

## Draft Minutes of WCA Annual General Meeting 28 November 2018

The Mansel Road Centre, Mansel Road, Wimbledon, SW19 4AA at 7pm

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

In addition to the trustees and secretary, there were 6 member organisations present as follows:- Lynette Shanbury and Hilary O'Connor, *Polka Theatre*, Kathie Arundell, *Carlton Theatre Group*, Jon Shepherd, *U3A*, Gail Moss, *Wimbledon Choral Society*, Rebecca Broadley, *St Mark's Church Wimbledon* and Jil Hall, *South Park Gardens* (until 7.15)

Two other members had registered their agreement to vote by proxy in line with the Chair.

The Chair declared the meeting quorate.

Others in attendance were: Susanne Ollig (*WCA Community Development Executive*), Hayley Ormrod (*Councillor Trinity Ward*), Helen Clark-Bell (*Love Wimbledon CEO*).

2. Apologies: Sabrina Sostero (*WCA Trustee*), Naomi Martin (*New Horizon Centre*), Daria Lucic (*Sodexo*), Sally Bisson (*St Mary's*), James Holmes (*Councillor Trinity Ward*), Genevieve Farrell (*WCA Community Development Officer*).
3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 6 December 2017

The Chair said that the first prize at last year's AGM, awarded as part of the 2017 Survey, still remains unclaimed. It will be set aside for another prize / gift.

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

4. Chair's annual report for 2017/18

The Chair presented his report of achievements over the last year and challenges for the future. See Appendix A for the full report.

This was followed by discussions from the floor:

- Hayley Ormrod congratulated the WCA team on the activity during the year. She sought further clarification on what activity had taken place in terms of liaison with potential partners to provide physical community space. After all, although Wimblecomm may be a useful community tool, the financial assets held by the charity are of a significant value.  
David explained that we had discussions with two organisations during the year. Firstly, supporters of Merton Hall were seeking to take control of the building and run it as a community resource via an Asset of Community Value bid. David and Roger had initially met with them and David had a subsequent meeting with them and Locality (not the GLA as mentioned at the AGM). We concluded that we were unable to provide the personnel resources they needed to support them on the project especially in the timescales required.  
The second discussion was with the Polka Theatre who are seeking financial and community support for the funding applications for their redevelopment. David and Roger explained that whilst the WCA has provided written support for the project, we have regrettably been unable to make a financial commitment at this time whilst we are still undergoing a review of Wimblecomm and preparing our business plan.

Existing personnel are also stretched at present. The timetable for the business plan and review extends to the end of February 2019.

- Helen Clark-Bell asked if all the venues run by our members are fit for purpose, and being used fully.  
Roger explained that the WCA had been in regular contact with many of the members in the last year, and he and Bill had offered to meet with the top five in terms of receiving referrals from Wimblecomm. This will be to assess the nature of the referrals they are dealing with, and what sort of people are finding them via Wimblecomm. David explained that we surveyed our members to try to gauge how their venues are being used last year and an updated survey had been launched earlier that day including to all new members who had joined in the last year.
- Helen Clark-Bell also asked if we know how many of the 1,000 user visits lead to bookings.  
It was explained that we do track the number of direct referrals from Wimblecomm but can only use surveys and discussions to inform how many convert to bookings. We are also developing content on the site which should lead to an increase in the number of visitors.
- Gail Moss asked if we'd considered digital advertising.  
Susanne said that we use social media via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and we have looked at online sites to advertise. Gail suggested AFC Wimbledon's website. Susanne said that our member venues do reciprocal advertising for us, and also displayed our fliers.
- David asked if his vision for a local community news space which was largely dependent on volunteers was being too dreamy or fanciful. Gail said that it did seem a little nebulous in that it's not as obvious what volunteering for the WCA would involve, unlike other organisations eg Wimbledon Choral Society or AFC Wimbledon, where activity is more readily linked to an identifiable passion. Liz Osako replied that she'd got involved because she could see the networking opportunity offered by the organisation. Susanne pointed out that one of the things we are trying to do is generate help for any organisation who needs to hire out their space eg schools. We are also using events and event reviews to help connect to venues, and that Wimblecomm regularly focuses on individual venues. It is hoped that Wimblecomm becomes an online focal point to share advertising of events taking place in the venues. Helen Clark-Bell said it would be a real challenge to keep up with the number of events taking place. This was acknowledged, but it was noted we are not yet at that point.

