

Minutes of FCC Trustees held on 02/02/2022

1) **Chairs Introduction**

Trevor welcomed everyone to this meeting.

- 2) **Present:** Trevor Parsons (Chair), Peter Jones (Treasurer), David Martin (Vice Chair), Momotaz Rahim, Zanna Millicheap, Val Goodyear Burrows, Catherine Stemple, Vicky Greig, Brendan Murphy, Jackie Brennan, Cathie Crowne (Manager), Ann Blassberg (Friend)

Apologies: None were received.

3) **Any outstanding matters**

All matters from last meeting will be addressed within the following agenda items.

4) **Managers Report**

- a) We are still receiving enquiries for bookings every day; adhoc bookings and regular ones Some potential users are deciding to look elsewhere because of the prospect of us closing in the summer.
- b) Many of our current users are in the process of booking other venues from July onwards.
- c) I am waiting anxiously, along with Kindergarten and Playgroup staff, to hear what the news is regarding temporary classrooms that will enable them to carry on with their valuable work.
- d) Zanna and I recently hosted the first of this year's 'Larks In The Parks' meetings to be held on Sunday 10th July – so save that date! It could serve as our celebration of many happy years in this 1940s temporary building.

5) **Financial Statement**

- a) Peter issued an up to date statement of accounts to trustees and highlighted some key numbers. These accounts show 6 months and show income of £22,633 room hire income and £11,000 of grant income. Expenditure in these six months was £27,686.
Bank balance at 31st January 2022 was £69,292.22
Friends balance currently £637.75 after the purchase of the dishwasher.
- b) Peter applied for another Covid recovery grant. We have been notified that we will receive an Omicron grant from government of £2800. Also, we have been notified by the Charities Aid Foundation that there is a donation on our way.
- c) Councillor Anthony Rowlands for Ashley ward, (Chair of St Albans City and District Council's Public Realm Committee and Lead Councillor for a range of community services) has a locality budget and Peter approached him about giving something towards FCC during the period we closed for. Suggestions of how to spend about £1,000 include a new computer system for marketing and the new building and

vouchers for current users towards paying rent if they return to the new building. It cannot be used for the development or running costs. More details to follow. Other suggestions to Peter please.

- 6) **New Build Update & questions** (including the latest report from the council meeting of Tuesday 1st February via Zoom)
- a) Suggestion of Hirer information evening soon to let them know the outline plans including the timeline that was shown at the meeting. The architect and project manager should either host or be present at the event and it will need a display showing all the plans and visualisations that have been created.
Suggestion of evening for local residents with the architect and council project team. Essential to include residents of Royal Road and the school opposite. Maybe these events could both happen on the same evening.
 - b) Conversations about the temporary classrooms. Diagrams were presented to show dimensions and facilities. They will be very expensive for the council but are essential to keep the vital preschool groups running. Many local preschool groups have closed and so council may have seen the need to support us. Discussion followed about whether the temporary buildings could be used for other user groups. Security, cleaning and keeping building safe for the preschool groups was discussed. Rental incomes from other groups could be useful but depends on costs for opening up. Who would manage the bookings for the temporary buildings if we no longer employ a manager? If we did allow other groups to use the portacabins then they would have to be selected by number of people, type of activity and time of day. Health and safety and security, including lighting at night are all relevant factors. More occupancy may deter vandals. Trustees have a responsibility to make best use of the investment the council is making to provide the temporary classrooms.
 - c) Continuing contact with current users was discussed. Cathie has a wealth of knowledge about current users and this will be valuable as we re-open and try to get the users who have located elsewhere to come back to the new building. All trustees agreed that during the closure we need to keep in touch with our current users. Users may not return because relocated to better, cheaper or more comfortable venue. There is a clear role for Cathie as trustee, volunteer or part time staff should she want it in 2023
 - d) Planning application is going in now and result will not be expected until mid April. The contract has been circulated and many companies including Boras have shown interest in it.
 - e) The Charity Commission is still involved with the charity in charge of the rec and the footprint of FCC.
 - f) Marketing the new building before it opens will be vital to ensuring a positive start. Reformatting the current newsletter, developing the existing or a new website, social media and print media all have a role to play.
 - g) Brendan and Jackie will investigate the centre computer, the laptop, the need of a computer for marketing while the centre is closed and the computer that will be needed by the new manager in the new building.

- h) Storage for equipment and white goods which will be retained for the new building was discussed. David made it clear that the cost of storage may exceed the cost of the items being stored. Care needed.
- i) Final finishes, fixtures and fittings will need to be clearly discussed in plenty of time so who pays for what can be decided.
- j) A working group will need to be identified to manage the transition out of the old building, during the works and into the new building.
- k) It was suggested that Jay be asked to set up a viewing of the portacabins or very similar ones for Zanna and maybe the playgroup so they could visualise how they would work.
- l) Jackie to check planning portal regularly to find out how the application is going.
- m) David asked about insurance of temporary classrooms while in use by preschool groups. Do SADC do it or do we?
- n) Concern was raised about the type of lighting and exterior fencing that will be in place for entering and exiting the building, especially in winter - muddy and dark!

7) **Sub Committee's Reports**

There were none. All new information included under other headings.

8) **A.O.B.**

- a) Larks in the Parks: July 10th. Zanna and Cathie have suggested that the focus of the Larks event should be to raise funds for fixtures and fittings for the new building. There will be stalls run by the centre to raise money for the centre. Val plans to hold the usual soft toy stall and a bottle stall. Start collecting donations! Teas, coffees and cakes will feature as usual. Music and other stalls as well. Some activities will be in place from SADC.
- b) New edition of the newsletter is under construction by Momotaz and she will pass it on to Jackie for finishing touches before printing and electronic circulation.

- 9) **Date of next meeting:** Discussion about frequency of meetings during the next 6 months. Maybe monthly? Probably fewer while building closed. **Wednesday 2nd March** chosen