Minutes of Todmorden Learning Centre & Community Hub AGM -

28th November 2024

Present: Ron Bartram, Dave Wardell, Lynda Baring, Colin Lyall, Alisa Yates, D E Forrest, Judy Canham, John Hudson, Rae Parkinson, Laura Able, Mary Clear, Dawn Dowding, John Williams, Sue Wardell, C Pinder, Barbara Jones, Katrina Aslet-Clark, Rachel Smith, Edmond Smith, Nick Green, Melvin Coleman, Barry Cook, Clare Townley, Jen Fagan, Catherine Bann, Helena Cook, A Whitehead, L Whitehead, Jill Bartram

Apologies: Shelley Burgoyne, Jan Peter, Ant Peter

1) Welcome and introductions. Current board introduced themselves, and potential candidates also introduced themselves and explained why they wanted to join the board.

2) Annual Report

Chair Jen Fagan outlined the achievements over the last year. Have developed a new strategy document (circulated) and a business plan will proceed from this. A great deal of the college's income is from hiring spaces, and all available lease-able spaces are occupied. Working with WYCA on the shared transport hub – this is out for consultation at the moment.

- **Update on Town Deal funded renovations – Nick Green**

  College to be a beacon to encourage others to retrofit. There is an idea is to get the whole town retrofitted perhaps apply to Heritage Lottery to treat the town as a heritage asset?

  College £1.7 million from the Town Deal Fund and raised this up to almost £2 million to renovate. So far we've done the quick wins eg disabled lift.

  Plan is to change the main entrance so it's on Burnley Road.

  There'll be a Shared Transport Hub, car share club, bike sheds, e-bike hire etc.

  Completely revamped front of the building, new growing beds, new and beautiful toilet block on outside, possibly with a compost toilet. External insulation to whole of building in different forms. Building will become a living example, with local expertise.

  Revamped foyer, old goods lift will become a bar for the hall. Power cables from the solar panels on the roof come through lift shaft, and batteries will sit above in a plant room. This will mean we can be independent of the grid. New handrail all round the roof. May need a new lightening conductor, this is complicated. New cookery room, hopefully functional by the Spring. Room will be double-glazed, insulated.

  New heating system – installed but not commissioned – to have much more control over the heating in the building. Looking seriously at air source heating as a bit of an experiment.

  Will have new windows, and Julie has managed to raise additional money.

New woodshop – all up and running and well organised. People can hire desks with proper woodworking machinery.
Q – will toilets be accessible to public outside?
A – only accessible from indoors, but anyone can use our facilities if they come in off the street.
Q – will kitchen be available for use to hire?
A – yes, will be 6 stations, so can be hired or used as a whole by a group for a course.
Q – schools have to deliver a careers week, and you could deliver an assembly and the retrofit message will go out to all pupils and their parents.
Q – retrofit course – how much would it cost commercially, without a grant?
A – we need to work this out. Funding is about £1400 per learner. Plus materials. Alarmingly – have had to reinsure due to the external insulation, and now costing us more than double. Insurance industry in turmoil about cladding. Actually these natural materials aren't flammable but insurance companies aren't interested.
Q – is there funding in place to do all of this?
A – yes – Town Deal money. Might not cover all the elevations for example but will get a lot of it done. Been trying to get local contractors where possible – not just cheapest but added social value.
Q – which companies so far have been local?
A - All of them except Crittal and then the lighting company. Quality of work by local people is excellent and strong relationships built.

- **Update on Climate Challenge College – Barbara Jones**
  A lot of grants in a flurry thanks to Julie – one of her big talents is fundraising. Started in September delivering 4 different funded projects. First one is 3 courses of 10 days each funded by UKSPF (WYCA). Students have been retrofitting the fabric of the building with external insulation – wood fibre and lime plastering using a system called WarmShell. Have achieved a really high standard. Internal insulation on the ceilings – starting with the cookery room.
  Another series of similar courses – Cozydale with Calderdale Council funding – running these in Halifax at different community venues that need insulation. This will serve to tell people about what we're doing, how it's for everyone, everyone can do it, not just experts. Women's Activity Centre – women-only course. Run one at the 51st Pellon Scouts at their timber building, and a third course about to start.
  GreenSkills WYCA/CMBC funding – 2 x 10 day courses, and an intermediate week for people who've done a course who have a bit more ability. DIY groups, self-help groups, and get them started in self-employment and small businesses.
  Will have trained 70 or 80 students mostly local to Todmorden. No-one in rest of country are doing what we're doing – a learning onsite course.
  Fourth funded project is through Calderdale's retrofit challenge – funded by the government under Innovate scheme. It's a project researching what are the non-technical barriers to retrofitting – What is stopping people? Focus is on stone built terraces.
  Q – will there be further courses?

A – if we can get the funding, and already talking with funders about next stage
Q – Would it be possible to partner with FE colleges?
A – It's complicated – different funding streams, and they're interested but don't want to part with any money. We're in field of private education/training, rather than government funded education.
We're running a course next year with trades people. This is much harder to recruit for. Running on Saturdays, and are hoping they will come. We need people with these skills locally.

