



**MINUTES OF
THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF
CITY OF CHELMSFORD MENCAP
RCN245421
RCN1171835**

Held on Wednesday 15th May 2024 at 7.00pm

Mencap Centre

President: Sandra Morton-Nance

Trustees attending:

Chris Newson, Neil Barnes, Alan Stoppard, Philip Preston, Anthony North, Sarah Sadler

Staff attending:

Emma O'Riordan, Duncan McKenzie, Naomi Toms, Jan Hewett, Bernadette Bass

Members attending:

Bryan Powell, Pearl Powell, Linda Barnes, Jennie Cappin, Robert Cappin, Chris Davy, Marc Ellin, Steven Gent, Brian Goodwin, Philippa Goodwin, Pam Groveham, Anne Hickey, Conor Hickey, Mick Langley, Liz Mckenzie, Natalie North, Helen Paffey, Kyproulla Pierides, Anne Roberts, Nick Ross, Kevin Sadler, Anthony Sherreard, Lesley Sherreard, Yasemin Smith, Bernie Sparks, David Wheelhouse, Beverley Holliby, Alex Holliby, Hannah Pike, Paula Ross, Issy Ross, Peter Smith, Andrew Toms.

1. President's Welcome and Apologies

Anthony North opened the proceedings by welcoming everyone to the meeting on behalf of the President, Sandra Morton-Nance, who was unable to attend. Apologies were received from trustees Rachel Scott and Elliot Johnstone. Apologies were also received from

Members Evelyn Hicks, Claire Wightman, Henrietta Tyler, Andy Smith, Kerry Wilshaw, Jan Lawson and Cameron North.

Trustee Abi Krone is currently on maternity leave and we congratulate her on the safe arrival of Jake, born at 10.33 last Thursday. Members ask that their good wishes be passed onto Abi, Matt and Josh.

Chair's opening remarks

The board is delighted that we have finally returned to a larger format for our AGM and we welcome all members and guests here this evening. It is wonderful to see so many familiar faces and we especially welcome those that have not been in Mencap Centre for some time, including former Chairs and trustees of the charity. We look forward to catching up with all members present over some traditional CCM hospitality at the conclusion of the meeting.

For those unfamiliar with our refreshed calendar, we moved our AGMs to April or May in 2022 so that we are reporting on the prior calendar year as soon as possible after the finalisation of our annual accounts. Whilst this may be the final AGM under our existing registration, the board intends to keep to this timetable under the proposed CIO.

I would like to remind you that all members of the charity are entitled to vote on any matter in that capacity. Every member's vote carries equal weight. Our board of trustees, myself included, are voting as members of the charity and we have no special status on any vote at a General Meeting other than if a casting vote is required.

With that said, I call to order the 2024 Annual General Meeting of City of Chelmsford Mencap and I turn to the agenda which you can see on the screen to your left.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM

We start with the minutes of our previous Annual General Meeting held on 5th April 2023. This meeting was stripped back to the minimum required format and no special business was conducted. Our thanks to Neil for the timely production and circulation of the minutes, which have also been made available on the CCM website in advance of this meeting.

The motion is that the meeting approves the minutes of the 2023 AGM. This was proposed by Bryan Powell, seconded by Pearl Powell.

To approve the minutes of the 2023 AGM.

For	Against
36	0

The minutes were **APPROVED**.

3. Special Resolutions

The board of trustees have tabled two special resolutions to put to members this evening. If approved, these would authorise the board to change the structure of the charity from a

charitable association to a charitable incorporated organisation or CIO and, at the same time, to wind down the existing structure.

Members have been given background information on this proposal in a variety of formats including an Easy Read version and a short verbal overview this evening. This includes the changes to our governing document and proposed wording of our new Objects, both of which are part and parcel of our move to a CIO for which you are about to vote on.

We will take the two resolutions as a block vote since they are dependent on each other.

Under the current constitution of the charity, 75% of members present must vote in favour of the change for the vote to be considered valid. With 39 members here this evening this means that for the resolutions to pass we require 30 to vote in favour.

I shall read the resolutions for those unable to see them on the screen behind me.

Resolution 1 is to change the structure of City of Chelmsford Mencap from a charitable association (registration number 245421) to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation - CIO (registration number 1171835) and adopt the new Objects of the CIO.

Resolution 2 is to close the current charitable association (registration number 245421).

These were proposed by Anthony North, seconded by Nick Ross.

To approve the change in structure to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (RCN 1171835) and close the Charitable Association (RCN 245241).

For	Against
39	0

Special Resolution 3.1 and 3.2 were **APPROVED** unanimously.

With 39 votes cast in favour of the resolutions I declare they are passed and that the board of trustees may now move to complete the transition at the date it determines is most appropriate. Thank you.

