



CHARLES BURRELL CENTRE

MINUTES

Annual General Meeting of Charles Burrell Centre Ltd

Thursday 28th July 2022, 6pm – 7pm

Welcome & Apologies: The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were recorded.

Conflict of Interest Declarations: None declared.

Minutes of 2021 AGM: Approved.

Chief Executive's Report:

For 2021-22 CBC was as unique as ever. There was much to celebrate with great achievements individually and collectively. We should remember that we were still in the midst of the pandemic which required a significant number of restrictions and yet the businesses and organisations who use the Centre were able to operate and showed a remarkable resilience. Indeed, in the last quarter of the period the 'bounce back' was marked. This has continued into the new period. The Centre itself also evolved and has been able to support the community in many different ways.

Through the first half of the period the Centre emerged from lockdowns of the previous year. The Furlough scheme closed, and the Centre staff were all back to work by the end of summer. Other Government grants had been sufficient to sustain the Centre and all those businesses who applied for them. This is remarkable and we should not underplay the achievement of that success.

Staff and volunteers: Over the period we have seen some staff turnover and the core team is now only nine. The most significant addition to the team has been the recruitment of a Finance Manager. We have a core of loyal volunteers although overall numbers are much less than in previous years. Both staff and volunteers have been exemplary in approach, attitude and accomplishment. They are amazing and have achieved so much. Some have been recognised – Billie and Phil at the TARAs and Barbara with the Platinum Champions Award – one of only 490 across the UK. But each and every member of the team have been force multipliers. And if you stop and reflect on what they do today and what has been achieved on top of that you will marvel at their commitment and dedication to the Centre.

The Centre: The Centre adopted a new logo and strap line; uniting community, learning and business under one roof to reflect the integrated approach it represents. A fusion of the three. It also reflected the integrated approach with other statutory and non-statutory bodies as a trusted partner as a force for good in delivering community benefit. Cosmetically the Centre underwent a spruce up with an internal and external painting project, a deep clean, and some new fixtures and fittings. Externally the grounds work continued to develop and included the removal of an invasive hedge and the establishment of a wellbeing garden project.

Burrell Shop

Opened November 2020 with no chillers, very little in the freezer plenty on the shelves, no members, some volunteers and lots of enthusiasm. We always wanted to offer fresh, frozen and shelf stacker items – everything from fruit and veg, dairy, meat, baked beans, bread, cleaning products and personal care items to pastas, snacks and more. Items we would put in our baskets by *choice*.

Opening with huge support from Norfolk Community Foundation and Breckland and Feeding Britain

who continue to support us we also have regular support from Warburtons; Norfolk County Council; Abreys, Wortleys and Raker Farms; Morrisons Wholesale for Charity; HiSChurch; Thetford United Municipal Trust; FareShare wholesale; Not Just Books; Country Food Trust; Sainsburys Thetford; Tesco Thetford.

Quite apart from the regular partnership working already mentioned we have been fortunate to have local police officer PC Leah working with us, as well as help from Patio Das Cantigas, Fresh Pod, Thetford Grammar School and Local Councillors. We have been able to share some of our surplus donated produce – particularly where it's fresh with other local food projects – Feltwell, Abbey Fridge, Meet and Eat, local hostels, Still Good Food and others.

We have enjoyed partnering and becoming part of a network of organisations across Thetford and beyond. Including the recently launched Nourishing Norfolk Network. And of course, being part of the Feeding Britain network means we can get our local community voice heard at National and Government level. But of course, a Community Shop does not run just because it has food on the shelves. This last 12 months we have had an amazing team of 13 volunteers giving 1350 hours of their time. Without them we could not do what we do. They welcome all into the shop, and look after folks with respect and dignity. They chat to everyone, gaining trust and rapport, they fill shelves, price up, clean – shirt sleeves are rolled up and they “get on with it”. We are lucky to have volunteers from the age of 14 to 68 – all bringing a different vibe to the shop. Younger volunteers gain skills, something for their CV and a job reference for the future. Older volunteers gain confidence and some just have time they want to give to a cause they feel strongly about. All are a massive asset to CBC.

