

## **Minutes of the Community Base annual general meeting held on 16th November 2005**

**Present:** Bob Cristofoli (treasurer), Duncan Blinkhorn (Brighton and Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum), Lincoln Bogartz (Video Educational Project), Sarah Bourne (Sussex Youth), Michelle Bridgeman (Gender Trust), Jane Frost (Assert Brighton and Hove), Lesley Heasman (St John Ambulance), Hong Lu (Chinese Educational Development Project and trustee), Louise Stone (Working Together Project), and Robert Taylor (Sussex Community Internet Project), Victoria Williams (Food Matters) and Nancy Zang (Chinese Educational Development Project)

**In attendance:** Colin Chalmers (director, company secretary and minutes) and Annette Moss (building manager)

### **1 Election of the chair**

In the absence of Sylvia Alexander-Vine the trustees present elected Bob Cristofoli to chair the meeting.

### **2 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Sylvia Alexander-Vine (chairperson), Sue Cole (receptionist and administrative assistant), Paul Evans (NHS Support Federation and trustee), Bert Williams (Brighton and Hove Black History and trustee), Lucy Stone (trustee), aMaze and Carr-Gomm.

### **3 Minutes of previous annual general meetings**

The minutes of the annual general meeting held on 5th October 2004 were approved.

### **4 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **5 Adoption of accounts for 2004-2005**

It was agreed to adopt the audited accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2005.

### **6 Appointment of auditors**

It was agreed to reappoint Clark Brownscombe as auditors.

### **7 Election of trustees**

Colin Chalmers reported that two trustees, Hong Lu and Lucy Stone, were retiring by rotation at the meeting and have indicated their willingness to continue as trustees; that Paul Evans, who joined the board of trustees in July 2005, was recommended by the board of trustees to be confirmed as a trustee; and that Sylvia Alexander-Vine, Bob Cristofoli and Bert Williams remained trustees. It was agreed to reappoint Hong Lu, Lucy Stone and Paul Evans as trustees.

### **8 Report on Community Base activities since the last annual general meeting and plans for the future**

Colin Chalmers reported to the meeting on Community Base activities since the last annual general meeting and plans for the future

- a) Since the last annual general meeting Carnival Collective and Middle East Community Project had moved out of Community Base and Brighton and Hove Millenium Volunteers and Assert Brighton and Hove had moved in.
- b) The 2005 questionnaire asking groups at Community Base for their assessment of our services and facilities rated these facilities and services better than ever with a rating of over 95% approval for our receptionist and reception, trustees, anti-discriminatory practice, addressing environmental concerns and value for money.
- c) Our most recent statistics, for 2004, showed the number of people getting help or support at Community Base was greater than ever, with over 77,000 getting help or support from groups at Community Base during the year and over 9,500 coming into Community Base for help and support, over half of these people being non-white British.

- d) After negotiation with Brighton and Hove City Council Community Base had been granted 100% rate relief until March 2007.
- e) In the face of opposition from council officers and some councillors we won planning permission for advertising on our northern wall until 2009.
- f) Improvements continue to be made around the building including improvements to our car park and the introduction of wireless broadband access throughout the building.
- g) There continue to be problems with our banners and these are being addressed.
- h) Colin was looking into the possibility of installing wind turbines on our roof to generate electricity.
- i) Community Base held its second essay competition in 2005 and was due to hold another one in the run up to our open day in May 2006.
- j) Community Base continues to publish its unique guide to local services in print and online. This year the guide was published in English, Arabic, Bengali , Farsi, French and Mandarin and the guide would continue to be updated annually online in all these languages.
- k) For the second year running Community Base held a successful public meeting during Refugee Week
- l) Community Base has held three pub quizzes in 2005 and it was intended to hold more in 2006.
- m) This year Community Base received grants of £35,000 from the local regeneration partnership and £200,000 from Change Up towards new lighting. This still left some £100,000 needed to install new lighting throughout the building and ways of raising this money were being looked at.
- n) This year the board changed the reserves policy to ensure that the need to build reserves to pay for future capital expenditure, rather than assume that such expenditure could be financed by grant funding or further borrowing, was taken into account when setting budgets and rent levels and charges for services
- o) Our rent levels and charges continue to be under market rates. Given the need to finance capital expenditure in the future, it was likely that rent levels would increase in April 2006 by more than expected in our development plan, with groups being advised of the rate of this rent increase by the end of 2005.

Duncan Blinkhorn congratulated Community Base on Venue Search, which he knew to be well used by local community and voluntary groups.

Robert Taylor congratulated Colin on raising £200,000 from Change Up when the entire Change Up budget for the south east of England was £1,327,000.

Bob Cristofoli thanked Colin, Annette and Sue for their hard work over the year.

### **9 Discussion about the installation of new lighting**

There was a discussion about the installation of new lighting starting in the near future and how disruption during refurbishment could be minimised. It was agreed that groups offering help and, where possible, temporary accommodation to each other during refurbishment would greatly help. Duncan Blinkhorn and Lesley Heasman gave their views on the new lighting which had been installed in their lower ground floor offices earlier in the year.

### **10 Any other business**

Colin proposed that the meeting send its good wishes to Sue Cole during her recovery from illness and this was wholeheartedly agreed.