4. Ordinary Resolutions

4.1 Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements

Report of the Trustees

We return now to the ordinary business of the meeting starting with the report of the trustees and the annual financial statements. Both of these have been circulated in advance and we don't propose going through them in detail. Instead we will have a brief summary of each. In a moment our Treasurer, Chris, will give an overview of the financial side of the charity but, firstly, one of our Vice Chairs, Sarah, will tell you about some of our activities during 2023.

The board has published its annual report for 2023 on our website and all those who registered to attend this evening have been sent the link. I would like to give you a flavour of some the report's contents before Anthony asks members to adopt it formally.

2023 was another very busy year at CCM with lots of activity across all our services and behind the scenes too. As we have reported in previous AGMs, our emergence from the pandemic was deliberately cautious and controlled and it therefore particularly pleasing to be able to present the first report in a few years where that issue has not been a factor upon service provision.

Starting with our key metrics, we ended the year with 210 service users and 266 members of the charity. We had three full-time members of staff, 14 part-time staff and one regular member of bank staff. In addition, we had contracts with self-employed tutors for some of our classes. We operated on five days a week for 50 weeks of the year, apart from three days where extreme weather prevented us from opening for safety reasons.

We continued our excellent relationships with Chelmsford College, Anglia Ruskin University and Essex University and were able to facilitate placement opportunities for an increased number of their students throughout the year. It is very pleasing that some of these have looked to further develop their experience through becoming volunteers or bank staff with the charity.

The Outreach Academy, our lifelong learning service flourished throughout the year and we were delighted to welcome new students as well as others who re-joined after following a break. We ended the year with 60 students attending the Outreach Academy on a regular basis and it was a pleasure to see this building regularly full and to marvel at the enthusiasm and enjoyment of our students as they developed their confidence and skills in a safe and caring environment.

Our timetable followed its regular pattern but was enhanced through regular visits and trips as well as guest speakers and tutors. We continue to see significant benefits with students working collaboratively in groups, something that obviously much-missed during the extended period of social distancing.

Our social enterprises continued to grow throughout the year, our students created a variety of products that were put on sale around Chelmsford city centre and they also designed a new range of Christmas cards which proved very popular. Our new horticultural enterprise, In Spades, gained their first contract, maintaining the gardens at Essex Community Foundation's new premises. Our In Production team wrote and starred in an education film about aspiration and pneumonia as well a number of information videos for Mid and South Essex NHS Trust.

Our "Working Out" initiative aims to provide fully supported work trainee placements and we saw two of these develop throughout the year. In partnership with Chelmsford CVS, we set up and ran a weekly café at Chelmsford Indoor Market and I'm delighted that one of our trainees, Conor, is with us this evening. I'm sure he would love to tell you all about the café later. We also developed a partnership with Havens Hospices which provided placements for four trainees in one of their charity shops. We are very grateful to all the partners who work with us to enable such placement opportunities and we will look to expand this initiative in the months to come.

Our Advocacy and Community Support service, led by Jan, had another very busy year and she continues this important aspect of our work well beyond Chelmsford, in fact across the entire central belt of the county. With no two cases the same, Jan provides advice, information and advocacy on a huge range of issues including benefits, housing and support

planning. We are also very proud of the Carers Connect sessions, again led by Jan, which take place in this room monthly. These allow carers to hear directly from local experts and practitioners on a variety of topics. The feedback for them has been excellent.

A quick word on events in 2023 because it is so nice to have these back on our schedule. In addition to Essex Book Festival and Chelmsford Radio Drama Festival, we were pleased to participate in Volfest, the annual volunteer recruitment and celebration event on the High Street and Chelmsford Carnival. We were also represented at an increased number of civic events throughout the year.

The board constantly looks for opportunities to increase our awareness of the charity and our exposure within the local area. A good example occurred in April, Anthony was the guest speaker at Essex Community Foundation's Spring Reception. He was able to update over 100 attendees on the charity's mission and recent progress. VIP guests included the Lord Lieutenant of Essex, the Bishop of Chelmsford, and the Deputy Chief Constable of Essex Police.

Likewise, in June we were honoured with a visit from the Chief Executive of Royal Mencap Society, Edel Harris, who saw various classes in action and met with Anthony and representatives of the board. Her feedback on what she saw and learned was extremely positive and has led to a number of joint initiatives.

And finally, of course, we returned to Chelmsford Cathedral for our annual concert. As many of you know, this was a wonderful event and reminded us how much we had missed it with three years away. Our own choir, Awesome Beats Collective were wonderful and there was barely a dry eye in the audience as we listened to CCM member Charlotte's wonderful solo. It was a very special occasion that will live long in the memory.