## 5. The Financial Report and Statements to March 2018

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value

The Chair explained that the year's income included a reversal of a long-term creditor from about ten years ago, and therefore does not indicate cash income. The charity's funds have been invested with CCLA to raise dividend income to fund its activities, and drew attention to the increase in investment valuation, which has increased further since the year-end.

A question from the floor was raised about the nature of the storage costs. David explained that the charity pays for two separate storage spaces; one is a garage lock-up which includes former office furniture and other items from the old centre, and another is a Big Yellow space which includes documents, archive material and various other items from the old centre.

The Financial Statements have been examined by Independent Examiner, Warner Wilde, and were recommended for approval by the Trustees at a meeting held by email on 5 November 2018.

**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 2018/19**

The Chair commented that Warner Wilde had given excellent service to Wimbledon Community Association for many years, but in line with good governance, we would investigate putting out to tender for future years.

7. Resignations and appointments of officers

The existing three Trustees and Secretary were all continuing at this time. Elizabeth Osako and Sabrina Sostero were appointed as additional Trustees effective 23 November 2018. The minimum number of trustees is three.

New trustees may be recruited during the year depending on the particular skills required. The Chair stressed that future development of the charity would benefit greatly from new trustees who had different but relevant skills to the existing trustees and invited anyone with an interest in their community to apply. Help with the business planning process would be welcome at this time.

8. Any other business

None

The Chair thanked all attendees for coming to the AGM.

The meeting closed at 8pm

## Chair's Annual Report for 2017/18

### Introduction

This is my 7<sup>th</sup> AGM presentation as Chair of the Wimbledon Community Association – the first one being in 2012 soon after the old community centre was closed down.

I don't want to spend lots of time repeating what has been said at previous AGMs and in earlier Annual Reports, including about the old centre, but just by way of a reminder Wimblecomm, the website, was formally launched in Sept 2016 after an earlier version was previously consulted on and then demonstrated at our AGM in 2015. Wimblecomm has therefore now been open to the public for just over 2 years.

It's been a busy year but as so often with Annual Reports more has happened since the end of March (the end of our financial year).

### Achievements this year

Much of this is covered in the Annual Report but, in summary, since reporting at last year's AGM we have done various things including:

- (i) Had a report (in January) from Superhighways on Wimblecomm, which highlighted various technical issues, many of which we have addressed.
- (ii) Recruited a temporary member of staff, Genevieve Farrell, (in April) to work with Susanne – and we have just extended her contract into the new year.
- (iii) Hosted a student project with the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) – that's Worcester Massachusetts, in Spring, and received a presentation in June and final report in August.
- (iv) Updated the website for a new software, Elementor, to make it easier to use and more visually pleasing – we are also now moving towards a new 'theme' to replace the Headway software, often used on Wordpress websites, which is now becoming defunct.
- (v) Carried out a high-level options review and commenced on a business plan and review of Wimblecomm – more on that later.
- (vi) Added more spaces onto the website (an increase from 66 last Sept to 112 now) which has also meant an increase in our membership (see attached schedule for details which shows our 37 venue members – we also have 4 user members).
- (vii) Significantly increased the number of events which we post on the site, taking place at our registered venues, as well as some other generic events taking place in the borough.
- (viii) Added a number of articles and blogs to the site and introduced a regular e-newsletter (Community Bytes). The next newsletter comes out in December.
- (ix) Developed a set of metrics and produced a Marketing & Planning Document to monitor performance against those. A new survey of members is also about to be carried out - and we have produced new flyers / postcards and a new banner.
- (x) Increased the number of visits to the website (there were over 1000 last month for the first time) and significantly increased our social media presence including now Instagram.
- (xi) Attended many events across the borough including those hosted by Merton Chamber of Commerce and Merton Volunteer Services Council to help market our presence.
- (xii) Managed various new one-off arrangements (eg setting up a pension for Susanne, GDPR) whilst undertaking our usual operational and back office functions (including payroll, accounts, insurance, company, charity and tax returns, annual report, updating and maintaining our shared documents drive).