Membership has grown from zero in November 2022 to just over 500 today. We believed we would look after about 200 to 250 households originally but we have exceeded that and over these coming months we expect there to be further demand. Sign up is as un-intrusive as we can make it to encourage as many of our local people on a low income to join as possible. Just a piece of ID with name and address on to show that the person lives in Thetford. Members can be working, a mixture of working and benefits, long term benefits, recently redundant and be single, in a couple, a family or a multi-generational household. Any combination you can think of! Our members are often reticent to come in as they are embarrassed to ask for help, sometimes cannot believe they are “needing” to approach an organisation such as ours. Staff and volunteers alike strive to welcome all potential members in a way that leaves them feeling good about themselves and confident that there's no shame in asking for and needing help. The shop wants to offer member households as close to a normal shopping experience as possible – dignity, choice and low prices. Members often comment that for a place that looks after people often in crisis that there's a lot of laughter to be heard. Shoppers save between 30 and 55% on average for a basket full of shopping, sometimes more. 15% is donated, 85% bought in – so it's a balancing act of using all supply chains open to us Morrisons, His Church, In Kind Direct, donations, FareShare Wholesale, Asda retail and Lidl.

Alongside our volunteers, we of course have the wider team here at CBC who join in with help – pulling carpets up, decorating, taking deliveries when the shop isn't open, digging old floors up, standing in when I am away and so much more – as always it's the CBC family that keep the projects here running. Such a small staff team make a huge difference! The shop was recognised for “Service to the Community” at this year's TARA awards – an award richly deserved by the volunteers and all staff at CBC.

Alongside the shop itself we are now able to partner with the Fuel Bank Foundation, The Hygiene Bank, Healthy Start and New-U Clothing. With grant funding from Feeding Britain we are able to have CAB with us weekly. We also are fortunate to have the Mobile Phone Co with us fortnightly too. This enables us to offer a wraparound care service right here as well as refer people on to other services too. Norfolk County Council are trialling a system similar to the Eden Red schools vouchers that local people can spend in the shop (making their money go further). This still needs working on to make it a total success but we are pleased to be one of 2 places working with NCC on this.

We offer wraparound care, signposting, time, listening ear, form filling, initial phone calls/advocacy, census info/doing, saving money, access to good quality food and so much more

Finally, continued partnership working wherever we can, networking with other food projects as well as complimentary organisations to ensure we have a good knowledge of other forms of assistance locally that our shoppers can benefit from. Continuing to offer a food service and a listening ear to anyone who needs us.

Engine Room and Training Kitchen

After being closed for seventy-nine weeks due to the pandemic, on Monday, 5th October 2021 we finally reopened the café. Initially we decided to trial opening for three days a week, Monday to Wednesday. This was increased to four days from January 2022 to include Thursdays. It's taken a while for people to have the confidence to return but once Zumba started again and WSC started face to face classes, we've seen a steady increase in customers. Takings aren't quite as much as they were pre-pandemic at the moment, but then we're not open as much as we were before and I'm sure with a bit more time, we'll get there (currently open sixteen hours a week vs thirty-seven hours per week previously).

Before we reopened, we spent time refurbishing the café kitchen area to make it more streamlined and a more practical space to work in. We invested in a new undercounter fridge and freezer, so we no longer have to walk so far to get something from the old domestic fridge or freezer, that we used to have to make do with. Plus, when Luke, the caretaker at The Thetford Academy called me and asked if I wanted not one, but two, commercial dishwashers, I practically bit his hand off! No more washing everything up by hand.

Additionally, we took some time to revise our menu to try and offer some healthier options before we reopened – so we no longer offer chips with everything and overall, most people don't seem to miss them, and we certainly don't miss frying them!

From November, we introduced a fortnightly Community lunch which we held on a Thursday as originally that was one of the days that we weren't open. This free, two course meal proved to be popular and we often served between thirty and sixty people on a regular basis. When we decided to open the cafe on a Thursday at the start of this year, we had to move the community lunch as it was far too much to try and serve in the café and cook a two-course meal for forty-plus people. Rather than move it to a Friday, which was the only other day that we aren't open, we decided to change it to a community dinner instead. It's the same free, two-course meal but at a different time, from 5–6.30pm, and with a different name. By holding it in the evening, we hope that it will encourage more families to attend which will probably be more beneficial in the coming months.