3) Acceptance of Report - passed

4) Treasurer's Report and approval of annual accounts.
Always balance so need to interrogate this.
Assets have gone up because of the improvements and new equipment.
Cash in the bank looks healthy – because we have the large amount of grant funding.
Creditors gone up, but a lot of this is linked to current projects.
Comparison to last year on income. Room hire grown by just under 10% - more people using the college.
Restricted funding project charges (this is the money that the college gets for room hire/management etc for the climate courses that are externally funded) – gone down, but we had a hiatus between the end of previous climate courses. This figure should go up again next year.
Net last year was -£17 257 and this year -£38,730. There are significant increases in costs Expenditure increases, accountancy, fuel bills in the main. Next year – minimum wage going up will increase by about £10,000, insurance has gone up from 9000 to 21,000. Energy prices going up again in April.
Room hire and lettings growth won't be enough to cover these increased costs.

Q – difference between hire and lease?
A – lease is where an organisation has permanent sole use of the room, hire is where rooms are available to anyone, one off or regular.
Q – is the building itself an asset within the figures?
A – No, because it is leased not freehold – 125 year lease
Q – was a calculation done how much the improvements will impact the bills?
A – this was done, but things have changed and been added. Hoping to be in credit in terms of electricity and solar thermal will reduce the cost. Decided not to replace boiler due to all the other retrofit improvements.
Q – what strategies to address the shortfall?
A – Got annual report from accountants in last few months – so just started to think about this.
Asset rich and cash rich right now – problem will be about April 2026 as the Town Deal monies will be paid up. Will look at increasing room rates, reducing other costs. Also, in terms of the business plan – this will emerge from the new strategy, which is only just being agreed by members this evening, so we have further work to do on this if members support the overall direction. Board not panicking at moment, knew there would be a deficit budget, and some things will be changing anyway with works on the building. More spaces available for hire, for example. More capacity, and more projects in the pipeline. However do need ideas for growth.

Q – can you come back with an interim financial plan in 6 months? So members can be reassured and work out how to help. Proposed by Caroline Pinder and seconded by Jill Bartram.
Resolution carried.

5) Resolutions

a) This AGM agrees that part of the building is allocated to the young people of Todmorden for their exclusive use and design, and efforts are made for young people to be represented on the board as part of the objective: *To help young people by education and training, especially but not exclusively through leisure time activities, so as to develop their capabilities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society.*
I will be happy to assist with building a network of volunteers to help young people take ownership of and design/fit out any space allocated to them and reword the above objective to reflect the thoughts of young people.
Proposed by Chris Dempsey

Chris was not present at the meeting to speak to this, and although there was support in the room for working on youth provision, the difficulty is in allocating space as there is a cost to this. No-one came forward to second the motion and as proposer not present, this was not taken to the vote.

6) Results of election to the board

Katrina Aslet Clark, Colin Lyall and Alisa Yates were elected to the board.

7) Presentation of the updated strategy for the College. Chair Jen Fagan

The report was circulated and those present given the opportunity to read through.

Q – Some events take a lot of effort on behalf of college, others are very simple. Could there be a tier level of charging according to how much effort is needed by the college?
Q - Long waiting lists for gallery space in other venues, could college look at providing space for this? would need further investigation.
Q – The strategy is an excellent framework, commend the board and staff for quality of the presentation. Was there a questionnaire to members?
A – Yes, and this was incorporated into the strategy discussions. Devising the strategy was an enjoyable process.
Q - Wedding receptions usage for hall – any progress?
A - Creation of a bar will help this. Hall used to be used by South Asian community locally as a wedding venue, and have had one wedding banquet here recently, so this might spread a bit.
Q - Feel strongly about increasing youth provision, and note that there is a group working on this. Can you say a bit more about it.
A - Proactively supporting this group (coordinated by Catherine as part of her council job). There is also a range of activities happening under our roof in terms of youth provision, constructive activities for young people, eg basketball which is joint enterprise with the school, funding from Mayor's Safer Communities, school steer at risk young peole to constructive activity. Good for integration between different schools. A lot of sports, crafts, social activities going on here. In terms of an actual drop in youth club - no funding for that type of youth provision. Want to help appropriate youth provision, want to involve young

people in the process, and also need it to be funded. Catherine noted there was to be an intergenerations
Q – regarding putting the rents up, don't want to be too expensive and lose the custom.
A - Probably need to, but it's a balancing act.
Q - Can't just be financial approach – needs to be much more than that. Need more people to know about and value the successes. Could shout more about such as using local contractors, more feedback into the community.
Q - Suggestion regarding partitioning rooms etc. creating more usable spaces
Q - Have you invited the media in?
Doing a big celebration event to which the media will be invited. 20th December a showcase event for all the courses with Mayor and councillors.

Note that last 3 months have been particularly good in terms of income from hirings.
Deliberately kept room hire prices down.
Do produce the What's On guide, and help people publicise their events.
Banking Hub will be based in the college for 12 months – a lot income.

Q – how is Warm desk space doing? - very busy

Still people who've never been in here before, still coming in.

Thanks noted from the members to the board.

8) Chair closed meeting by saying we should publicise more what's going on behind the scenes.