

Community First in Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Minutes of the 23rd Annual General Meeting held on 14th November 2012 At the Green Centre, Dines Green, Worcester

Present

Board Members

Alan Courtney	Individual Member (Chair)
Cal Edwards	Mansel Lacy Community Association
Gordon Kingston	Individual Member
Magda Prail	Individual Member
Nick Read	Bulmer Foundation
Elspeth Rolls	Individual Member
Richard Wallace	Individual Member (Honorary Treasurer)

Michael G. Clarke (President)

Member Organisations

Jim Allsopp	Powick Parish Hall
David Bareford	Cookley Playing Field and Village Hall Association
John Bodger	Rotary House
Michael and Nan Fellows	Rowney Green Village Hall
Cathy Jackson-Read	Onside Independent Advocacy
Richard Nicol	Care Farming West Midlands
John Paxton	Worcester Diocesan Board of Finance (not nominated rep)
Eric and Eileen Payne	Folk at the Fold (not nominated rep)
Griff Richards	St Paul's Hostel
Douglas Rushton	Honeybourne Village Hall
Jim Smith	Sight Concern Worcestershire
Jeremy Teal	Wychavon District Council (not nominated rep)

Individual Members

Guests

Jake Bharier	Carol Cumino	Nicky and Tony Geeson
Jean Chamberlain	Liz Davies-Ward	Manda Graham
Chris Chappell	John Farrell	Professor David Green
Ray Groves	Dan Herbert	Michael Hunter
Dr Miriam Isaac	Di Jones	Debbie Lambert
Ginny Lee	Viv Lucas	Nic Millington
Liz Needham	Mike Parker	Peter Pinfield
Victoria Preece	Natalie Sadler	John Sherahilo
Dag Smith	Liz Smith	Mel Smith
Jeremy Teal	Peter Tebbitt	Jane Thomasson
Jeremy Thomas	Briony Williams	Alan Forrest
Richard Hunt		

In Attendance

Richard Quallington, Chief Executive, and 19 members of Community First staff.

Apologies

Apologies had been received from 10 member organisations and no individual members.

Welcome

Community First's President, Michael Clarke, welcomed all to the annual meeting. The theme of the meeting was to celebrate and learn more about some of the projects and initiative taking place in the wider community and activities that people are doing in their community that Community First supports.

The Chief Executive commented that a different approach had been taken to this year's AGM. One of Community First's great privileges is that it is aware of how many ordinary people are doing extraordinary things across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The purpose of this AGM was to put the spotlight on them and celebrate their achievements.

The Chief Executive drew people's attention to the tapestry panels at the side of the room which had been provided by Leominster in Stitches. The tapestry was a community tapestry depicting 1000 years of history local to Leominster. Leominster in Stitches had received an Elmley Arts Fund grant to help them fund the tapestry.

Various community groups that had been assisted by Community First talked about their work.

Painting Breinton Green. Ecohere project - (Tony and Nicky Geeson)

Tony and Nicky had been working with Rebecca Semple of Community First as part of the Ecohere Project which helps community groups to come together to develop a sustainable future. Breinton has a church and a village hall but no pub or shop and with no hub it has been difficult to get people together and to communicate with all the people in Breinton. The project is slowly bringing the community together with such things as car sharing, bulk buying a monthly newsletter distributed by the Church.

Malvern Book Co-Operative – Dan Herbert

There had been for many years a very small but well respected bookshop in Malvern but this had fallen on hard times. A small group decided to form an investor co-operative into which about 150 people invested. This turned the bookshop around.

Nick Comley from Community First commented that the bookshop had become a community asset for the town and that he had been very impressed with the 'can do' and entrepreneurial approach that had been demonstrated by the group.

Brampton Abbots and Foy Community Plan

Over the past 3 years, Sophie Pryce has worked with 80 community groups. The community led plan (CLP) has improved the area through practical projects. In essence, a CLP is a step by step process to contribute to the social, economic and cultural well-being of the local area. A personal approach at Brampton Abbots and Foy ensured a response rate of 80% for questionnaires from local people. The CLP group has established an implementation group, an alternative energy group, a group for action against fly tipping and a climate safety group. They now have a parish website available for information and 83 email addresses and can communicate across the community at the touch of a button. This allows all parties to feel part of the community and not isolated.

Alfrick and Moseley Parish Council – Peter Tebbitt

Peter had been working on developing a community plan for Alfrick and Moseley. In the years from 2001 to 2010 the number of residents in Britain of pensionable aged had increased by 42%. The forecast increase from 2008 to 2013 was almost 65%. The annual mortality rate for the county has been decreasing for the last 20 years. The Parish Council were keen to broaden the CLP process so that covers elements such as health and social care and so that local initiatives can be developed so people can remain in their homes for as long as possible.

The Rural Media Company – Nic Millington

Over the years Community First has enjoyed good relations with the Rural Media Company. A film called 'Over the Hill' about rural ageing made by the Rural Media Company was shown.

Nic thanked Community First for the opportunity of showing the film and Peter Tebbitt for the endorsement of the film. The film highlighted the importance of communication which is going to become increasingly important for the voluntary and community sector. There are increasingly many cost effective and imaginative ways to enhance an organisation's communication. There is going to be a new tier of local broadcasting called local TCN. This has already started on Freeview Channel 8. The government has put both Hereford and Malvern in scope for potentially having a local station.

The Fold – Eric and Eileen Payne

Eric and Eileen have received 2 grants from the Elmley Foundation. They have been performing together for over 40 years and are trying to get a wider audience. Folk at the Fold has been running for 3 years. They have also been involved with putting together folk plays. Eric and Eileen approached the Elmley Foundation for portable lighting that was safe. They charge a small fee to cover expenses and ask people to donate to Charity. Their current charity is Macmillan Cancer. Their song 'The Ageing Legacy' has gone down very well and has been played at 12 venues in the last 3 years.