As confidence in venturing out again has returned and the centre has continued to get busier, we have noticed an increase in the number of buffets and catering that we provide. It seems that there's not a week that passes when we don't have a buffet or refreshments to prepare for a sessional hirer. We have also had the opportunity to cater for events outside of the centre too and this is an area that we'd like to develop further in the upcoming months.

The long weeks of lockdown weren't all about waiting to reopen the café though, we used some of the time to develop and construct the training kitchen. It felt like we had talked about doing it for so long, that when Nik told me to cost it out then just go ahead and do it, it really did seem too good to be true. Although in reality, I really didn't need telling twice, to start sending money! It all started with the wall being constructed on 19th April 21, and after that was completed, we started on planning the layout. I'd always known in my head what I wanted the training kitchen to look like, so after a visit to B&Q for a consultation, they produced the design for it, and it finally brought it to life. So, once the units had been delivered and constructed, the fitting began along with updating the electrics and plumbing. From start to finish, it took twenty-two weeks in total to complete the Burrell Kitchen.

Although I think trying to decide on a name for it took nearly as many weeks as the actual building of it. I'm sure if I had to do it again, I'd change a few things but, on the whole, I'm so pleased with how it turned out. If you've not had a chance to see it yet, please do pop in after the AGM and have a look. I hope you have the same reaction as the vast majority of people who witness it for the first time do – they usually say 'wow, what an incredible space'. I'm so happy with it and glad that we're finally able to start to teach people basic food skills and improve their confidence around food.

Our first booking for a cookery course in the Burrell Kitchen was the Joy of Food – an Adult Education course offered by Norfolk County Council, which started in Nov 21. In total they ran four four-week courses, which covered how to cook simple family meals and slow cooker meals. Each of these courses were free for adults to attend and drew people in from Thetford and the surrounding villages.

For our first children's cookery class, we had the students from the Damara school booked in for two sessions in January & February this year. During those classes, they learnt how to make a basic white sauce which they added pasta and cheese to before sitting down in the cafe to eat it together for their lunch. One of the children only ever ate toast for his lunch, but after making and trying the pasta and sauce, he now has that every day instead. On the second week we made soda bread and jam jar butter – so not only did they have a food tech lesson, but they also had a science and PE lesson too!

Since the end of the Easter holidays, and throughout the summer term, we have taught Years 3 & 4 from Diamond Academy in weekly sessions in the kitchen, which has been incredible. Seeing children experience new foods for the first time and build in confidence is so rewarding. When we made naan bread pizzas, many had never tried peppers or mushrooms before, so encouraging them to try them and then they realised that they actually liked them, was a total joy. If we can help to change some of the eating habits of children from an early age, hopefully they will continue to make some healthier food choices throughout their life. Being in the kitchen also helps to give the children some essential life skills such as washing and drying up. Obviously, once they leave, I rewash everything as their idea of clean certainly isn't mine. At the moment when they wash up, they're still at the spraying water everywhere and using nearly a whole bottle of washing up liquid for a single bowl but we will get there - eventually.

The success of these lessons has resulted in the school adding food tech classes to their curriculum and starting from Sept, they will be sending students over each week for a two-hour lesson throughout the academic year. They plan to give all KS2 students the chance to cook at some point over the year, which is brilliant.

Because of the enthusiasm shown by the Diamond Academy students we decided to harness this and offer a cooking club during the summer holidays – I really wasn't expecting many to sign up but it's been so popular that we've had to put on an extra day to accommodate them all. They started this week, and we have twenty-four students in total enrolled.

During August we will also be one of the activities offered as part of the Read & Feed project. The children taking part in the programme will be able to prepare their lunch in the Burrell Kitchen and then sit in the café and eat it afterwards. Whereas historically August and the summer holidays have been extremely quiet at the centre, I think this year we'll be quite a bit busier.

Now, whilst it's been lovely to be here and tell you all about the great things we've been doing here in the Engine Room and the Burrell Kitchen over the past year, I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that none of this would have been possible without the help and support of team CBC – which includes not only staff but also their partners, our volunteers who give up their spare time to help out and even our board members. When it matters, many of you have rolled up your sleeves and helped out in one way or another. Whether it's clearing tables, painting walls, serving at a community dinner, being up to your elbows in washing up, helping to build over fifty flat packed kitchen units, working through my never-ending list of jobs during the building of the training kitchen or stepping in to help out in the café when we have a large event on, it's what team CBC does best.

