

## **Draft Minutes of WCA Annual General Meeting 23 November 2016**

**Merton Art Space, Compton Rd, Wimbledon, SW19 7QA at 7.15pm**

1. Attended: **Trustees:** David Hall (Chair), Roger Drage, Bill Lake. **Secretary:** Jackie Chapman

In addition to the trustees and secretary, there were 19 others in attendance at the AGM. The Chair declared the meeting quorate.

2. Apologies: Beau Fadahunsi (MVSC), Jeff Graves (Carlton Theatre Group), Audrey Jeffrey (Wimbledon Flower Group).
3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 30 November 2015

### **The minutes were approved at the meeting**

4. Chair's annual report for 2015/16

The Chair described the progress achieved during the year, and explained the Trustees' vision for the charity as a strong "virtual" presence in the community following the launch of the website, Wimblecomm. He explained this vision within the context of the charitable objectives of the organisation.

The full report is attached at Appendix 1.

5. The Financial Report and Statements to March 2016

The accounts which have been circulated and previously placed on the website have been put together on an historic basis.

The Chair explained how the charity's funds have been invested with CCLA to raise dividend income to fund its activities.

The Financial report is attached at Appendix 2.

The Financial Statements have been examined by Independent Examiner, Warner Wilde, and were recommended for approval by the Trustees at a meeting on 3 November 2016.

**These were agreed at the meeting.**

6. Appointment of Independent Examiner

**It was agreed at the meeting that Warner Wilde be reappointed as Independent Examiner for 2016/17**

7. Resignations and appointments of officers

No changes to officers are reported. The minimum number of trustees is three.

As indicated in the Chair's Report new trustees may be recruited during the year depending on the particular skills required. The Chair stressed that the future development of the charity would benefit greatly from new trustees who had different but relevant skills to the existing trustees.

8. Any other business – questions/comments from the floor

Leigh Terrafranca of WEHRA commented that the alternative strapline, mentioned in the Chair's Report, *Connecting People, Places, Pastimes and Passions*, seems to capture the aim and vision perfectly.

The Chair thanked all attendees for coming to the AGM.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm, followed by a Panel Discussion centring on the role community space should play in the future of Wimbledon.

## **Appendix 1 Wimbledon Community Association**

### **Item 4: Chairs AGM Report 2016**

#### **Our legacy**

Some of you may not know much about the WCA so I thought it may be useful to explain a bit about its history. The WCA was first set up in 1946 and, after spending its first decade or so homeless, it became physically located in St Georges Road in the mid-50s. The WCA is now in its 70<sup>th</sup> year. It is believed that the original organisation linked up and communicated with several hundreds, (even thousands) of people in Wimbledon and the surrounding area.

It ran the old centre for over 50 years. However it fell into disrepair over the last decade and at the SGM in July 2012 it was agreed to dispose of its interests to the Council. Following the final handover of the site in 2013 the WCA has ironically found itself homeless again.

The organisation adopted a different constitution in 2000 when it reincorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG). The Memorandum and Articles, adopted at that time, included the following objects (as appear on the screen behind me):

- (a) To promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Wimbledon and the surrounding area without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions, by associating together the said inhabitants and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation, with the objects of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants;
- (b) To establish or secure on the establishment of, a community centre and to maintain and manage the same (whether alone or in co-operation with any local authority or other person) in furtherance of these objects;
- (c) To promote such other charitable purposes as may from time to time be determined.

Since the 2014 AGM the trustees have primarily focussed on objects a) and c) whilst keeping an eye out for opportunities to invest the available resources in alternative physical premises in line with object (b). In deciding to set up a new website with a focus on existing organisations with community space we have taken a broader interpretation of our role to 'provide facilities'.

If we decide in future that we should not or cannot carry out (b) – ie providing a centre - we believe it will be necessary to take time out to review the constitution more widely as well as these objects. At the same time, we believe it would be useful to adopt a more up to date model in conjunction with the general constraints set down by the Charities Commission.

Nevertheless, we feel that the original broad aims of the organisation can be upheld and now we are becoming re-established under our new guise we think it would be appropriate to revisit where we have got to and focus on finding different ways to link up with ‘the inhabitants of Wimbledon and the surrounding area’.

### A Vision?

So. A vision? The process of linking up with various different organisations, including several churches, has enabled the WCA to re-establish itself through the leaders and administrators of those organisations, each of which is itself connected to many of the local inhabitants. For practical purposes we focussed initially on those in the immediate Wimbledon vicinity but we have chosen to define the ‘surrounding area’ as Merton at this point and are now reaching out to that wider geographic area.

The initial contact with the first group of organisations was led by the trustees but with the help of our new Community Development Executive who started in May this year, we are now hoping to reach out further to that wider group and through them to all inhabitants in the area. By ‘inhabitants’ this need not just mean those who live in the area but also those who work or engage socially in the area.

The remaining part of our primary object refers to a mission of working with others in ‘a common effort to advance education... in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation’. We have translated that into a new strapline ‘connecting people and venues’. But in practice we think that could be extended to connecting people, places, pastimes and passions!

We are interested not only in promoting the spaces that are available to use but the events that they are used for in our new Community Noticeboard section as well as being a forum for important local issues – hence the Panel session later tonight.

Whilst many other organisations, not least statutory bodies like the Council, have a role to represent the local inhabitants and provide various services there is arguably still an important need for organisations such as the WCA, particularly at a time when public resources remain constrained, to provide additional links to the community, beyond the aims of specific organisations. Our current mission is set out in the leaflet. **However... it would be nice to think that the WCA could act as a beacon for other communities ‘without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions’ at a time when the need for connecting disparate groups is so high on the national agenda.**

### Only connect

With the advent of the internet and social media over the last two decades the initial connection many people make is through their computer and increasingly their phone.

