centre and our user groups. One of the most difficult things is uncertainty about the situation, how long it will last, and what will happen over winter. In the coming months, we will continue to ensure that the Centre's resources are focused on supporting groups while the pandemic and lockdowns continue, and supporting groups getting restarted as we come out the other side.

We are being strongly supported in all our work by our Management Committee and all our user groups, and we are confident we can overcome the next challenges and continue to work with our users to create strong, active community groups and activities.

9. Close of meeting

Judy thanked everyone for their support and contributions to the meeting. She reminded everyone that the Resource Centre is still open for phone calls and emails on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays between 10am and 1pm, and that if groups need any help or support to get in touch. The meeting closed at 8pm.

These minutes were approved by the Annual General Meeting of Brighton and Hove Social Welfare and Educational Trust Ltd on _____ (date)

Signed

on behalf of the Management Committee
