*EngageMalvern*

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Lansdowne Crescent Methodist Church, 11th February 2019 from 18.00.

TRUSTEES present: Andrew Webb (Chairperson), David Tweats (Secretary), Eoin McCarthy, Ruth Forecast; Barry Jones

Treasurer: Colin Reed

Other Attendees: Laurie Gregory (Foster Care Co-operative); Tony Vere (Secretary, Lansdowne Methodist Church); Sue Nichols (Jigsaw Worcestershire, Mental Health relatives and Carers Support Group); Melanie Jameson (Malvern Quakers and member of Malvern Welcomes); John O’Loghlen (former Director of the Malvern Hills CAB)

Apologies: Peter Buchanan; David Kitcat; Cally Law; Steve Smart; Paula Kingston; Rev Nigel Coke-Woods; Nat Macara; Gwyneth Tweats

1. Welcome from the Chairman

The EM Chairman, Andrew Webb, warmly welcomed the attendees to the 2019 AGM of EngageMalvern.

1. Chairman’s report

The following report was delivered by Andrew Webb, The Chairperson:

The year 2018 was the first full year of EngageMalvern as a registered charity and it has been a busy one, with progress against both objectives of community organising and advancement of education:

To develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged, and socially disadvantaged communities of Malvern and its surrounding villages in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs and to participate more fully in society.

The advancement of education for the public benefit in Malvern and surrounding villages in South Worcestershire and North Herefordshire in the areas of citizenship, science, religion, philosophy and ethics.

On community organising, two trustees attended a Citizen’s UK (CUK) training day in Merthyr Tydfil in January. This was a taster event for the national 6-day training provided by CUK. It was helpful in promoting the process advocated by CUK to elicit change and in providing some training in negotiation. In October, Alison Webster of the Oxford Diocese reported on her experience of the 6-day CUK national course. She found that the training was inspirational and empowering. She felt that it would be of great benefit for EM to send people to receive this training if we want to get involved in community organising. We have received a donation to send two people on the national 6-day course and we are currently seeking candidates to attend the course in 2019.

A subgroup of Trustees has been developing a strategic plan for the community organising element of EngageMalvern. Looking ahead, we plan to focus on three main areas: Really-Affordable Housing; Integrated and Connected Transport; and Community-based Social Care. However, a key requirement is the appointment and training of central Community Organisers (full-time/part-time/voluntary), establishment of working links with key stakeholders in the projects.

On the educational objective, two successful Lansdowne debates have taken place (on the effect of budget cuts on schools and on the consequences of Brexit). The next debate is in March on the future for young people in Malvern. The Festival of Ideas in March 2018 was cancelled due to the ‘Beast from the East’, but two of the talks (Clare Short and Paul Rogers) and the children’s activity day were rearranged to take place in the Spring. The 2019 event, on Crisis, will be opened by Lord Owen. It has received a lot of interest, with bookings substantially exceeding previous years. An emphasis this year will be identifying partners and sponsors for continuing the event in future years.

Other key activities include

* Development of a website. This is now online with details of projects and policies. We shall need someone to maintain the website
* Trustees have also been putting in place necessary policies for the charity:
  + Safeguarding
  + Partnering and sponsoring – this is an important area of activity for 2019
  + Privacy
* Setting up a Bank Account

During the year, Revd Dr Barrie Hinksman formally resigned as a Trustee. Barrie was instrumental in the establishment of the charity and we are very grateful for all the work he has done for EngageMalvern. We wish him well in his retirement. Two other founding Trustees, Cathy Jackson-Reed and Jill Freeth stood down since EngageMalvern became a charity. We were pleased to welcome Eoin McCarthy to the Trustees in June and Colin Reed who joined in October to be EM Treasurer.

1. Community Organising Projects

Eoin briefly outlined the progress we are making with identifying the projects we feel have priority and which will form the basis of subsequent applications for grants.

With regard to social care, the market is dominated by ‘private for profit’ provision. We are aware of alternative, community-based models which provide a high-quality service at lower cost and pay staff a true ‘Living Wage’ e.g. in Harrogate and Hebden Bridge. Thus, it is the intention for EM to drive for similar schemes locally, such as the Co-operative model for social care being proposed by Laurie Gregory.

The relative lack of truly affordable homes in the MHDC area is a major concern for many local people. It is the intention of EM to assist in the provision of Community-based Land Trusts in the Malvern area, working with the community, land owners and the Local Authority. The process will begin with the gifting of land, which will grant the donors considerable tax benefits. Nationally, there are approximately 300 housing units per Community Land Trust. It is anticipated that the costs per housing unit will be in the area of 40% of current market values. To this end we are meeting with experts and interested parties to better understand the process and to enable us to make grant applications to facilitate the setting up of local Trusts.

EM has made a submission to the ongoing Malvern Town’s Neighbourhood Plan, to request consideration of Community-based Land Trusts as part of the Plan.

There is currently no Local Authority-led licensing scheme for landlords providing properties to rent. EM will be pressing for such as scheme to help raise standards.

Bus services to rural areas adjacent to Malvern have been cut or have ceased all together. There is a need for a new, integrated strategy to mitigate this situation. EM has been invited to participate in a workshop hosted by the MHDC, which will look at the new public transport strategy being proposed by the Worcestershire County Council and the role of subsidies by the MHDC for Community-based transport. EM is aware of a car share scheme for 150 users which makes the most of technology to provide Community transport at costs of only 50% of similar providers. There is potential value in co-ordination between different transport providers, by making use of similar technology. In addition, Eoin has devised a questionnaire to be distributed to local villages to determine the needs of local residents and their preferred options. This will be distributed by Citizens Advice, South Worcestershire. A question was raised suggesting the transport questionnaire could be made available online.