Community First's Thank You to Its Ambassadors

Community First thanked some of its ambassadors who, unrecognised and unpaid, go about supporting the work of Community First. They play a key part behind the scenes to make a real difference.

Individuals thanked were:

Andrew Bateman

Andrew was nominated by Amanda Wright for his office based help and in particular updating the mental health database.

Peter Tebbitt

Peter was nominated by Lorna Pearcey for his work for Alfreton Parish Council.

Dag Smith

Dag was nominated by Rob Grunsell for his enthusiastic support of village hall agents sessions.

Launch of Community Bulk Oil Buying Scheme – Lorna Pearcey

Leaflets had been included in the AGM packs. This is for anyone in off gas grid areas and will help anyone in fuel poverty by allowing people to buy oil more cheaply.

University of Worcester

The University of Worcester had gone into partnership with Community First, WAVOCC and ACT to provide high quality student placements in the voluntary sector. John Taylor from Community First, Mel Smith from Sight Concern and Professor David Green from the University of Worcester all spoke about the significance of this mutually beneficial partnership.

AGM Business Meeting

1. To Receive the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1st November 2011.

Magda Prail proposed that the minutes be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

*Alan Courtney seconded this
All were in agreement.*

The minutes were therefore accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. To Receive the Annual Report 2011-2012

Community First's Chair, Magda Prail, presented the annual report. This would be her last year as Chair of Community First. She commented that it had given her great pleasure to see some of the achievements and successes of the organisation over the last year which had been a very successful year for Community First in terms of lobbying, informing and advising on rural community issues and delivering its aims.

In Herefordshire, In Mortimer Ward the REACH project is finding out about fuel poverty, we also supported over 60 CLPs

In Worcestershire in health and social care Community First is active in supporting a number of key health and social care networks and is also providing business support to many individual voluntary and community organisations.

Magda commented that last year she had reflected on a financial environment that was far from comfortable and the need to look for savings was at the forefront. Community First has not been immune from the financial environment and has reshaped in order to reflect the limited resources now available.

The partnership agreement with WAVOCC for work in Health and Social Care sector has seen the two organisations collaborating very effectively.

Community First has recently established a community interest company so that all trading income can be gift aided to support the work of the organisation. This will be

an opportunity to help other organisations whilst at the same time managing the need for a more entrepreneurial approach.

Magda acknowledged the ongoing work of the staff team and the exceptional commitment of Chief Executive, Richard Quallington. She commented that it had been a privilege to be Chair of Community First and that she will be handing over a strong and vibrant organisation to a new Chair.

4. To Receive the Treasurer's Report and Audited Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2012

The Board of Trustees had previously approved the Directors Report and audited accounts on 18th September 2012. These were presented to the AGM for consideration.

Richard Wallace, Community First's Treasurer, presented his report.

The financial year ending March 2012 had been a transformational year for Community First. In periods of plenty the organisation had built up reserves and is now taking the decision to utilise a proportion in order to retain capacity and skills to continue to deliver its work in the future.

During the year there had been a planned and deliberate move away from grant dependence towards a more entrepreneurial model of earned income and it is anticipated that this will develop further under the auspices of the new Community Interest Company.

The Treasurer thanked Community First's staff for their enthusiasm and commitment over the course of the year.

*Michael Clarke proposed that the meeting receive the accounts.
Alan Courtney seconded this
All were in agreement.*

Jake Bharier raised a query over the level of free reserves in relation to previous years. It was subsequently noted that there had been a typographical error in the accounts which was subsequently rectified.

Michael Clarke thanked the treasurer.

5. Appointment of the Auditors for 2012-2013

The Treasurer reported that Kendall Wadley had provided Community First with a good and cost effective service over the year. He confirmed that trustees were proposing to the AGM that Kendall Wadley be appointed for the ensuing year as the firm is local, helpful and its fees are very competitive. Liz Needham from Kendall Wadley was present at the meeting.

*Richard Wallace proposed that Kendal Wadley be appointed for a further year as auditors.
Nick Read seconded this
All were in agreement.*

6. Election of Directors to the Board

The President confirmed that one third of the Board of trustees retires at the end of the AGM. Retiring trustees are eligible for re-nomination.

This year, Roland Summers retired but was standing for re-election. Elspeth Rolls and Gordon Kingston had been co-opted to the Board during the year and were now offering themselves for election.

The Board will co-opt additional trustees over the coming months for formal election at the next AGM.

Michael asked that anyone interested in becoming a trustee of Community First approach him or Richard Quallington.

Michael Clarke proposed that Roland Summers, Elspeth Rolls and Gordon Kingston be elected.

Magda Praill seconded this.

All were in agreement.

Michael Clarke thanked trustees for the time they give and the input they offer. He especially thanked Magda Praill who was standing down as Chair.

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Summary and Close of the Meeting

Michael Clarke extended thanks to Richard Quallington and Community First's staff. It has been a challenging year and Community First had had to re-envision itself.

Michael Clarke summarised the meeting.

- It is important to have a sense of community and the inclusiveness that goes with that.
- We ought to be providing community led problem solving and finding community led solutions.
- We need to persevere and not be distracted by those who criticise.
- Communication and the exploitation of new technology is very important.
- A sense of humour which provides perspective is very important.
- We have seen modest but energetic leadership many times this afternoon.
- It is important to have the ability to do something from which we can learn.
- In difficult circumstances the natural inclination is to be defensive to protect what has been. However we need to be prepared to do things differently and to look at

the relationship between our organisation and other organisations. Too often we are looking backwards rather than forwards.

'Go back, get on but get on with imagination and think outside of the box'.

SignedChair

Date: 2013