- (xiii) Ran our usual trustee meetings and now an increasingly active marketing committee.
- (xiv) Recruited two new trustees (welcome tonight Liz Osako and Sabrina Sostero) and one volunteer (Kathie Arundell).
- (xv) Met with organisations and individuals interested in collaborating with us on developing community space (including Merton Hall, their ACV bid, and Polka on their redevelopment proposals).

## Finances

As you may be aware our main source of income has been the dividend from our original CCLA investment of £600k (now worth around £743k). In 2017/18 the dividend of £23,000 broadly matched our expenditure (as indeed it did in 2016/17). In 2017/18 there was also a one-off adjustment to write back a very old – but significant - creditor.

As highlighted in the Annual Report, we have decided to spend extra money on the development of Wimblecomm in 2018/19. Genevieve's contract is being extended and we have also decided to spend more money on marketing and website development. In total we now expect to spend around £47,000 this year. The additional spend is being funded by the assumed growth in our CCLA investments.

## Looking Forward

As already highlighted, we are embarking on a review of Wimblecomm which is also being carried out alongside our business planning exercise. The plan is to report on that by the end of February.

For 2019/20 and beyond there are a number of questions we are addressing as part of the business planning process, building on the options appraisal and the WPI project. This includes:

- (i) If we decide to spend more than the annual dividend in future, what assumptions should we make on our capital growth each year? Is it reasonable to use our capital resources in that way?
- (ii) How should we best target the money that we spend? In particular, would it make more sense to appoint an additional member of staff (rather than continue paying expensive temporary rates plus VAT)? Should we be seeking to bring in a new website developer? How much should we spend on marketing?
- (iii) Are we using our staffing and our volunteer / trustee resources to best effect? How else might we use them?
- (iv) Should we seek to generate income from any other sources (eg advertising, membership or commercial fees, events income) in order to pay for this and if so, how much should we be targeting? What else could we be offering members and the wider community?
- (v) To what extent does this help meet our current charitable objects and other aims? Do we have sensible targets for Wimblecomm? What benefits do we bring to our local community? What is a reasonable growth target? Should we be looking to review our constitution and objects in the light of this?

Progress has been made on a number of aspects (for example the Marketing Plan and metrics) but over the next few months we will be working hard to address the other issues.

At the end of that process we will take a view on the most appropriate course of action factoring in our existing constitutional objects including the object of establishing a community space. If we need to convene an extraordinary general meeting to consider any more radical plans, we will give due notice to members on that and consult as necessary.

In due course we may wish to hold a larger event in spring or summer to bring together our members and like-minded organisations in the borough and beyond, as appropriate.

### **A Voluntary Ethos and Personal Vision**

As highlighted above, a key issue which we are constantly having to deal with, is the amount of time we commit, as trustees, to the charity. The progress over the last 6 years has mainly been achieved by the voluntary input of three unpaid trustees and one unpaid secretary, plus, more recently, the efforts of two part time staff and a website contractor. We have also drawn on support from others.

As I indicated earlier, we are pleased that we now have two further trustees who are also joining us to share the load and add some additional insight during our business planning process. Liz and Sabrina are both working mums, so it is wonderful that they have been prepared to support us despite their existing busy lives. Kathie, also attending tonight, has joined us as a volunteer and has already started contributing some events pieces to Wimblecomm.

However, we are keen to expand this further if we can. My personal vision for Wimblecomm has always been to embrace the very best of the voluntary ethos which I see around me every day here in our own local community - and see that reflected in our website.

I wrote a blog on Wimblecomm earlier this year entitled 'A Sense of Purpose' and linked it, slightly grandiosely, to the challenges the country is facing, finding a new purpose in a post Brexit world. There was also an interesting piece in the weekend papers recently highlighting the impact of a growing number of people who are now retiring early in this country – although this does vary by community and the decision to retire is not always by choice. There was an interesting contrast in the article with the plight of many young people trying to find their way, in the world we face today.

Whether working, retired, or somewhere in between, people's circumstances vary and their scope and desire to commit will change from time to time, but it would be great to bring together more of the different skills, interests and passions of our community, on our website so this can be shared.

