

Cherry Hinton Community Benefit Society AGM - 9th June 2022 Annual Report

By the time of the last AGM a Board of eleven Directors had been appointed and Planning Permission had been granted for the Hub. An application for funding had been made to the RBL and the outcome was due to be announced in July (2021). A website had been launched and a Fund-Raising Committee set up. A JustGiving Page for donations had been set up. It had been decided with the City Council Project Manager that fund-raising would be focussed on the cafe´ kitchen design and fit-out. An energetic Fund-raising Committee had been set up but the lack of knowledge on a firm start date for the build and the difficulty of holding fund-raising events due to the constraints of Covid 19 meant they focussed on raising Community Awareness of the project. I ended the annual report by saying that I thought CHCBS was in a very good place to move forward once we got the go-ahead for the project to go to tender in October (2021).

Developments since the last AGM

The new CHCBS year did not start well. The RBL Branch Property Trust Trustees finally met in September having postponed their meeting twice since they needed more information about the project. Unfortunately they decided not to provide the funding. Stuart Newbold and Allison Conder, Cambridge City Council Project Manager for the Hub, had worked hard to bring this to fruition so this was particularly disappointing for them and Paul Holmes, Chair of the local RBL branch which would now have no permanent meeting room.

However on a more positive note Allison Conder was asked to prepare a recommendation to the Cambridge City Council Strategy and Resources Committee that the city council should now provide the outstanding capital funding required to provide a £767k total budget to deliver the hub scheme in a single phase of construction which was unanimously accepted. This was the last item of 10 at the meeting which finished late in the evening so we did not hear the good news till the next day. We were very grateful to the City Council but it now became a priority that the community funding should accelerate. (On February 14th 2019 it was agreed that the local Cherry Hinton Community through the Cherry Hinton Residents Association and soon-to-be -formed CHCBS would aim to raise a target of £50,000.)

Since the October meeting events have moved very quickly for this project. Natalie Bailey has been appointed to work on this scheme with Allison Conder, to provide construction project management expertise internally from the Housing Development Agency team. Calford Seaden have been appointed as the Employer's Agent. They will act as Clerk of Works and hold the contractor to account. Lee Bentley will be their appointed representative for the Hub. We are pleased that Ian Morrison from lingleton Wood, the architect who has worked on the current plan for the Hub will be working with the construction company, Duncan, Cameron and Hutchinson who were appointed in May to deliver the project. A project board has been set up with the construction team for the project – representatives will be Mo Child and Stephen Hall (CHCBS), Andrew Stoter (County Libraries), Allison Conder (CS PM), Natalie Bailey (HDA PM), Lee Bentley (EA Calford Seaden).

Due to Covid and various other factors there is an escalating cost within the construction sector. This is one reason why the project is proceeding as quickly as possible so that the contractor can then tender required work packages and confirm contract pricing. Allison Conder and Natalie Bailey will be working hard with Lee Bentley (EA), to ensure the final specification meets the client brief and can be delivered within the budget available. Due to these factors the City Council would prefer the Community Funding to be given at the beginning of the build and not focused for the cafe´. However this would cause problems when applying for grants. The City Council have suggested a contingency plan so the Directors are currently taking advice from various agencies and will be negotiating with the City Council on these points. The Build is due to start in the autumn.

Trustees/Directors

The Directors met for the first time at the 2021 AGM. Starting in September, when we met in person, they have usually been held monthly on Google Meet. A big vote of thanks to Stuart Newbold who as Secretary has written the minutes for the meetings.

Paul Holmes, a Founder Member and Chair of the RBL, felt unable to continue as a CHCBS director after the RBL decided not to provide funding to the Hub. We understood why he stepped down after the September Meeting but wish to thank him for helping us to set up the Community Benefit Society, open the Bank Account and appoint the directors.

Marny Wesley, who brought experience of catering to the Board has been on an extended leave of absence, keeping in touch by email, but is now back working on plans for the cafe'.

Directors' Activities

Financial Group

Prabhu Guptara was part of the original Strategy Group (Mark Ashton, Stuart Newbold, Roy Child and Mo Child) which made decisions before the Board of Directors first met and also represented us on the Steering Group as well as at various meetings with Cambridge City and County Officers. Prabhu joined CHCBS as Financial Director and saw us through setting up the bank account and getting Gift Aid. At present Prabhu is looking to move to London and this has led us to look at the way our Finances are managed.

