



Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at Patching Lodge, Saturday 14th February 2014

Members present: Paul Gillett (Chair), Chris Dutton, Colin Bennett, Shirley West, Ruby Woolven, Dorothy Whatman, Sam Collingham-Wood, Keith Turner, Margaret Pearson, Jacqueline Campbell, Sue Vivian, Iris Keppler, Christine Laurence, Susan Galloway

Volunteers present: Andrea Nonce, Jonathan Dutton (minutes), Ray Woolven, Rosie Collins, Steve Evans, Sue Joseph, Darren Luckhurst, Valerie Mainstone, Barbara Wells.

1. Introduction

Paul welcomed everyone to City Synergy's 11th AGM. He said that Connie, who had a fall in 2013, is still recovering, and sent her love.

2. Apologies for absence

Ron James, Connie French, Louise Eaton, Christina Mendez.

3. Minutes of last meeting dated 9th February 2013 were read and agreed.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Brighton VIPs: Paul reported that we have good links with Brighton VIPs and many of our members are also members of Brighton VIPs.

4.2 Brighton and Hove Buses: Valerie said she had noted a tendency for buses to start before passengers were settled and this is dangerous for disabled and elderly people. It was agreed that Valerie would write to the bus company on behalf of City Synergy to raise this and also offer that we could provide sight awareness training particularly for new drivers.

5. Chair's Report

Paul thanked the committee and volunteers for their contributions to another successful year. He said that the word synergy is an expression of how working together can achieve great things, and the member/volunteer partnership symbolises this. Paul welcomed new volunteers Darren, Barbara and Ron. In 2013 there had been 29 activities. Funding had been received from the Robin Hood pub and the Waitrose Community Fund.

We have an exciting year ahead, particularly with Sound Tennis. We now use Facebook and Twitter, and receive donations through My Donate. Paul invited all to suggest ideas over the coming year to fundraise and reach out to new members.

Chris proposed a vote of thanks to Paul.

6. Treasurer's Report

Iris presented a report showing that during 2013 City Synergy had received grants from Waitrose Community Fund and the Robin Hood pub. However, she said that we need grants of £1,000 to £1,500 in each year to sustain activities at the current level. In 2013, charges to members and volunteers represented 51% of the cost of the activities which is in line with the guide of subsidising events overall by about 50% in the year. We are carrying forward grants of £2,200 and reserves of £465.

The AGM approved the accounts and the proposed budget for 2014.

Valerie proposed a vote of thanks to Iris.

7. Honorary Membership

Paul noted that over the years City Synergy had conferred honorary membership to Christina Mendez and Lynne Thomas in recognition of their support through the LeisureLink project to set up the group. He now proposed on behalf of the committee to offer Honorary Membership to Valerie in recognition of her strong support to the group over the years. This was seconded by Jacqui and agreed by the members. Valerie expressed her appreciation.

8. Election of Officers

In her inaugural duty as Honorary Member, Valerie took the chair for the election of officers. Chris Dutton proposed that the existing committee members be re-elected en-bloc and for officer roles to be assigned later. The following committee members said they were willing to stand again:

- ▲ Paul Gillett
- ▲ Iris Keppler
- ▲ Ruby Woolven
- ▲ Sam Collingham-Wood

The proposal was seconded by Chris Laurence and approved by members.

Paul resumed the chair and invited other members to stand for the committee. Susan Galloway offered to stand. This was proposed by Sam and seconded by Iris and approved by members.

9. Sound Tennis

Chris Laurence told the group that during 2013 she had played sound tennis in London. She now has funding from ESAB and help from City Synergy to fund and organise 8 fortnightly sessions at the King Alfred Sports Centre starting on the 28th February.

Chris passed around the ball and racquet used and said that these would be supplied for the sessions.

Chris outlined the rules of the game and emphasised that it could be played by people of all abilities.

The first session will be free. Subsequent sessions will be charged £2.50 (no charge for volunteers).

In response to a question, this event is open only to over 16s.

A short 'You Tube' clip of sound tennis was shown.

Chris said that the long term goal is to establish regular sound tennis sessions in Brighton. She said that it is a growing sport with groups, teams and competitions emerging.

A number of members and volunteers said that they would attend, and Chris was thanked for setting up the sessions.

10 Fundraising

Paul said that the finance report had shown how reliant we are on getting grants. He noted that it is now more difficult to get grants, and that grant making organisations like to see that bidders are fundraising themselves.

Darren said that he is doing a sponsored walk from London to Brighton on 24th May. He will set up a “Just Giving” page which Paul will link to from the City Synergy website.

Paul suggested that we have a fundraising event in the Autumn. He suggested that a sub-committee may be useful to organise this, and he asked everyone to pass on ideas.

Colin suggested that we approach Southern Water and EDF and Amex for grants. Iris said that Amex tend to fund the Royal Alexandra Hospital. Valerie suggested that we reapply to previous funders.

It was agreed that we need to bid for grants, but support this by our own fundraising activities.

11. Activities

11.1 Looking Back: Paul listed the 29 activities that City Synergy had organised in 2013.

11.2 Current activities: Sue apologised that it had been necessary to change the date of the forthcoming trip to Great Dixter. It was agreed that this should now go ahead on either the 10th or 11th of May. At the meeting 10 members and 6 volunteers expressed an interest in going.

Paul went through the arrangements for the current list of activities.

11.3 Activities: Looking ahead: Jonathan presented a list of possible future activities and invited members and volunteers to vote on those that they are interested in. The results are included below as an appendix to the minutes.

12. Any other business:

Ray said that he would like to organise another meeting for volunteers. There was no other business.

13. Proposed date of next meeting – Saturday 21st February 2015.

APPENDIX

Voting for activities

Response is indicated as LOW, MODERATE, SIGNIFICANT, and ENTHUSIASTIC.

Activity	AGM response
Whitehawk Air Raid Shelter	Moderate
Brighton Station Tour	Significant
10 Pin Bowling (vs Brighton VIPs)	Significant
Town Walks	Enthusiastic
Pavilion Tour	Low
Seafront Funday	Enthusiastic
Book Talk (“11 minutes late”)	Significant
Pub Quiz	Low
Exercise Class	Moderate
Amex Stadium Tour	Significant
Amberley Chalk Pits	Moderate
Arundel Castle	Moderate
Pulborough Wildfowl Trust	Moderate
Woods Mill Wildlife Sanctuary	Significant
Southwick Museum	Significant
Marlipins Museum, Shoreham	Moderate
Fishbourne Roman Villa	Moderate
Brighton Big Balls	Clashes with Great Dixter weekend

NVT – End of the Beginning (March 29 th)	Moderate
Mermaid March 26 th July	Moderate
Big Screen (12 th June for 4 weeks)	Moderate
Big Wheel	Low
Lewes “De Montford” weekend 15 th May	Enthusiastic
Barn Dance	Enthusiastic
Highcroft Gardens	Moderate
Carlton Hill Talk (Valerie)	Moderate
Festivals and Celebrations in Sussex (talk Valerie)	Significant
Harvey's Brewery Tour	We're on the waiting list

It was noted that meals are always popular. Brighton Odeon cinema now has audio description available for major releases (contact 01273 323317 James or Kat to arrange headset availability). Theatre visits are usually popular.

After the meeting, Colin suggested a trip to Woodvale Crematorium Gardens (he says there is an Open Day – no info on the website, but there is a Tomb and Nature Trail guide).