

Minutes of the Eighth Annual Members' Meeting of the Chalke Valley Community Hub Ltd held on 21 March 2022 at 7.30pm

16 shareholding members and 2 guest attended.

The Society Secretary, Terry Jolly, welcomed everyone to the 8th Annual Members' Meeting and extended the apologies of Derek Brown, the Chairman, who was isolating having contracted covid. As vice chairman, Katie Whitmore, assumed the Chair, with Terry managing the agenda.

1. **Apologies** were received from: D Brown, E Jolly, A Allen, L Walton, K Mills, C Donne, M Tomkies, D Gilbert, J Gilbert, Sue Fry, J Roe, Sally Fry, R Sykes, R Jones, A Truluck, C Dutson, M Scott, H Pelly, R Collins, T Hitchings and J Truluck.

2. **A quorum** was declared.

3. **The Minutes of the Sixth Annual Members' Meeting** held on 22 September 2021 were accepted as being correct after a proposal by Will Hillary, seconded by Andrew Jeans and carried unanimously.

4. **The Society Accounts for the year ending 30 September 2021** had been tabled and were presented by the Treasurer, Julian Thomas.

Julian was very pleased to advise the key points for this trading year; a small profit of £9k compared to a small loss in the previous year of £10.8k; the total gross margin returning to pre-pandemic levels despite much reduced café business for the year as a whole; the balance sheet remaining strong.

He then expanded upon these points through a series of slides. In addition, he was able to illustrate how trading levels and performance are returning to pre-pandemic levels and despite challenges such as local road closures for maintenance work affecting foot flow.

Will Hillary had observed that turnover for 2021 (£313.5k) was down on the previous year 2020 (£345.4k) and sought the reasons for this. Julian answered this by illustrating the huge leap which occurred in 2020 with the first covid lock down. At that time, the ability to shop at supermarkets in general was curtailed through either the unavailability of supermarket delivery slots or the need for self-isolation. The Hub filled this gap through the introduction at that time of the home delivery and click and collect services.

Will also asked what were the main items of other operating income £26.1k. In the main, these were covid and furlough grants.

Looking to the rest of this financial year, Julian expressed cautious optimism in view of sales levels getting 'back to normal', the coffee shop now contributing fully and robustly and margins being better and our ability to be able to monitor these realistically. Obviously, income will not be bolstered by furlough and covid grants but it is believed some form of business interruption finance, as a consequence of the pandemic, may be available. However, no income of this nature has been used in any forecasting and planning.

While there were no further questions from the floor, Will Hillary observed that overall, the performance had been good bearing in mind the challenges, and was encouraged for the future. Andrew Jeans thanked Julian for a clear and concise presentation making understanding that much easier.

5. The Management Committee Report

Katie Whitmore opened the address with thanks to Caroline Dutson for all she has done both with the Management Committee from the beginning and before during the pre-planning stage. Her liaison with

the Post Office has ensured all has run smoothly and she was instrumental in getting our current postmaster, Ed Rigg, on board when the original Post Office franchisee decided to stand down.

The Post Office continues to offer a most valuable and much appreciated service. Thanks were extended to Ed and his team for their help and cooperation. It has been confirmed by the Post Office that they will not be able to offer an increased service by opening additional days or hours.

In the Hub, we continue to have four part-time team leaders who assist Tony Patel with his many management duties and obligations, with Kate Woolven appointed as Assistant Manager. We are very grateful to them all for the excellent work they do on our behalf.

The new stock control and EPOS system installed last year has given us a much improved certainty of stock levels and value. Tony and the team deserve many thanks for installing and managing this complex system so efficiently. This system with careful product selection and purchasing is allowing us to continue achieving better margins.

We will strive continuously to review the range and number of products offered for sale in the Shop, to ensure customer wants are satisfied and we will continue to offer good quality food and service in the Coffee Shop.

The number of volunteers continues to be a challenge. In order to publicise Hub involvement by volunteering, and also share ownership, an updated information sheet will be given to all newcomers to the Valley through the village welcoming teams.