For me, being part of team CBC is an absolute privilege and I am grateful for the help and support you give unconditionally. Thank you and in the words of the late, great George Michael – I think you're amazing.

Chief Executive's Report Part 2 (CEO)

Support Services: The Centre has also been a haven and platform for a range of services and specialist charities, children services, domestic abuse charities, probation agency and so on. There have also been pop ups providing specialist advice through Citizen Advice Bureau.

Mental Health: Throughout the period there has been a focus on mental health through education, training, information and the provision of activities and opportunity. This includes mental health first aid training and a range of projects designed to address all aspects of mental health including social isolation. For instance, the Friendly Bench will be installed next week.

Additionally, we have established a wellbeing garden which was being finished for High Sheriff visit today. All the hard work has been done by Darren and Ricky as a labour of love. The broad picture with our tenants is the overwhelming majority of those who were at CBC during the most difficult period of the pandemic remained at CBC throughout the reporting year. There has been some movement with a couple of tenants leaving only to return a year later. We also had some tenants who did not have a strong business plan and their stay at CBC was a less than a year.

Rents remain low but all new leases now include an annual 4% increase. That 4% increase is to be reviewed annually and any change would only be included in new leases, not existing ones. A number of tenants have had really successful years and have grown significantly. Others have won national and regional awards. There is much to celebrate and that looks set to continue over the current year.

Sessional hire took longer to recover, which is not unsurprising given the various restrictions required to combat the pandemic. Nevertheless, there was a pent-up energy to resume some of the staple activities. We have seen a significant increase in sessional hire from NCC children's services and Birch Tree as well as a number of other statutory and charitable bodies. We have also seen the NHS and commercial firms hold training sessions, there have been recruitment drives, and pop-up vaccines sessions as well as Health MOT. A wide range of bookings which was seen the overall volume steadily increase month on month through the last quarter of the period.

Health and Safety: This is the number one priority for the Centre. There has been considerable progress made over the course of the last three years and this was built on last year with a range of improvements. There was a full fire audit by an external expert which included new risk assessments and some key recommendations which we have implemented. TP Fire and Security have also been contracted to give our fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment a review and be maintained. We contracted a firm to undertake the first full mapping of our water supply and provision. This has been an expert piece of work and we now have a fully functioning legionella programme which we can have confidence in. We conducted a full review of all risk assessments, method statements and policies.

Energy: It will be obvious that a major cost driver is the price of energy. This cost is significant and has profound implications for the sustainability of the Centre. We commissioned a review of our energy through Utility Aid. They produced an exhaustive review with costed business plans to reduce energy bills. The upfront investment for all that would make a real difference is considerable. We are locked into separate gas and electricity contracts which will provide some protection for the next two years. In terms of water, we are in a repayment plan and we had been undercharged for the first few years of the Centre. That will be paid by the end of this year.

Flood: Although the last few weeks we have had extreme heat I take you back to last year when we had an extreme weather event of another kind; rainfall that resulted in flooding across Thetford and

for the first time at the Centre. The buildings were flooded in three different areas. Although inconvenient and carpets needed replacing there was no sewage and it could have been much worse.

Hedge Clearance: During last year it became clear that the trees at the rear of the tennis courts were growing at very quick rate – they had been trimmed only 4 years previously. In addition, they fell under the high hedge regulations. And clearly this was greater than 2m. We had an exceptional offer to cut and remove the trees which we took. We need to rest the soil and remove some of the acidity before we plant with a British hedge.

Toilets: The eco toilets have proved to be a failure and during the 2021 we became on first name terms with DynoRod who suggested we open an account with them. In essence the science behind the design was flawed and resulted in weekly blockages. We have replaced both the men's and the women's toilets in the main corridor with flush toilets.

Windows: We continued our programme to replace plastic windows with glass windows as and when funds became available or repairs were required. This is a long running programme which can only be accelerated if we find some capital funding to do so.

