

COMMUNITY FIRST

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Wednesday 6th October 2021 held online due to COVID-19 restrictions and isolation guidelines

PRESENT:

William Wyldbore-Smith	Vice President
Ken Whatley	Vice President
Steve Boocock	Trustee (chairing)
Jane Rowell	Vice Chair
Leah Campbell	Trustee
Piers Dibben	Trustee
Edward Heard	Trustee
Ginnie Keen	Trustee
Sanjeen Payne-Kumar	Trustee
Tony Pooley	Trustee
Merope Sylvester	Trustee
Victoria Walsh	Trustee
Lynn Gibson	Chief Executive

A total of 77 guests, trustees and staff were in attendance for the event. *(A full list is available on request from Community First's offices.)*

1. **WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS by Steve Boocock, Trustee of Community First**

Steve chaired the meeting in the absence of James Moody who sent apologies that he was unable to attend.

Steve welcomed everyone present to Community First's Annual General Meeting and introduced Lynn Gibson, Chief Executive, and Jane Rowell, Vice Chair and Chair of the HR Committee.

He thanked all the staff and volunteers of Community First on behalf of the Trustees for their continued hard work and commitment over the past year in what have been exceptional circumstances.

Sarah Troughton, HM Lord-Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire and President of Community First was unable to attend the AGM due to a prior engagement. She sent a message in which she thanked Lynn Gibson, all the staff, volunteers, and Trustees for their work in keeping the

charity running and acknowledged the wide diversity of projects that Community First is involved in which has a huge benefit to so many in the county.

Sarah thanked Martin Hamer, the former Chair of Trustees who stood down last year after many years of service and support to the charity and welcomed James Moody to the role of Chair.

James Moody was unable to attend the AGM due to another commitment but had prepared a short film to be played in which he welcomed everyone and expressed the importance of not only reflecting on the challenges faced over the last 18 months but also celebrating the resilience within communities. He thanked the staff for their exceptional dedication and contribution in supporting these communities.

James also thanked the Trustees for their support of both the charity and to him personally in his new role as chair. He paid tribute to Jane Rowell and Tony Pooley, two long serving Trustees who are today stepping down, and thanked them for their dedication and commitment, and for playing such an important role in helping Community First to thrive.

2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNUAL REPORT

Lynn's presentation covered the year April 2020 to March 2021.

Lynn thanked everyone for attending the AGM and in particular Carolyn Carter, Chair of the LINK schemes who kindly offered to speak about the service later in the meeting. Lynn invited questions at the end of her presentation.

She reported that despite the difficulties of the pandemic, we have been able to continue to support people across the county and she thanked everyone in the team. There will be a film presentation shown at the end of this item to highlight some of the work carried out.

Youth Action Wiltshire (YAW) has continued to work throughout the pandemic to ensure young people and some of those facing the most challenges had the vital support needed and the Building Bridges Programme has supported over 350 participants during the last year.

Our community links are extremely important, and we have continued to provide advice and support to the key networks of the LINK schemes, Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC), village halls and youth clubs.

With partners, we developed some new delivery programmes including a rural youth programme which will see us working in five areas in the county looking at young people's needs, current provision and hoping to commission new services.

Lynn expressed her personal thanks to Jane Rowell and Tony Pooley at their last meeting as Trustees for all the support given, and also to Martin Hamer and Brian Clake who have stood down as Trustees since the last AGM after many years with Community First and seeing through some significant events for the charity.

Lynn thanked our Patron, HRH Duchess of Cornwall who has continued to support us and we are delighted that she has agreed to continue in her role as Patron for the foreseeable future.

Financial Overview

The organisation remains resilient and in the last financial year, we sourced £302k of new income for services in the county. Our reserves remain within the range set of 3-6 months, and we have a designated fund which holds a legacy received a few years ago that is set aside to be used for a specific purpose, yet to be decided but this offers a further safety net if required.

We continue to carry out our rural work and hope to have confirmation in January 2022 of further funding from DEFRA.

Our fundraising target for 2021/22 is £357k, and £270k has already been raised so we are on track to achieve this. This includes a 5-year programme for Splash through The National Lottery Community Fund: Reaching Communities England.

