

Strathmore Community Hub
SCIO 47244
Fourth Annual General Meeting
26th January 2023

Board of Trustees
Chairman's Report



Welcome and Apologies

Welcome to the fourth AGM of the Strathmore Community Hub SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation). This AGM has been delayed from September 2022 as the Board of Trustees believed there were insufficient signed up, voting members of the Hub at the time the AGM was due in September 2022. Since it was known that the refurbishment should finally be completed and the hub opened in October, the opportunity would arise to focus more resources on recruiting more members and reconnecting with the few members still recorded.

As it is a legal requirement to hold an AGM within 15 months of the last, the charity regulator, OSCR was consulted, and consented to allow the postponement of the AGM until January 2023.

This report covers the period between 03/06//2021 – the date of the last AGM and 26th January 2023. As the report is being prepared in December 2022 any novel or relevant information, which arises up to that date, will be reported on verbally at the AGM. At this point may we remind people intending to attend the AGM in person that only members residing within the postcodes of PH13 and PH10 are permitted to vote.

If you wish to become a member in advance of the AGM, then you can find application forms in the Hub, or you can apply on our website. We also welcome anyone who wishes to become a member who lives outwith those postcodes and their views and opinions will of course be listened to.

We ask that those attending the meeting, and wish to raise a question relating to this report or the financial statement to do so in writing and send it to the Hub manager at admin@strathmorehub.org this is both to save time at the meeting and to allow the trustees time to research answers as fully as possible before the meeting.

We will also be introducing a suggestions box into the Hub atrium in the hope that all Hub users will feel welcome to make suggestions about the running and use of the Hub.

The Board of Trustees

The current trustees are:

- David Downie (Chair)
- John Davies (Treasurer)
- Alan Grant
- Alastair Gemmell
- Susie Black
- Dr. Bob Pawson

Kevin Lancaster, of Watson and Lyall Bowie, is the Board's solicitor.

Board of Trustees activities during the reporting period

The charitable purposes of the SCIO remain unchanged along with the constitution at this time. However, since the hub opened formally on 8th October and has been operating under its full time manager, it is becoming evident that the existing charitable purposes will need to be reviewed in the near future. The trustees are not concerned about the appropriateness of the current purpose but it is rapidly becoming evident that the community's expectations are for it to cater for much wider uses and activities, for example by young people and small children. It is after all a *community* hub. Equipped as it is with a high specification kitchen, large common sitting area and versatile, flexible meeting rooms, it should be adaptable and have capacity enough to continue to provide for its original purposes and accommodate new and novel purposes. The original purposes are to: -

Promote wellbeing and reduce isolation, particularly among older members of the population residing within the postcode areas of PH13 and PH10 by providing a well-equipped and welcoming place for its users to:

- Enjoy, meeting others and get involved in community activities
- Be creative with arts, crafts, music and film
- Provide flexible spaces for small businesses who promote health and wellbeing
- Support wellbeing and companionship for all, such as a Men's Shed and other common interest groups
- Operate a community café and catering facility
- Support day care respite services if possible

Whether these purposes are broad enough to encompass wider uses is a matter for discussion and the trustees very much encourage and welcome your views.

By the time of the last AGM, we were anticipating that the refurbishment contract would be fully let and the contractors, A.C. Shepherd of Forfar, would have taken possession of the site at the end of May. The contract period was estimated at four to five months. That forecast turned out to be very optimistic. Short delays for the final building warrant and factors related to delivery times for materials saw the start push on into summer. It soon became apparent that early Spring would be the earliest completion date and that the pandemic was already having an impact on prices (the cost of the steel for the extension frame almost doubled). Steel delivery time was unpredictable adding to the delay.

During this time the structural engineers discovered a major design issue with the steel frame. The original design engineer had suffered a severe stroke and did not return to work. A senior colleague checking his portfolio discovered the fault and a new design had to be prepared. This in turn required major alterations and additions had to the foundations (nearly double the volume of original concrete). We sought advice as to whether we should pursue a claim against the consultants but were advised this would halt the project and lead to the main contractor claiming compensation for prolongation of the contract.