If any members wish to volunteer, or they know of anyone who would like to, we would love to hear from them.

Last year we set ourselves specific objectives for the year; to conclude a new lease arrangement with the Landlords; to plan and implement a refurbishment of the Shop area; to do all to ensure that the business can trade profitably thus ensuring its continuity.

Because of the absence of engagement by the Landlords we were not able to achieve a new lease. However, we can report that in this current financial year, a dialogue has at last commenced. More detail will be available in due course.

As a consequence, the current year's objectives remain largely similar; a concrete resolution of the lease issue, of which there is more hope; depending on this, to plan the refurbishment of the shop; to continue to strive for regular, albeit modest, profitability to ensure our future.

Katie concluded by thanking our volunteers, the management and staff, our advisers and the Management Committee members for the collective contributions made to ensure the continuance and success of the Hub.

Finally, she extended thanks to all our customers for their loyal support and their understanding of, and cooperation with, the many changes to operations required by Government regulations.

6. Appointment of Independent Accountants

The service being provided by Clifford Fry & Co continues to be good, as is the working relationship between us, and they have an acknowledged expertise in supporting the 'not for profit' sector. Julian Thomas recommended the re-appointment of the firm, which was proposed by Will Hillary, seconded by John Lace and passed unanimously.

7. To disapply Section 83 of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (duty to appoint auditors) for the Chalke Valley Community Hub Limited

This motion was introduced, and passed, at the last Annual Members' Meeting. For those members not present last time, Terry Jolly outlined the rationale for not seeking an audit of the accounts which, ultimately, ensures that it is a less costly affair. Julian Thomas flagged that much of the reason that the accountant involvement is less is due to the meticulous records maintained by our bookkeeper, Liz Brown, and her overall professionalism. He expressed his thanks for all she does as a valuable member of the Hub's finance team.

Terry Jolly stressed that the authority 'not to audit' is only in place for a year and will need to be considered and voted upon again at our next Annual Members' Meeting.

The motion to disapply Section 83 of the Act was proposed by Di Jeans, seconded by Ann Ferreira and was carried unanimously.

8. Elections to the Management Committee

Caroline Dutson retired by rotation and having been involved since the beginning she has decided to stand down. Terry expressed his sincere thanks for all she has done for the Hub and endorsed the thanks offered by Katie earlier.

Sandra Kidby was willing to stand for election, to take Caroline's place on the Committee. Following a proposal from Hilary Brown and seconded by Ann Ferreira and there being no other previous nominations, she was voted in unanimously.

9. Any other business and points raised by members from the floor

One question and one observation had been put to the Society Secretary prior to the meeting.

Sally Fry asked if the Handbook for Volunteers could be made available again. There are good tips in there which she finds useful. John Lace confirmed he has the master file as it was the intention to review and update the document. It is quite large and perhaps could be produced in an abridged form as an aide memoire for both new and existing volunteers.

The Management Committee will take this forward.

Ashley Truluck wished to highlight the success of the Hub at the recent Wiltshire Life Awards. Terry read out Ashley's congratulations and comments on achieving runner up in the independent retailer category. He highlighted this is county wide and we were up against very stiff competition. Even getting to the short list stage was an achievement.

Kate Woolven, the Hub's deputy manager who was attending the AMM for the first time, was invited to say a few words about the Awards Ceremony Dinner which she attended with the other Hub staff members. It was an enjoyable and entertaining evening with good excitement generated during the awards announcements. The ultimate winner in their category was a very large retail outlet whose operations are more 'supermarket' and not at all comparable to the Hub and the other nominees. Kate and her colleagues consider they were the real winners!

Ann Ferreira advised that there are new volunteers coming through which is encouraging and we would love to see more coming through.

Hilary Brown expressed thanks and appreciation for the superb job Jayne Thorne is doing in ensuring the Coffee Shop remains hugely popular and in demand.

With there being no further questions from the floor, the meeting closed at 8.05pm after which refreshments were provided.