Electric LED programme: We were fortunate to receive a £10k grant from Breckland Council under a green programme to replace our lights with LED lighting. It also enabled us to include motion sensor lights and other energy saving devices. Not all lights have been replaced but we are well on the way to completing all the communal area lights as well as the Burrell Shop, Engine Room and kitchen.

Events: Every day at the Centre provides a new experience. It has been a delight to see the Centre open up over the course of the year – even though there were blips along the way. For instance, we had to cancel some of the Christmas events as a result of a surge in COVID cases. Nevertheless, the Father Christmas experience was the very best that can be offered and the team received so many plaudits for the grotto and the warm welcome and diverting activities whilst waiting to see Father Christmas. The year did not quite have a full calendar nevertheless there was much which was memorable. This included taking part in Open Gardens – plenty of Pimms to be had. And with our new wellbeing garden and Friendly Bench we will be back next year.

We also had a super successful Community Day with bumper crowds and wonderfully warm weather.

Partnerships

I wanted to highlight that part of the success story at the Centre has been our relationships with other organisations. We have always believed in partnerships and collaboration. Our reputation has strengthened over the pandemic and we are viewed as a trusted partner by many. This supports an integrated approach working alongside statutory bodies and other organisations. For instance because due diligence had been conducted on the Centre the disbursement of Household Support Fund grants took no more than three days from application to award. It is more than this though. It is about having the trust and confidence of the community and having the trust and confidence of the statutory body or organisation. This was further demonstrated with vaccine pop-ups, Health MOTs, Mindful Towns and other initiatives. These collaborations and partnerships are key to the continued success of the Centre.

Norwich Institute of Healthy Ageing (NIHA): NIHA develops and implements effective strategies to promote sustained population behaviour change, in order to improve physical and mental wellbeing. Behaviour change to promote health can reduce the risk of premature disease by up to 70%. Norwich Institute of Healthy Ageing (NIHA) is set up to develop and implement effective strategies to promote sustained population behaviour change, in order to improve physical and mental wellbeing. It considers the food-environment-health trilemma and the need to view the environmental and health impacts

of food through food systems thinking. A key question in all our 'endeavours' is how to deliver research impact to effectively informing health policy, product and service innovation, economic growth and ultimately population wellbeing.

NIHA is a collaboration between Norwich City Council, UEA Health & Social Care Partners (HSCP), Norfolk County Council, NNUH, John Innes Centre, UEA (led by the Faculty of Medicine and Health), Quadram Institute of Bioscience and the Earlham Institute. NIHA membership includes: Behavioural scientists, Basic scientists, Clinicians, Digital health expertise, AI and big data capacity, Health Economics, UEA Health and Social Care Partner, Commercial partners and New Anglia LEP; Norfolk Public Health and local government; Norfolk community.

Media: We have had a good deal of media interest in the Centre. Although much has been focussed on the social supermarket and the cost of living crisis we also enjoyed two big media days; firstly a 15 minute film made by Locality which was used as part of the national convention and secondly Take over Tuesday on BBC radio where the normal two-hour programme was extended to four hours to cover all the exciting things that go on here. The list of interest is lengthy from local media to national and even international press issue. It all helps put us on the map.

Summary: Despite the restrictions and constrictions of the COVID crisis the Centre demonstrated practically, empirically as well as emotionally how important it is to the community. It provided service, support and succour in a time of need by adapting to the situation we all found ourselves in. And it found innovative ways to do this. The Staff and volunteers were critical to this success. In addition to the day to day operational delivery the Social Supermarket project and the establishment of the training kitchen were practical examples of meeting the cost of living crisis which it identified would follow the pandemic in the spring and summer of 2021. A risky venture in normal times; but it has flourished and has been a rallying point for others across the region and has led directly to the establishment by Norfolk Community Foundation of the Nourishing Norfolk Network.

FINANCE

Charles Burrell Centre Limited recorded an in balance set of figures with a profit of £19,546. This is remarkable against the backdrop of a turbulent year with the best part of half the period having some COVID restrictions and at the same time the drawing down of the furlough scheme. This resulted in a significant fall in Government grants. This in large part explains the fall in surplus from £172,237 in 2020/21 to £19,546 for this year. The group accounts show a loss of £8,878 which is a result of the Engine Room Subsidiary making a loss of £28,424. This is in large part as the Community Café did not re-open for business until September and there was investment in refurbishing the café kitchen and installing a training kitchen.