We maintain a broad base of funding streams which includes 10% from local authorities, 17% from Landfill Community Grants which is only held by us until it is distributed out for community programmes and 32% of central government funding including the Building Bridges Programme.

Our largest area of expenditure across the charity is in tackling disadvantage through YAW and Building Bridges.

Community First Trading Limited

The services provided by the trading arm of Community First play an important role in generating income which is transferred across to the charity to be used for charitable purposes.

- ***Community Insurance***

We are partnered with Zurich to offer specialist insurance for parish councils, village halls and community buildings, playing fields and LINK schemes. Details can be found on our website <https://www.communityfirst.org.uk/insurance/> and the contact for this service is Jess Emery jemery@communityfirst.org.uk.

- ***BOLD***

Our PR and Marketing service offers professional creative services including print and digital design, branding, websites design and bespoke campaigns. Details can be found on our website <https://www.communityfirst.org.uk/bold/> or by emailing Lynn Gibson lgibson@communityfirst.org.uk

New Initiatives

Kickstart Scheme

The Kickstart Scheme, launched by the government, provides funding to employers to create jobs for young people receiving Universal Credit. We are a Gateway organisation and have 16 not-for-profit partners in our consortium who have provided 28 new jobs for young people and there are a further 32 jobs planned before the end of March 2022.

Priorities for the Next Year

Premises

Following a period of homeworking which has been successful, we plan to consider the feasibility of a hybrid model for office and home working, and the possibility of renting out spare office space.

Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre and Linkenholt Adventure Centre

Our income stream through Oxenwood was affected by the pandemic but remained a vital resource during the crisis to enable YAW delivery to be carried out. Bookings are again starting to come in.

We plan to take on the Linkenholt Countryside Adventure Centre later this year which is currently run by The Blagrove Trust and will look to grow and develop both sites together, including a capital project to potentially refurbish Oxenwood.

Integrated Care System

There is currently a national reform of health and social care with the Integrated Care System replacing the existing Clinical Commissioning Groups fully by April 2022. The VCSE sector will play an important role in looking at what is needed and how organisations can work together. Community First has a seat on the Integrated Care Alliance (ICA), and alongside Wessex Community Action, we have formed a voluntary sector leadership group of 25 organisations with the hope of creating a single point of contact for the ICS/ICA and developing a mechanism that supports engagement, commissioning and partnership working.

Young Carers Clubs

We have just launched Young Carers 'place based' respite sessions, local regular clubs similar to youth clubs. Lynn thanked Carers Support Wiltshire for their support to offer working with other organisations and providers to look at, and improve, health and social care locally.

Community Networks

It remains a priority to sustain our strong community networks including youth clubs, village and community halls and support WALC.

Building Bridges Programme

Extension of the programme has been confirmed to June 2023, and we will be looking at what succession plans may be put in place, the Shared Prosperity Programme and "Levelling Up" agenda.

Lynn introduced Harry Tipple, Head of Community and Partnership Development who presented a summary of the work undertaken by the Community Development team and the achievements in a challenging year. This included:

- Our partnership work with Macmillan Cancer Support
- Community Information Champions project delivered in partnership with Wiltshire Council
- Youth Consultant project funded by Wiltshire Council
- Homes of Our Own in partnership with Wiltshire Community Land Trust, Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council
- Village Halls and Community Buildings support including the Get Out Get Active project in partnership with Wiltshire and Swindon Sport (WASP)

- Wiltshire Association of Local Councils work providing advice, support and training to Councillors and Clerks
- Landfill Community Grants
- MiDAS training
- LINK Schemes and Community Transport

Harry introduced Carolyn Carter, Chair of Chippenham LINK Scheme and Chair of the LINK Schemes, who provided an overview of the service and meeting the challenges faced during the pandemic with the support of Community First. She stressed that more volunteers are always needed, and anyone interested should get in touch with their local scheme.

Harry thanked Carolyn for attending this evening.