The Financial Group consists of Roy Child, Stuart Newbold and Marny Wesley who will decide on strategy together with Prabhu while he is available. The Benefit Society has advertised for a volunteer book-keeper both on social media and the Residents Newsletters delivered to each home in Cherry Hinton. Daniel Harland, a qualified book-keeper, has volunteered to give us an hour a month to advise us but we still need someone to do the day-to-day book-keeping. Roy Child is doing this at the moment.

Business Plan

Roy Child has been working hard on the Business Plan with Stuart Newbold and Marny Wesley's help

Health & Safety

Stephen Hall has written a Health & Safety Policy with advice from CCVS

CRM (Customer Relationship Management)

Roy Child and Kate Jones have established a CRM system which we are starting to use. This will organise data and help us to use it more effectively.

Communicating with the City Council

Councillors Mark Ashton and Rob Dryden have continued to represent us with their City Council colleagues Mo Child and Stuart Newbold have represented CHCBS at regular meetings with the Project Manager. Mo Child and Stephen Hall (Maintenance) will represent us on the Project Board.

Communications

Roy Child manages the website. Kate Jones and Cathy Mcluskey manage Social Media. Numbers at the moment – all up from those given last year.

Facebook 552 followers

Twitter 56 followers

Instagram 190 followers

Volunteers

There is a steady trickle of volunteers through the website and at events we have attended. A register of volunteers is now being set up on the CRM by Cathy McCluskey and Kate Jones.

Training

Directors have been taking advantage of courses run by CCVS and also use their advice.

Fund-raising Group

Kate Jones, Cathy McCluskey, Mo Child lead the Fund-raising Group. Since the last AGM various people have dipped in and out of the group depending on their other responsibilities. Kelly Tarrant, Tracy Saunders, Lara Grew, Felicity White, Bindhu Ravi, Jackie Webster, Celine Curtis and Smita Botre have all been part of the group. The group has met by Google Meet over the year. It had mainly been concentrating on raising community awareness but as Covid restrictions have been lifted it has been able to engage more actively in community events. Until very recently it has not been possible to apply for grant funding due to the uncertainty over the build timeline (now happily resolved) and now the use of the funding. Cathy McCluskey has researched funds which we can apply for once the latter is resolved.

The group have been concentrating on the following areas:-

Engaging Corporate/Business Sponsors

- A partnership has been formed with Cambridge Building Society which has led to a joint hosting of a Launch – Networking event for small businesses in the locality on Wednesday 15th June at the Cherry Hinton Store. Kate Jones and Mo Child have attended meetings with Gemma Ashman - former store manager, Andy Jukes – Head of Customer Engagement for CBS, and Dan Killingback – present store manager
- Kate Jones has prepared a sponsor pack for businesses
- Kate Jones and members of the fund-raising group are approaching larger businesses e.g Sainsburys

Engaging Cherry Hinton Residents

- The Community Cafe has been named “The Cherry Branch” after 300 entries for the competition
- Social Media has been used when possible to send out news
- Articles were placed in all the two Residents Association Newsletters delivered to all houses in Cherry Hinton with the Just Giving Page QR code which resulted in some donations
- The Fund-raising Group took part in the Community Groups Fair as part of the Weekend Cherry Hinton Festival at St. Andrews in September 2021. This was the first appearance of Bud, our Builder mascot. Much thanks to Guy who brings him to life. Bud is a great hit with the children. It was also the first time we made the QR code available on business cards. Donations to the Hub were also collected by volunteer Lara Grew who guided Bud around.
- Members of the Group also visited the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations at the Leisure Centre on Saturday June 4th together with Bud. £41 was raised in bucket donations. 100 colouring sheets of Bud were given out and 34 supporter forms were filled in – all within 2 hours.
- A number of events are being planned to take place in the library e.g. a family craft morning and a version of the Human Library.
- We are in talks with the Library Services about being part of some of their events e.g. the Summer Reading Medal Ceremony to engage with people attending.
- Gerry O’Keefe, a local artist, contacted us and Mo, Kate, Cathy and Roy met with him. He is willing to give us a percentage of any art he sells to the Hub if we can find a venue. He is also willing to hold half day art classes.

Methods of Fund-raising

- Directly by bank transfer
- Just Giving – Cathy McCluskey has taken over the management of the Hub Page
- Easyfundraising – Kate Jones has set this up

Over the last year in spite of various constraints the Benefit Society has moved forward. We are now at an exciting part in the progress of the project. There is going to be a lot of energy needed in the next year!

Mo Child (Chair of Cherry Hinton Community Benefit Society - 09.06.22)