When the old community centre closed, we lost many of our old members as they ended up going elsewhere. A few have remained as 'user members'. A key reason behind starting Wimblecomm was not only to provide a service which we considered would be useful, it was a way to connect with the many different people who are active in those venues which have registered, and to develop a new membership.

As I indicated earlier, we now have 112 spaces (46 venues, 37 members) registered on Wimblecomm. From our indicative research there are a number of other venues still out there in Merton who could be added. But at some point, we will get close to 'saturation level'.

One approach would be to expand the service beyond Merton's borders and redefine our 'surrounding area' even more widely. I attended a joint Merton Chamber of Commerce session with the Chambers of Commerce from Kingston and Wandsworth recently and there was genuine interest expressed in what we are doing here and expanding beyond the borough.

However, my personal preference at this point would be to focus more on what is going on in our community and better engage with the organisations and users of the centres that have already registered and may yet register.

Whilst the website does require ongoing investment and administrative and marketing support, I personally have never thought that is about spending significant amounts of money on the site.

In my view, now it is better established, the key to developing Wimblecomm is bringing in more people to contribute voluntarily to the site with their ideas and thoughts on events taking place locally. I would like to see it as a platform for positive discussions about how we can support one another in our communities - rather than the frequent negative exchanges we see on the internet.

If we go ahead with a Wimblecomm event (or conference even) in Spring or Summer, then I would like to bring together some of the individuals and organisations who inspire people to volunteer both locally and further afield. This could include representatives from Wimbledon Bookfest, Wimbledon Parkrun, AFC Wimbledon, MVSC (the umbrella body for so many local groups) and any organisation that relies heavily on the support of local volunteers (be it a drama group, a fireworks display, an abundance day or whatever). What can we learn from them in developing a virtual, volunteer based, community hub for news and views?

Why do people do it? What is their motivation? A survey 4 years ago suggested volunteering was worth £50bn to the economy. It does of course depend on the value of the volunteer and the type of input. My experience is it is also critically important to channel that effort wisely - specialism of labour applies in the voluntary sector as well as the commercial sector. But by any measure, we could have used up a substantial amount of our funds by now if we were paid the economic rate for our time.

If we were to expand our volunteer force further, we may realise that we can release some of our financial resources towards other objects including the investment in community space.

Ultimately it is about working smarter with the resources that we have (financial and otherwise) to benefit our local community and to promote the advancement of education, social welfare and well-being of our local citizens. Surely a goal that we can all embrace.

### **And finally, some thanks**

First of all, and in no particular order, I want to thank our staff, Susanne and Genevieve. Between them, working with Tim, our website designer, and drawing on the report from Superhighways, they have made significant progress increasing the number of users and developing the website content, our e-newsletters, our social media presence and producing our new marketing plan and metrics - as well as carrying out other administrative functions. Their enthusiasm, commitment, experience and skills in various areas has been very welcome.

Secondly, and focusing on our existing voluntary input, I would like to thank my fellow trustees, Roger and Bill, for their support over the last six years, (five in the case of Bill) and particularly for the additional work they have carried out in recent months on the Marketing committee. Also, in Roger's case, engaging with both Liz and Sabrina to bring them in as our new trustees. Bill's input has also been welcome, given his recent ill health.

Thirdly I would like to thank others who have given up their time freely during the last year. This includes Daniel Soltran, the student who undertook the WPI project earlier in the year, Kevin Dodman (a colleague of Roger and Bill) who has been carrying out work on the option appraisal and business plan, and Kathie who has started attending events and writing articles for us. We are also grateful to others outside the WCA who have submitted articles to us and supported us in other ways.

Fourthly I would like to particularly thank the immense support of Jackie whose work behind the scenes sorting the pensions, payroll, and GDPR as well as the charity and companies house regulatory requirements has been invaluable. She has also frequently written minutes of meetings, attended events, produced the

website stats, written pieces for the website and provided excellent guidance at the most challenging moments.

Finally, the unwritten member of the team who has provided catering for meetings for the last six years, written and edited articles for the website, occasionally even written minutes in the past amongst other things, and has also been a rock when times have got really tough, and that is my wife, Jil. Thanks to her for her dedicated support to me and to the WCA cause.