

Minutes of WCA Annual General Meeting 30 October 2019

The Mansel Road Centre, Mansel Road, Wimbledon, SW19 4AA at 6pm

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

In addition to the trustees and secretary, there were 6 member organisations present as follows:-
Andy Coles South Wimbledon Community Association, Joe Dillon Carlton Theatre Group, Tracey Sherman Wimbledon Choral Society, Dominic Grant Trinity Church Wimbledon, Naomi Martin Commonside Trust and Jil Hall, South Park Gardens

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

The Chair declared the meeting quorate.

Others in attendance:-, Susanne Ollig, Genevieve Farrell, Kevin Dodman, Matthew Snelling, Adrian Searle, Jenny Burrett

2. Apologies: Kathie Arundell (volunteer), Gail Moss (volunteer), Karinne Torr (Lady Wimbledon magazine), Stephen Hammond MP, Hilary O'Connor (Polka Theatre)
3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 28 November 2018

The minutes were approved at the meeting

4. Chair's annual report for 2018/19

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

Key achievements since 2018 AGM

- Completion of the Wimblecomm Review process in March, which recommended continued commitment to Wimblecomm
- 110 spaces now registered on the site plus basic directory
- Around 50 venue members
- Significant increase in number of events, blogs and articles on site. This has been a key part of the further development of Wimblecomm content, and has been very well supported by members.
- Substantial increase in social media presence and networking. We have continued to build relationships with key partners such as MCC, Love Wimbledon and Merton libraries.
- Number of site visitors roughly trebled since 2017. A chart was presented showing some of our monthly metrics tracked since January 2017, the latest being from September 2019 - +1,700 users,+4,300 page views, and 70 enquiries to venue members
- Relaunch of website this October
- Development of financial model as part of business planning. A chart was presented showing the split between investment value and cash deposits over the next five years. As explained at the AGM last year, it was decided to use the capital growth in the investment portfolio to fund the cost of developing Wimblecomm. The fund is valued at almost £800k, increased from the £600k original investment with CCLA. The chart shows that at current activity levels, cash reserves will be depleted in five years. During that period, we will be considering other sources of income for the future.

Relaunch of website new features

- New mapping geo-directory system
- Enhanced search facilities
- New closed member forum for members to use to connect with each other on relevant topics or shared experiences.
- Reviews of venues facility. This has been introduced following discussions with members. WCA staff will monitor for inappropriate comments
- New user friendly calendar format / submission process
- On line user survey
- Updated content and FAQ section
- Improved logo, layout and gallery (linked to Instagram)
- Scope for integration of fixed paid adverts. These will not be pop-up adverts – they will feature on a fixed banner on the website, and will be for community related companies.

Challenges moving forward

- Move Wimblecomm onto a new faster server from UK2
- Further increase of content on the Wimblecomm site
- Development as Merton's main community hub website
- Develop new sources of income over next 5 years
- Work alongside Council (and others) with its new Community Plan
- Continue to increase number of users / visitors to the site
- Recruitment of new trustees / volunteers. Jenny Burrett is joining as a trustee and will formally be appointed by current trustees at their next meeting. Adrian Searle is interested in volunteering for WCA; he has a background in IT
- Review of Constitution / Membership structure

Thanks and acknowledgements

- To Susanne and Genevieve for their continued commitment and hard work to improve the site and develop our on-line presence
- To fellow trustees (past and present) for their support. In particular, thanks to Roger who stood down in March after 6 years service - and to Bill and Sabrina who are continuing for the present.
- To Jackie, our Secretary, for her tireless work behind the scenes
- To Tim, our Website developer
- To friends and family who have also supported us
- To our members and others in the wider community who have continued to provide encouragement and support

5. The Financial Report and Statements to March 2019

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

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.

The income statement shows that expenditure exceeds income by £20k, which is more than offset by the growth in the investment portfolio. Overall, the financial position of the charity is strong.

The Financial Statements have been examined by Independent Examiner, Warner Wilde, and were recommended for approval by the Trustees at a meeting on 17 September 2019.

These were agreed at the meeting.

6. Appointment of independent examiner

The Chair commented that Warner Wilde had given excellent service to Wimbledon Community Association for many years, but in line with good governance, the position would be put out to tender after the 2019/20 financial year.

Agreed at the meeting

7. Resignations and appointments of officers

Roger Drage resigned in March. Bill Lake and Sabrina Sostero are continuing for the time being. The intention is that Jenny Burrett will be joining us as a trustee in the near future. The minimum number of trustees is three. It was noted that we are continuing to look for new trustees and volunteers who are interested in supporting our work.

