

Haringey Community Centres Network

Minutes of General meeting - 22 March 2023 [Draft v2a]

Hornsey Vale Community Centre

1.30pm-3.30pm

Present

Dave Morris – Lordship Hub (Chair)
Andrew Johnston (AJ) – The Engine Room (Secretary)
Debra Mendes – Hornsey Vale
Daisy – Innovative Vision Organisation (online)
Keith Fair – Markfield Project
Tejas Patel – Wood Green Community Hub
Leyla Laksari – Living Under One Sun (online)
Herman Irish – Goan Community Centre (online)

Apologies

Denise - Wolves Lane
Christalla and Susie – Cypriot Centre
Sandra – The Grace Organisation
Candy Fernandez - Goan Community Centre
Russel King – Chesnuts Community Centre

1. Minutes of last HCCN meeting 12th April 2022

Approved.

2. Reports

Markfield Project – finances really difficult. Started £30k deficit projected – now just £10k. Positive – new Director in post looking to bring in new funding – Silvia Hurtado. Development project for next 5 years going ahead. 10 year out of date lease. Council expecting a large commitment to repairs and maintenance.

Hornsey Vale – One part time paid staff. Income has been a challenge though have secured grants. Really tight on resources. Challenging rent position with Haringey Council. Volunteers working for free. Out of lease since 2016.

Lordship Hub – Equivalent of 5 full time staff. 50 volunteers. Have a good 25yr lease with the Council – specific agreed services provided completely offset the rent. Survived COVID financial and other stress - just about. Nearly back to pre-covid capacity re café and regular classes and activities (including launch of a Weather Station!).

Wood Green Community Hub – lease has expired. Full repairs costs – gasworks, electrics and plumbing all need attention. Day care is keeping us open. Cannot run kitchen as gas supply not safe.

The Engine Room – positive year – all staff took pay cut post COVID. 250 year lease in place with Lee Valley Estates dated from 2017. 2022 account showed a healthy surplus and the combined income from room hire, café and nursery provide a solid income base which is augmented by grants and fundraising activity.

Innovative Vision Organisation – still seeking to develop the room hire business. Re-opened post COVID – weekend activities taking place. Have done lots of repairs. Lease ends this week, but Haringey Council have insisted that £1500 arrears are paid.

Living Under One Sun – extended lease to 2025 and now has commitment to run the new permanent community hub to be built in Down Lane Park. Delivering a weekly programme – 6 days a week until May and then 7 days a week. No religious or party political events allowed. Several local groups that have no funds meet there. Haringey Welcome hub also meeting. New finance and admin staff – equivalent to 5 full time staff. All temporary positions depending upon available funding. Cycling, dance, sewing and football activities. Still working with Haringey Council on the co production of the future plans for Down Lane Park. Gill Taylor was to write a new business plan for the new community hub but she is leaving Haringey Council too.

Grace - Dave reported that the Grace Organisation had sent their apologies as they are moving building this weekend.

3. Relations with Haringey Council

Leases - In the mid 2010s there was a crisis for the sector as the Council cabinet were trying to impose market rents and short 5 year leases, and also there were closure and redevelopment threats to many sites. As a result, most centres whose lease was coming to an end refused to sign the Council's proposed model lease at that time. The Community Centres Network was created mainly as a result of this. Eventually there was a change of approach by the Council as they realised they needed to appreciate and support the sector and work with us. A couple of open meetings held by VCS Service provider Bridge Renewal Trust discussed this issue constructively. Meanwhile the HCCN and Council held 2 joint face to face negotiation meetings, the last one of which was last May 2022 to discuss the details of a new proposed Model Lease.

That meeting last year was very productive [See Appendix 1 below] and there was progress re length of leases, repairs, recognition of services provided etc. There were outstanding issues to be further discussed. Unfortunately since then Charlotte Pomeroy (Deputy Director Commissioning) and Poppy Thomas (Charity Officer) have left their roles. Shehnaz Begum (Commercial Property Manager) was present at that meeting but there has been no updates provided since then. Yet many Centres leases still need renewing.

VCS Coordination Contract - Leyla reported on the future of the VCS support contract. Four different models have been explored by the Council. What are the criteria around monitoring and evaluating? Gill Taylor was leading this exploration. AJ agreed that the current VCS contract had been thoroughly explored at recent consultations but with staff changes the process seemed to have stalled. He expressed concerns that Haringey

Community Centres had not been well represented by Bridge Renewal Trust and that we were not being given the support we needed either by the Council nor by Bridge Renewal Trust.

Dave considered the future of the VCS contract and the future of the relationship with the Community Centres Network as two separate but related items. However he agreed that there has been no recent communication between either the Council or Bridge Renewal Trust with HCCN.

AJ – suggested that rather than meeting Gill Taylor, a meeting with Andy Donald CEO, PerayAhmet Leader of the Council, Julie Davies VCS Voluntary and Community Sector Lead Councillor.