Dawn Whiting, Service Development and Splash Manager, presented an overview on the work and challenges met over the last year including feedback from young people highlighting the positive impact the services make to their lives. This included:

- Providing welfare checks and additional support during lockdown with provision of online activities during periods of lockdown and heightened anxiety. Referrals to our services have not lessened and, at a time when our capacity was reduced, the demand for our services increased.
- The sole use of Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre to deliver our group activities when permitted, being confident that there was a rigorous cleaning programme in place and young people have been safe whilst with us.
- the Wiltshire Young Carers service, in partnership with Carers Support Wiltshire, has provided face-to-face respite and support groups, webinars, extensive mentoring programmes and access to coaching.
- Splash delivered face-to-face group work sessions and webinars, and young people have engaged in one-to-one support through coaching, mentoring and counselling. The Young Victims of Crime programme has been extended for another 12 months.
- Project Inspire continues to support young people secure a place in employment, education or training.
- Youth Clubs were forced to close at times during the last year but as restrictions have eased, we are working with them to provide a diverse range of activities whilst meeting the challenges of funding and resourcing.

Dave Potts, Building Bridges Programme Manager, and Gayle Harper, Building Bridges Senior Support Worker, presented an overview of the programme which works with partner organisations to provide support to those furthest from the world of work to access the skills, education and experience they need to be able to achieve and sustain ongoing employment. We are coming up to the 5th anniversary of the launch of the programme and it remains one of the highest performing projects of its type in the country. Testimonials were shown which reflected the benefits the support provided participants and highlights the importance of working collaboratively with our partners.

Lynn thanked the team and introduced a short film that was shown reflecting on the challenges and celebrating the achievements over the last year. This can be found on our website www.communityfirst.org.uk/ and on You Tube [Community First - Annual Review and Celebration Video 2021](#)

There were no questions raised.

Steve thanked everyone for an informative presentation which highlighted the breadth of work that Community First has carried out over the last year and plans moving forward. Given the resources available to us and the challenging circumstances, he expressed that it has been a remarkable achievement and a great credit to Lynn and the whole team. He also thanked all those involved in putting together the AGM.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were 15 apologies reported.

4. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 14th October 2020

The minutes were circulated with the meeting papers. No questions were raised. Steve proposed acceptance of the Minutes of the AGM on 14th October 2020 as a true record. This was seconded by Jane Rowell and unanimously agreed by the meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

6. PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

The Report and Financial Statements were circulated with the meeting papers. No questions were raised.

Steve proposed acceptance to the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2021. This was seconded by Jane Rowell and unanimously agreed by the meeting.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Steve thanked David Owen & Co on behalf of Community First for their support for the year 2020/21. Steve proposed the re-appointment of David Owen & Co for the financial year 2021/22. This was seconded by Sanjeen Payne-Kumar.

There were no other nominations and the meeting unanimously agreed that David Owen & Co be re-appointed.

8. ELECTION OF HONORARY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

- a) **President:** Steve proposed that Sarah Troughton be re-elected as President for this coming year. There were no other nominations.

The nomination was seconded by Sanjeen Payne-Kumar and unanimously agreed by the meeting.

- b) **Vice Presidents:** Steve proposed the re-election of The Earl of Radnor, James Layton, Ken Whatley, and William Wyldbore-Smith, Vice-Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire, as Vice Presidents.

The proposed nominations were seconded by Merope Sylvester and unanimously agreed by the meeting.

It was noted that George McDonic, MBE had sadly passed away earlier this year and Community First wished to acknowledge his many years of service to the charity.

- c) **Trustees:** Steve proposed the election of Leah Campbell, Edward Heard, Ginnie Keen MBE, Sanjeen Payne-Kumar, Merope Sylvester and Victoria Walsh as Trustees.

The proposed nominations were seconded by Piers Dibben and Tony Pooley, and unanimously agreed by the meeting.

9. CLOSING REMARKS

William Wyldbore-Smith expressed, on behalf of the President and the Vice Presidents, the great privilege it is to be involved in this wonderful organisation that does so much across the county and in what has been a particularly difficult year. He wished to pass on thanks to all.

Steve thanked everyone present for their attendance and continued support of Community First.

7.20pm END OF FORMAL BUSINESS