This has only been a very brief overview of our activity throughout 2023 and much more detail can be found in the report. It's safe to say that 2024 has continued in much the same way and we look forward to talking to you about that. Please do keep an eye on our social media channels where we regularly share all our updates.

Financial Statements

The back drop against which we are operating is that post-Covid, donations to UK charities have approximately halved. Additionally, the number of people donating dropped by around 5 million and this continues to drop. There is some mitigation in that those who continue to donate are giving more. All this means that many charities are struggling financially and there is much more competition for grants to top up income. Fortunately, due to the hard work of Grace Lidstone and Bernadette Bass, we get more than our fair share of grant money.

Against this backdrop, we are in relatively good health. We posted a small surplus for 2023, although this was only after using some of our reserves. Our reserves continue to remain healthy, at current levels covering approximately 2 years of net costs, although there are quite a lot of variables in that calculation. We always maintain at least 3 months' worth of costs on instant or near instant access with the rest on short term deposit.

We have been working on an income strategy over the last year. We consider our fees to be competitive and most importantly, affordable for our users, however they should better reflect the high quality service provided by our excellent staff and volunteers. Ideally our income would match our costs so that if we are able to secure grant money, it can be used for projects or any unexpected major expenditure.

To summarise, we have a future plan to increase income, we are in relatively good health currently, however there is no room for complacency.

As you have heard, 2023 was a very busy year on the services front and 2024 has continued in much the same way. We have a very exciting curriculum planned for the coming months and we can't wait to share our news and progress via our member updates and social media channels.

I would now like to ask members to adopt the Trustees Report and Financial Statements.

This was proposed by Robert Cappin, seconded by Natalie North.

To approve the report of trustees and financial statements.

For	Against
39	0

Ordinary Resolution 4.1 was **APPROVED** unanimously.

The Trustees Report and Financial Statements are approved. Thank you.

4.2 Appointment of Independent Examiners

Our final resolution this evening is the appointment of the independent examiners of the charity's accounts. As our income does not exceed £1m per annum, we are not required to have a full audit but our accounts must be examined by a person or organisation approved by the Charities Act of 2011. We have a long established relationship with NSO Associates on Springfield Road who also provide payroll services to CCM. They understand us, our financial records and are a trusted advisor to the board. Importantly, they also have an excellent working relationship with Bernadette, our financial administrator.

The board recommends that NSO Associates be reappointed for the year to come and they have confirmed that they are willing to act in this capacity.

This was proposed by Nick Ross, seconded by Connor Hickey.

To approve the reappointment of NSO Associates.

For	Against
39	0

Ordinary Resolution 4.2 was **APPROVED** unanimously.

Thank you. I declare that NSO Associated are duly appointed.

5. Any Other Business

We turn now to Any Other Business and I shall lead on this item with an update on the senior personnel of the charity.

I will start with the Board of Trustees.

The board has been notified of the resignation of Elliot Johnstone. During his short tenure in the role, Elliot provided invaluable advice and experience from his vantage as a leading management consultant in the City. Sadly, for us at least, he has seen a significant increase in his volume of work, necessitating frequent overseas travel. He has therefore regrettably decided to step down and we hope this measure is temporary and not permanent. The board thanks him for his service to CCM.

The board does keep a register of people who have expressed an interest in becoming a CCM trustee. If you know anybody who might be interested in joining your board, please let me know.

Moving now to our honorary non-executive positions. The transition to a CIO feels like a watershed moment for the charity and it is for this reason that our President, Sandie Morton-Nance has decided to step down at the effective date.

When the story of CCM is turned into a Netflix mini-series (it can only be a matter of time) Sandie will be played by a Hollywood A-Lister, such is her significance to our history. A former trustee and Chair of Trustees, she is, quite simply, a key reason that we are here tonight and that the charity is in such good health. That wasn't always the case but it was through her perseverance that some challenging times were overcome. Her extensive knowledge and experience in the fields of health, social care and, of course, learning disability were instrumental in ensuring that City of Chelmsford Mencap (including under previous names) gained the reputation and respect that your board strives to uphold today. Her dedication to the training of our staff team was inspirational and is yet another part of her legacy to us. We will share further stories and reflections on what Sandie means to CCM in the weeks to come but for now I would ask you to join me in a round of applause as a token of members' appreciation.

Sandie leaves big shoes to fill – to put it mildly. But this is CCM and we have outstanding contributors left right and centre. On Monday this week, one of these accepted my invitation, on behalf of the entire Board, to become our new President.