In 2020/21 the Government's furlough scheme had a significant impact in meeting staff costs. This scheme was wound down in the first part of the reporting period and was only worth £16,271 (£174,237 in 2020/21) of support. The staff had a staggered return from furlough and were all fully back to work by September.

During the pandemic sessional hire was considerably reduced. It remained difficult for the first half of the year but has bounced back with vigour in the last two quarters. Indeed, the last quarter was very strong – exceeding expectations – and this is projected to continue into the new financial year. Sessional hire income was £38,655 (£16,517 in 2020/21).

Tenant lease income remained strong throughout the pandemic and increased for the fifth straight year. The income was £220,353 (£206,638 in 2020/21). This was in the main as tenants were able to take advantage of the various Government covid grants, particularly those for firms in receipt of small business rate relief. Occupancy remains very strong for CBC. A 4% rent increase was introduced in January for new and renewing leases following a two-year freeze. Money earned from trading also

bounced back. The Forge did not trade during the reporting period, but the Engine Room re-opened in September and the Burrell Shop traded throughout the period. A total of £56,106 (£19,669 in 2020/21) was earned through trading during the year. Donations and fundraising continued to be subdued with all activity taking place in the second half of the year. A total of £12,087 (£2,632 in 2020/21) was raised this year through fundraising efforts.

The Centre benefitted from a variety of grants over the reporting period to support core costs and to provide additional services but was down from the previous period. These other grants totalled £104,449 (£146,760 in 2020/21).

The most significant expense for the year was staff wages. For the Group this was £228,951 (£254,879 in 2020/21) with only £16,271 of that cost offset by the Government Job Retention Scheme. Although this shows a fall in staff costs for the year there was a degree of movement in staff across the group in the second half of the period which shows that the cost trend is an upward one. The Engine Room did not start trading again until September and yet was £36,057 (£41,121 for 2020/21) and the Forge only had residual staff costs of £2,284 (£25,298 for 202/21). There was a staff pay rise of 5% implemented from September 2021.

Of the other expenses, it is worth noting:

- Heat and light costs were up at £58,440 (£41,194 in 2020/21) as the Centre activity increased after the lockdown of the first half of the year. The Centre benefits from locked in Gas and Electricity contracts signed just before the energy cost rise although will not be completely immune to future volatility in the market. The historic debt from previous water bills has been further tackled during this year and will be paid in 2022/23.
- The Centre made use of the lockdown period and some of the bounce back grants to undertake some necessary repairs and renewals amounting to £57,667 (£23,115 in 2020/21). Some of this was funded with in-year specific grants.
- Insurance cost booked for the year is £nil (£11,179 in 2021/21) following a review of the Centre's historical share of costs with the landlord and the release of an historical accrual which had been established to cover these costs.
- Water Costs: The water costs remain significant as it includes the repayment scheme agreed in 2021 to address the underpayment of previous years. Thus £765 includes usage and the repayment. This will be concluded before the end of 2022. Water bills will fall to less than £250 a month.

Appointment of Auditors (CEO)

Members agreed that Prentis and Co be appointed as auditors.

Election of New Board Members (Chair)

CEO announced the outcome of the tenant vote for tenant representatives on the Board.

Terry Jermy and Suzanne Connolly were appointed to Board as Tenant Representatives.

Ian Dixon and Kimberley Fox were thanked for their service as Board members.

Chair's Closing Remarks (Chair)

Central point was that the risk in the early days was whether CBC would flourish and thrive. The risk is now different as it has become important to so many people; health; work; service; community. So, what would happen if the Centre was no longer here? Therefore, every event and lever to be applied to keep it going.

CHARLES BURRELL CENTRE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

Apologies:

Pauline Barsby
Dennis Sully
Suzanne Connelly

Attendees:

Barbara Bysouth
Ann Kew
Chris Piper (Thetford Bowls)
Billie Lawler
Sam Chapman-Allen
Ian Dixon
Karen Emma-White
John Bricks (Model Rialway)
Joanne Jenkins
Beverley Williams
Terry Jermy
Adam Stadnicki
Ricky Jermy