It is perhaps appropriate then that the WCA, as a 'homeless' organisation, has to focus itself on being a virtual body, at least for the time being, in much the same way as many organisations have adopted by choice.

One of the aims of our website will be to make it more accessible and provide the tools for people to want to engage with others, and by so doing improve 'the conditions of life' of the local inhabitants. In conjunction with the website we are now embarking on establishing a social media presence, which again, is almost a pre-requisite for any organisation with or without premises these days. We have made a start but are aware there is more to do.

We are seeking to further develop our new branding with a new name for the website – **Wimblecomm** – in order to distinguish it from the organisation, ie the Wimbledon Community Association. As has been pointed out to us, the initials WCA also represent other more prominent local organisations such as the Wimbledon College of Art!

Notwithstanding the over-riding emphasis on virtual tools we will also be producing further leaflets and other documents to publicise the organisation. A copy of our first leaflet has been made available tonight and will be distributed in various places around the borough.

### **Membership**

As with many not for profit / charitable organisations, the current constitution includes for membership as well as trustees / directors. Membership, as defined by the current constitution, is largely within the remit of the trustees.

The issue of membership has been a tricky one for the trustees to grapple with since the old centre closed and we have adopted a fairly, open policy to membership for the purposes of the AGMs since 2012.

Given our change of focus towards working with other organisations that have community space, we are assuming that all such organisations (along with the current, former trustees and secretary) are members.

We also have a long list of organisations that used to be users of the old centre some of whom were paid up annual members and others who were simply users. We have maintained contact with a number of these and are happy to continue with them as members but are minded that we would like to open this out and engage with more organisations locally.

We also feel it would be valuable to reintroduce the idea of individual members. The type of membership might be adapted and varied according to the powers associated with that membership depending on whether there is any payment involved and what one receives for that membership.

**Consequently alongside the revised constitution we want to develop a new membership structure which provides scope to open the organisation out to a wider group.**

Given the differing demographic profile of the borough we are keen to embrace the original charitable mission to embrace all members of the wider catchment area.

## **Trustee and staff recruitment**

At the AGM in September 2012, Roger Drage and myself joined returning / existing trustees, Stephen Ashcroft and Dave Little. Dave stood down the following year and was replaced by Bill Lake. Stephen stood down in March 2015 after many years of service to the WCA. He has yet to be replaced as constitutionally we can continue to operate with just three trustees. Jackie Chapman also joined as Secretary in September 2012 replacing Fran O'Toole.

All trustees and the new Secretary have been working for the WCA on a voluntary basis. After the initial intense period negotiating the deal with the Council, the workload became focussed on getting the new rebranded organisation re-established and the website set up and running, alongside the usual reporting and financial requirements.

Whilst we now have a part time Community Development Executive and have been working closely with our contracted website designer the input required from the volunteers has been considerable.

Each of us have generic business skills as well as some specific skills and experience but as with any voluntary organisation the challenge is to harness the skills you have available as well as those within the wider community.

**We are therefore keen to further develop our trustee base and draw on other locally based volunteers of all ages who have skills in a variety of areas, not least on managing websites, dealing with social media, reviewing the constitution / membership, reporting on local events and other communication skills.**

Whilst we have a capital sum, we have chosen to invest that and use the dividends to support our website, staffing and other costs for the good of the community. However, this is still a relatively small revenue sum (less than £25,000 per annum) and if we want to further maintain the rich local legacy and extend the organisation it will need extra volunteers to bring their skills, experience and local knowledge to bear.

We will shortly be advertising for future trustees to share with us in this new start for the WCA and if anyone here is interested in finding out more please do feel free to speak to us tonight or get in contact. If we choose to develop the organisation further and generate extra income streams there may be scope to add to existing staffing and become a more established local employer.

## **Conclusion**

The WCA has a rich legacy and the current trustees have worked hard to re-establish the charity so that it remains an important part of our local community in Wimbledon and across Merton. We hope you will continue to engage with us and the website through the local organisations you work with and represent and in due course we are able together to return the WCA to the former glories of its heritage in its new more virtual guise.

## **Appendix 2 Wimbledon Community Association**

### **Item 5: Financial review 2016**

The accounts before you have been prepared by our Independent Examiners, Warner Wilde (as they have been for the last 5 or 6 years) and reviewed by the trustees at our last trustee meeting on 3 November. We fall beneath the threshold which is required for a full audit.

Following the closure of the old St Georges Road centre in 2012 and the disposal of our interest to Merton Council in 2013, the trustees initially placed the funds in a deposit account.

However with the fall in interest rates we felt it was better to look at investing the funds. After investigating various options we decided to invest a significant proportion of those funds (£600,000) via the CCLA during 2015. CCLA manages over £1bn of funds for churches, charities and local authorities.

The balancing sum (around £150,000) is currently kept in two separate bank accounts (to protect it up to the maximum compensation level).

Our costs in 2015/16 were around £7,000 and our income was over £12,000 (mainly CCLA dividends). The performance of the CCLA funds was affected by the subsequent downturn in the market in 2015/16 resulting in a reduced valuation at March 2016 (which we have reported in the accounts as a loss of £22,000).

However, the recent upturn in the markets has largely recovered the original position and at the end of September 2016 our funds were worth £635,000 (an improvement of £57,000 over 6 months).

The CCLA Investment also generates dividends and in a full year we are budgeting for an income of around £22,000. This is now being used to support the development of the website, the cost of our new Community Development Executive (Susanne who started in May) and other expenses including this event.

In the short term, we expect the CCLA Dividend to be our main income. The WCA does not intend to charge charitable and non-profit organisations supplying space for the use of the site. This policy will be kept under review as the website and our services further develop.