The incidence of alcohol-related liver disease in the MHDC area is relatively one of the highest in Worcestershire. EM intends to commission some research to understand the underlying causes to inform some possible remedial measures in the future.

1. Secretary’s report

The following report was delivered by the Secretary, David Tweats:

As reported by our Chairman Andrew, we achieved Charitable Status on 10th October 2017and our Charity number is 1175088. Also as Andrew reported we had three of the founding Trustees leave and two joined. Today we need to formally ratify the election of the Reverend Lynne Sparkes from St Mary’s Church Pickersleigh as a new Trustee. Lynne’s term will be for 3 years. The terms of office of the founding Trustees were staggered so that all do not have to be replaced or need to be re-elected at the same time. So Barry’s term will be to 10/10/19; David and Ruth 10/10/20 and Andrew and Eoin 10/10/21.

We are also very grateful to Colin Reed for agreeing to be out Treasurer. An AGM is normally held at the end of the Financial Year, when audited accounts are available, but as there were no accounts to file for EM for the previous year, we have decided to hold our AGM at this point. Our next AGM will be in tune with the next financial year.

Since we became a registered charity, this is the 5th meeting of the Trustees and we set up the subgroup on fund-raising at the end of last year, which has held two meetings to date.

To further our ambitions to become active in Community Organising, we wish to build an alliance of like-minded Community groups to bring a co-ordinated approach to tackling key issues that affect our community and to create leverage with those with the power to make decisions. We have an agreement with both Lansdowne Crescent Methodist Church and with the charity Malvern Welcomes to work together on common issues and to support each other’s ongoing work where we can. We wish to expand this group so that we can tackle the issues of truly affordable housing, an integrated approach to public transport and to progress provision of community-based social care. We continue to have links with Citizens UK and will take advantage of the excellent training they provide in Community Organising and their guidance in the strategies we will follow to achieve our objectives.

As Andrew said we are developing the necessary policies that we need to meet our obligations as a registered charity, in particular, safeguarding and privacy policies. All our policies will be present on the EngageMalvern website, engagemalvern.org.uk. We are very grateful to Jacob Webb for developing the website, which we will keep up to date with our ongoing events, policies and initiatives, so please look at this from time to time to follow our progress. I am grateful to Jacob and to Gwyneth Tweats for their help with IT issues.

Finally, I would like to add my thanks to Andrew and the current Trustees for their service on the Board and to the Trustees who have stood down, Cathy Jackson-Reed, Jill Freeth and in particular to the previous Secretary, Barrie Hinksmann for his help and guidance.

1. Trustee election

Reverend Lynne Sparkes was elected by a unanimous vote to become an EM Trustee. The term of office will be for 3 years i.e. until 11th February 2022.

1. Financial Report

The following report was delivered by the Treasurer Colin Reed:

I’m almost in the position of Liam Byrne the former secretary to the Treasury under Prime Minister Gordon Brown who wrote to his successor, “I’m afraid there is no money.” Currently, there is no bank account either. However, that is about to change. There are three main items to report as follows.

1. Andrew Webb has kindly taken on application for a Community Directplus account with the Co-operative Bank. They have received our application and accepted it. I should be hearing from them imminently (within 7-10 working days of 7th February). The expected signatories for transactions are:

* Andrew Webb - Chair
* David Tweats - Secretary
* Colin Reed - Treasurer

1. We ‘almost’ have some funds in the form of a cheque to the value of £1500 sent to myself as the Treasurer. The donor wishes to remain anonymous. The cheque was received on 25th June 2018; so, we are anxious to have it banked as soon as possible. It is gift-aided (with a completed declaration form); so, we should receive another £375 eventually - making a total of £1875. The donor’s intention was that the money be used to support two candidates for training by Citizens UK - or whatever else the Trustees may decide.
2. David Tweats has looked into our annual return to the Charity Commission. It now appears that we don’t have to make a return until 31st December 2019 - to cover the period from 10th October 2017 (when EngageMalvern was first registered) to 31st December 2018. (We are unable to make a return before registering a bank account.)

This is the shortest report I expect to make.

1. Grant applications

Barry gave a review of the likely approach and scope of the grant applications to be made by EM in the future, as below:

**Outline EM Proposal for Community Organising and Charitable Cooperatives and Trusts Programme in Malvern Hills town and country areas**

Programme costs: £200,000 over 3 years => two Community Organising officers +office support.

£100,000 via donations (mostly “in-kind”, eg denoted land for housing—for some people may be set against tax liabilities, provision of office).

£100,000 via grant (eg the Methodist Church central justice fund, the Big Issue social fund).

Project 1: “Really-Affordable **Housing**”: Local Housing Trust (LHT).

Project 2: “Integrated and Connected **Transpor**t”: Local Transport Trust (LTT).

Project 3: “**Social Care** User-plus- Employee Cooperative” (SCC).

Project 4: “Reduction in Alcohol and Drug Access and Abuse”: research into means for reduction in alcohol/drug outlets in locality.

Project 5: Appointment and training of central Community Organisers (COs) (full-time/part-time/ voluntary), establishment of working links with Local Authorities et al and establishment of the Voluntary Community Implementation Groups who will implement the projects with support from the COs and in association with the LAs et al.

Year 1 Projects 5, 1, 2 and 3.

Year 2 Projects 1, 2 and 3.

Year 3 Projects 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Outcomes: trained Community Organisers, operational charitable trusts/cooperative (housing, transport, social care) and reduction in alcohol and drug abuse, all to be described in a newly published manual as exemplars for small town-country areas.

Responsible for and oversight of the Programme: EM with inputs from associates (eg local churches, and established groups, national organisations).

1. AOB

There were no further issues raised.