8. Any other business

None

The formal part of the AGM was followed by an open discussion structured around the following three questions:-

- **Our long term 5 year aim is to be THE on-line community hub across Merton where people register their venues and events. Is this a realistic aim and how should we integrate with the Council on its Community Plan?**

Matthew Snelling, Policy, Strategy and Partnerships Officer for Merton Council, began the discussion by explaining the context of the Council's Community Plan. Though no longer a statutory requirement, Merton Council has published a document which brings together all partners in a collective vision for the borough. It is driven by Merton Partnership which also includes other agencies, such as the police, fire brigade and MVSC. Its aim is to draw on social capital to tackle loneliness, mental health and safety across the borough, harnessing volunteering, neighbourliness and community activity.

The previous Plan from 2013 is a fixed PDF document available to all on the Council's website. The plan for the 2019 review is to make it online and interactive. One element of the review is the location of community buildings and the activities taking place within them. The idea was to introduce an interactive map where people can find out what is happening near them. Having been introduced to Wimblecomm following a networking event, Matthew could see how our website is already delivering elements of the community plan, and approached WCA to see if collaboration was possible. There is maybe an option to link Wimblecomm to the Council platform, supported by the Council's resources in some way.

Jil Hall said that it seems to be a great idea to link Wimblecomm to the Council site, and also to link Wimblecomm to members' own website, specifically to their events calendar. This would be another way of promoting events, and she would be happy to suggest to her trustees that South Park Gardens collaborate in this as an experiment.

Susanne said that though this is fine in principle, it would be important to recognise that some members do not have technically advanced websites, and would still need help to promote their events on Wimblecomm. We had in the past discussed linking to member websites via Google Calendar to show room bookings and availability of spaces on their calendars, but there was not a

huge interest from member venues. Some of the churches, for example, use their own church specific IT for their events calendar which could not be linked.

Kevin Dodman asked how in practice could we link to the Council – would it become an online resource available from their website? Naomi Martin stressed that it would be important for WCA to be careful not to try to be all things to everybody - Wimblecomm has its own aims and identity. Susanne said that the content of Wimblecomm does not cover the whole vision of the Community Plan, but as a minimum, there could be a portal from the Council site to Wimblecomm for those people looking for venue space ie signpost to Wimblecomm.

Jenny Burrett suggested that we should start by evaluating our aims and values and looking for synergy with the Community Plan.

Sabrina Sostero said that even a simple link from the Council website would result in increased traffic to Wimblecomm, and we would have to understand the impact of this on our resources. In light of this, the Trustees would have to consider what could be achieved in the short-term before looking to the longer term.

Matthew confirmed that the initial draft of the Community Plan is due to be published in February 2020.

Next steps for the Trustees is to discuss our aims in light of this potential collaboration, and what resources would be needed to underpin it. The conclusion is that we are still open to a partnership on this.

- **Our business plan model is now predicated on using our cash reserves and assumed capital growth over 5 years whilst we develop other forms of funding. What is the best way to generate that funding? Adverts on the new site? Membership fees? Events income? Is it right to protect the original capital longer term?**

As mentioned above, we do not want to introduce random pop-up ads. The proposal to add a fixed banner advert could earn around £50/£60 per quarter, so would not generate much income. However, as Kevin stated, any income would be welcome, and we would learn from the experience.

Naomi suggested investigating sponsorship of the site from a local business.

Susanne said that we had also thought of adding commercial listings at a fee alongside the free service available to community run venues. This was also supported as an option by those present.

- **Should we look to alter our membership / constitutional structure to accommodate that longer term aim and funding model? Are the current models fit for purpose?**

David acknowledged that we struggle to engage with members at events such as the AGM, which is raising the issue of whether our current structure is fit for purpose. And Susanne indicated that venue managers when registering with Wimblecomm do not always fully understand that registration leads to membership. Dominic Grant described them as stakeholders, rather than members, which was largely accepted by those members present.

However, Naomi stated that this was probably the issue for many of the member venues too. If the current structure works on some level, and meets the Charity Commission requirements, then it is sensible to keep things as they are, but remain open to the possibility of having to change in the future.

It would be very difficult process with the Charity Commission to change away from a membership structure, but WCA Trustees can decide who can be members, and what classes of membership can

exist. There is an option of introducing a fee-paying membership for small, commercial businesses which would allow them to advertise on the site.

David said we may investigate changing the legal structure from a company limited by guarantee.

The Chair thanked all attendees for coming to the AGM.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm