Minutes of Parracombe Community Trust Annual General Meeting

Village Hall, Parracombe, 19:00 Wednesday October 19th 2022.

(Proposer/Seconder initials in italics)

Members Present: Jill Jones, Mike Vardy, Nick Backhouse, Martin Hallam, Esther Bray, Chris Stoodley, Karen Farrington, Harry Harrison, Jo Harrison, Si Young, Alison Smith, Jaye Jones, Conrad Hewitt, Simon Omar, Stephen Cheetham, Nick Constable, Dave Austin.

1. Apologies: Brian Dallyn, Craig Wiggill, Keith Denby, Linda Tansley, Annie Constable

2. **Minutes of the PCT AGM dated September 29th, 2021 were approved.** *(SY/NB)*

3. Annual Accounts to year end March 31st 2022: Treasurer DA presented the balance sheet. SO highlighted some errors in presentation. The capital expenditure line of £114,052 should be transferred to the fixed asset line because this expenditure created an ongoing asset (the shop and cafe). The asset will be valued up or down accordingly on a yearly basis. There would also need to be minor adjustments to the income and expenditure figures because some items had been mistakenly capitalised. However DA stressed that the balance sheet was a true and accurate record of the Trust's overall financial position as of March 31st 2022

The accounts were approved subject to the above adjustments *(KF/CH)*

Other questions and comments linked to the accounts.

*An early issue with our accounting system was that items should have been logged exclusive of VAT yet spreadsheets didn't accommodate this. We had since moved our accounting platform to Xero which automatically took account of VAT recording (DA).

*JayeJ asked how depreciation of assets would be calculated. DA said the Trust accountants would use an accepted formula.

4. To vote on audit exemption. The Management Committee recommends that there be no audit of Trust accounts for the year ending 31/3/22 in accordance with Article 26.2 of the Trust's Rules.

After discussion it was unanimously agreed to accept the Management Committee's recommendation and that no audit would be conducted *(SY/SC).*

The meeting also expressed the unanimous wish (on a show of hands) that the Trust's accounting practices and financial statements be reviewed by an accountant before the 2023 AGM.

5. Approval of alterations and additions to policies (none)

6. Resolutions proposed and seconded by members at least 14 days before the AGM (none)

7. Election of PCT Directors. DA noted that Simon Omar had resigned as a director and Trust treasurer. He thanked Simon for the huge amount of work he'd done in helping to manage the Trust's financial liabilities during a crucial period in which the Pavilion shop and cafe had been built, fitted out, stocked and commenced trading.

There remained seven directors. Two directors, Nick Constable and Jeremy Holtom had resigned in line with Trust Rules requiring one third of the Board to step down. Both had submitted themselves for re-election.

Jeremy Holtom was re-elected (*JH/SY***)**
Nick Constable was re-elected (*SO/NB)*

8. New directors nominated for election: (none)

AGM closed: 19:45

Open Q&A Session

Comments and questions summarised below:

DA Financial policy and all Trust policies need updating.

DA The Trust needs more directors. DA would stand down as chair either at the end of the current financial year or the next AGM. It also needed more volunteers. Volunteers didn't need to be members of committees.

JillJ People may not have the skills or think they're not up to the job. Need to address it another way. Get people to know meetings are going on and how the meetings are going. Perhaps a brainstorming event to get more people involved.

SY Got to show more transparency in what we do to reassure people. Need to run a recruitment campaign which is nuanced and informal so that we don't scare people off. Also, explain what directors do.

JayeJ Committees could put pictures of meetings on Facebook - say more about what's going on. Sub committees are re-formulating so now is a good time to encourage people to come in.

KF Could we do a Welcome Pack to send to people new to the village. DA said the Parish Council had done this but it was outdated.

JH The shop committee started out with 8 members and was now down to 4. Comms had gone out to all members, also on the website and on Facebook. But it was a struggle to find people.

SY Asking for volunteers isn't the answer. We need to do it differently. We should start off by explaining to people what we're all about. Having only 4 committee members makes it difficult for those who have stayed.

SO We should stress the benefits of being part of the Trust - helping your community, making new friendships and being a part of things. It's not all about time-consuming jobs.

HH The village hall has ten people on its committee. The shop has only four. That seems strange - why has it turned out like that.

DA more people have a historical link to the village hall and so feel more invested in it.

SY With the village hall its clearer what you're getting into. With the shop you don't know. Facebook would be a starting point but we shouldn't see Facebook as it. We are not sending the right messages.

JillJ It is hard to make yourself heard.

DA We need to have a Trust social evening. Work packages could be assigned to people without them having to join a committee.

KF Perhaps a social event with wine. Ask how we can make volunteering work for people.

SY Also wall posters showing what roles we need to fill. Perhaps ask committee members themselves to try and find more people for roles where they are deficient.

NB Members of the Events Team could be asked if they would consider joining one of the committees.

JH We also need to remember that we have had a fantastic response from the community. We started with 41 shop volunteers. Our target from the Prince's Countryside Fund was 25.

KF I would be happy to help with ongoing recruitment.

HH It feels like more transparency is needed. Vast majority of members are unaware what's happening on a day-to-day basis. Could we publish on Facebook a summary of what is discussed at committee meetings?

DA Members of all three committees are present. Committees can announce what they're doing whenever they wish and by whatever medium - newsletter, social media etc.

JayeJ How is the shop doing generally? And what about stock taking?

JH We currently have fewer holidaymakers but more loyal customers. Trading numbers look good. We do have quite a bit of old stock in - will it sell? We don't know yet. Our managers Felicity and Teresa have settled in really well, they are committed and they are enjoying the work.

DA Our last stock take didn't tell us very much but it did tell us that we need to get our system updated. We currently have over 1,000 different lines.

HH Why didn't we get full stock take results.

DA The issue is partly down to VAT. We have a buying price, then have to add VAT if necessary, then a selling price. Initially we didn't input a buying price and we need to do that to show that to do a proper stock take. We are now putting in the buying price.

SO Could we improve the stock monitoring system?

DA Yes, but all volunteers would need to be trained to monitor it.

SO In terms of next year's holidaymakers is anything additional on the cards to attract them?

JH We're doing flyers and we now have wooden signs at the front of the shop. Negotiations are ongoing to place a brown tourism sign on the A39. But this is proving very difficult to negotiate with Devon Highways and Exmoor National Park.

HH This discussion puts a spotlight on the vast amount of work that has to be done at the shop. We desperately need more volunteers on the shop committee

JH do we know how much money we're making? So that we know we're making enough to cover basic amenities such as utilities or insurance.

DA We face a trading loss this year as expected. We have had additional expenses and fees that we weren't expecting. The cafe is clearly our best asset and it produces the best profits.

KF it is quite right that we focus on things we can do better. But we have achieved huge things and can go onto achieve yet more. We should applaud ourselves as well as consider constructive criticism.

DA Exmoor National Park seems to sing our praises as do all the people who work with us.

SO It's a great little shop.

Ends.