In September 2021, the basic steel frame was in place and we thought rapid progress would take. However, following a complaint to Perth and Kinross Council Planning Dept. by a near neighbour about the proximity of the frame gable to their property, planning enforcement officers decided to halt the project and investigate the claim. Sadly, once again it proved that a design error had been made and not checked thoroughly before the frame was erected. This time the design fault was in the original architect drawings. Our architect acknowledged blame and advised that we should make a claim against his professional indemnity insurance. Meantime the Council confirmed that the error was significant enough that it would require a material change to the original application for planning consent. We therefore had to reapply for planning consent for the whole project. Fortunately, the Council did not place a stop notice on the original hub building so some work could go on while the planning application ran its course. That delay lasted just over three months.

Work did not recommence until the Spring of 2022. The second lockdown further delayed the work. Prices had continued to rise all through this time. Social distancing and isolation had a heavy impact on the labour element of the work. The Council acknowledged that the rise in costs would need further support and offered another £125,000, which we felt confident, would cover the increases. From an original revised tender sum of £533,956 plus VAT (the SCIO is not exempt from VAT) the estimated final forecast is £701,658 plus VAT. Despite completion and building warrant certificates being issued, half the tender retention monies being released (normal practice for building contracts deemed to be on track), we are still awaiting the final account invoice from the contractor. This is partly because there were a large number

of uncompleted tasks along with snagging. For example, a number of light fittings are still awaited and a filtration system is absent from the kitchen air extraction. We can report that fault rectification is slowly progressing.

Formal Opening of the Hub

Many of you reading this attended the formal opening of the Hub on 8th October by our MSP John Swinney. We took the decision to open the Hub and start operating it rather than wait until the contractors had completely finished their work. Given the rate of progress since then, this was a good decision although there has still not been a formal hand over which would normally include instructions relating to the operation of the buildings various systems. We were also in a more secure position as regards the management and operation of the hub having appointed a full time hub manager, Graeme Dawson, back in August. Much progress had been made with preparation of the legally required operation protocols such as risk assessments and health and safety policies. A website and online booking system was put in place and the Hub's social media presence was revived.

Current Activities and the Future

We are very optimistic about the future of the hub at this time. Perth and Kinross Council awarded the hub a grant of nearly £3000 for the winter Warm Space initiative and we have welcomed a steady 20+ local people to the regular Thursday soup lunches. The grant also covers providing a TV, magazines and newspapers and warm packs for those who need extra basic warm clothing.

We are currently in the process of setting up a community fridge with another small grant. This is not a food bank but a system which helps people get access to food, which would otherwise go to landfill or compost. Supermarkets currently throw away a large amount of food, which is at its sell by date but not its use-by date. You may well have come across these outlets in Dundee, Perth, Woodside and Alyth. They do need volunteers to help run and you will already know that we are asking volunteers to come forward and give whatever time they can afford across a range of activities.

You will probably have taken part in a number of the events and activities now running in the hub. Our income is as yet small but appears to be keeping ahead of the running costs. It is too early, with the hike in inflation and energy cost, to be certain that we can be fully self-sufficient but we believe the challenges ahead will be met.

A strong condition on that prediction does lie with the community. The Hub membership is now nearly at 90 but it is absolutely crucial that we recruit more trustees with appropriate skills. Ideally, we need some younger people and also people from other ethnic groups within the community. So, please consider very carefully if you would like to investigate what it entails to be a trustee. Now that the busy refurbishment project and the establishment of

management and operational procedures have mostly been completed, it is anticipated that future board meetings should be held no more than once a calendar month at most. Trustee application forms are held at the Hub, and you can find more details on being a trustee on our website. Nominations for trustees will also be invited at the AGM.

Financial Matters

A financial statement covering the this AGM reporting period is being prepared and will be circulated prior to the meeting.

Finally

Please consider attending the AGM. It is vital to the future well being of the Hub and of course the community that it serves through its charitable purposes. Remember if you live within PH13 and PH10 you can vote at the meeting. Again, if you would like to ask a question at the AGM it would help us greatly to have this in writing beforehand.

On behalf of the Trustees of Strathmore Community Hub.

David Downie

Chair, Strathmore Community Hub

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