Bryan Powell is another CCM legend. Brad Pitt has already been signed up for the Netflix gig when shooting commences. Bryan's association with CCM stretches back nearly 20 years and has taken many forms. He has been a volunteer a trustee and, I'm proud to say, my first Vice Chair. Let me tell you a quick story that shows the measure of the man. When the vacancy for Chair of Trustees arose in July 2020, with the pandemic raging, the board met on Zoom to determine what to do next. Bryan offered his services to get us through the immediate period of time and everybody thanked him profusely. I said that I had more time to give to the charity if that might be useful - but I was very conscious that I was the most junior trustee on the board at the time and still learning the ropes. Without missing a beat, Bryan immediately jumped in and said "great, if Anthony will do it then he has my vote and

I'd like to stand as vice chair". It was such an amazing moment and, I think, demonstrates his kindness and generosity. I, for one, will never forget it.

Bryan's knowledge of our charity, its mission and its people in encyclopaedic and he is a fine ambassador for us amongst the local rotary clubs and far beyond. He will take up the role of CCM President upon our conversion to the CIO (so another reason to get on with it). I'm delighted to be able to share this news with you this evening and perhaps you will join me in congratulating him.

We are currently on Any Other Business. Are there any questions from the floor? Of course, the trustees are happy to discuss general charity matters during the buffet.

6. Vote of Thanks

In true CCM tradition, we close our meeting with a vote of thanks. This is probably one of my favourite moments of the year since I – and the board – are thankful for so many individual and group contributions that make CCM such a special community. I'm often asked why I love this charity as much as I do and I always give the same answer, probably shared by many of you, which is "please come to Mencap Centre and spend an hour watching our service provision. Watch the smiles, listen to the laughter, and embrace the Mencap Magic".

All of this requires a lot of dedication from a lot of people. Let me invite you to thank some of them.

- Thank you to all our support staff and tutors. We have such a great team of frontline Outreach Academy staff who do so much to make this building such a safe, welcoming, and stimulating environment for all our students and service users. I never tire of saying that every single student at CCM has a talent or a skill or an aptitude that we can develop. Our staff make it their mission to find that and then develop it and share it with the wider community so that every CCM student takes their rightful place at the heart of our community. Thank you to our wonderful front of house team.
- Sometimes the Outreach Academy grabs all of our headlines for very understandable reasons. But it is only one part of our mission and our service provision. I think most people here this evening know Jan but you may not be aware that we have rebranded the valuable service she provides as "Advocacy and Community Support". This is important because she is the person taking CCM well beyond the boundary walls of the City of Chelmsford. She has many complex and challenging cases, and her cheery approach is accompanied with a relentless determination to deliver the best results for the people she works with. We – and the LD community - are so grateful to her.
- And now, our behind-the-scenes team. Actually, they aren't really behind the scenes at all because they are fully involved with our students and service users. Bernadette keeps a steely eye over our finances and Rachel keeps a steely eye over all of us including me. Thank you both. Your contribution to tonight's AGM in different ways is appreciated by all of us.
- Next, our volunteers. Like any charity, we are heavily reliant on the time and goodwill of lovely people that share our philosophy. We continue to attract new volunteers, including from the annual Volfest event on Chelmsford High Street, and most stay with us once they are hooked. Thank you to our volunteers.

- Next, our trustees. As your Chair, I'm so lucky to work with the people sitting alongside me. Please always remember that your board of trustees are all volunteers. They give their time, enthusiasm and expertise without any expectation of reward other than sharing in the CCM magic. Running even a small charity like ours needs a lot of time and focus and dedication. Our trustees have loads of each of these. We work together individually and as a team. We are open and honest and passionate about doing the best for CCM. Thank you trustees; it is a pleasure and an honour to work with you.
- I don't normally single out individual members of staff but tonight I will make an exception for Grace. You don't need me to tell you about her passion for CCM and its wider community but I'd like to pay tribute to it here. Her ability to manage so many moving parts of CCM is extraordinary, whether that be service user transport, constantly changing rotas, curriculum development, staff training or the diary of the Chair, she is all over every moving part of CCM. I think everybody in this room – and well beyond – owes a debt of thanks to Grace.
- You all know where I will conclude. Exactly where I should. With our students and service users. It means the world that we have some of our student community in the room this evening. Exactly where they should be – at the heart of everything we do. I would like to thank them and their friends for impressing us and giving us joy every single day. I remember my first Christmas Concert in Chelmsford Cathedral in December 2019. We didn't know then that we would be away for four years, In his speech Nick said to our students "you are the reason that we do what we do" and I can't put it any better than that. So I will leave that there.

Please join me in a round of applause for all of the above.

That concludes our 2024 Annual General Meeting. Please join us for something to eat and drink. We have some of our photo highlights to show on the TV screen.

I certify this is a complete and accurate record of the above meeting.



Anthony North
Chair of Trustees
6th June 2024