Leyla – agreed with that as a process. We need to go in with solutions. We need to be seen as wealth builders, employers and providers of access to services.

Dave– agreed to write to Andy Donald, set out why sector is important and to emphasise how people are struggling without any support from the Council. We should put our demands clearly to the Council – commitment from the Council to support the sector. Copy in the leader and the member who is responsible.

Debra – we need to agree the approach the Council with a clear list of the issues and the approaches to each one. Would be good to consolidate all the issues and our approach.

Keith – the Council may want to look at everyone individually.

Dave – In our negotiations with the Council it was agreed in principle that Centres should be able to offset their rent with the value of services provided. The Council wanted to set a ceiling of 40% offset, but we said it should be 100%.

Debra – need to detail out the services that each Centre provides in each area.

Dave – any services which align with the corporate priorities of the Council should reduce the rent payable.

Leyla suggested we have a meeting focussing on Social Value Portal – she will circulate the Social Value calculator and offered to run a training course.

Herman – should be working to getting some funding to improve our own skills on collecting community value. Also possibility of working with LawWorks to maybe advise us on legal and lease issues – he will investigate further.

4. Bookings Discussion/Sharesy Presentation

a. Summary of Centres' current bookings processes/operations

Markfield Project – massive increase in number of bookings in recent years - £25k in bookings. Issues are around covering the hires with staff. Charge £1600-£2000 a night for late parties.

Hornsey Vale – bespoke computerised management system – most of bookings by phone. Online form. Emma manages everything. Wanted to have automation of front end. c £50k income. Interested in pursuing a conversation with Sharesy.

Lordship Hub – commercial rate bookings (eg parties) and community bookings with community rates and free bookings for specific groups based in Lordship Rec – currently c 50% occupancy rate. Manual booking system. c £50k income generated.

Wood Green Hub – mostly phone enquiries. Two calendars. Major concern is cleaning up. Bookings have kept us alive.

The Engine Room – has had a real time booking system since 2018 managed through the Planyo programme. Recently The Engine Room had also joined Sharesy with the challenge to fill in the available Monday – Friday hire space. They had stopped using some platforms and were less engaged with others, focussing on their own booking system and Sharesy. Annual income target £90k, almost 50% of the income of the charity. Mostly taken on real time live online system Planyo but recently have started working with Sharesy seeking to fill more weekday space. Has been a positive experience. 90% of bookings are taken online with very few manual bookings.

Living Under One Sun – forms and conditions for hiring available for download on website and bookings are handled manually. Large enclosed garden for bookings and events. Local birthday parties £25 per hour. Get income from selling food. Rates for Council and corporates are different. Income from hires was c £10k. Fully licenced. Majority of customers are low income. Major focus is on front line service delivery – household support and NHS funding mean that front line service delivery will take priority going forward.

I/O – has been an informal booking system and free for community events. Always expected to do it for free, but need to generate income. Appreciate that they need to move to a more professional model.

The Goan Community Centre - Candy deals with booking directly. But looking for a more automated system so could be interested in Sharesy. Busy at weekends.

b. Felix presented Sharesy (see links/slides)

Sharesy, is a venue hire platform for community spaces. We are now supporting ~300 community venues (schools, places of worship and community centres) across London to generate an extra £2-5k/mth each through bookings. Our top performing venues generate over £10k/month.

We have designed Sharesy to be very low risk to get started, as we charge no fixed monthly fees, up front costs nor do we have a contract lock-in, meaning you can exit anytime with no penalties at all. We simply take a commission on bookings taken through our platform.

For more information, see how St Edward Church earns 40% more by letting their spaces with Sharesy: <https://www.sharesy.com/case-study/st-edward-church-venue-lettings>
More info here: <https://www.sharesy.com/become-a-host>

With Sharesy you:

- Have your own listing pages for each of your spaces available to hire
- Reach thousands of local London bookers readily available through the Sharesy website
- Simply manage your calendar, set your house rules and choose the types of events you host
- Receive bookings instantly, removing all the tedious back and forth.

Here are some examples:

<https://www.sharesy.com/s/the-engine-room-main-hall>

<https://www.sharesy.com/s/the-community-hub-haringey-main-hall>

<https://www.sharesy.com/s/wolves-lane-centre-community-cafe-kitchen>

<https://www.sharesy.com/s/ferry-lane-primary-school-main-hall>

<https://www.sharesy.com/s/holy-trinity-ce-primary-school-main-hall>

Our Offer for The Haringey Community Centre Network:

- A reduced 15% commission for the venue's first 3 months on the platform (reduced from standard 20%).
- 10% commission to manage the admin for all existing bookings and 'venue led' bookings.
- Marketing welcome pack, including paid google search and custom printed flyers and posters to help advertise and promote your space to hire.
- Access to sales support to proactively find you long-term repeat bookers.
- Dedicated landing page to cross promote the The Haringey Community Centre Network venues.

If you would like to arrange a zoom call to discuss further, simply email me back with your availability and I will send a calendar invite.

If you would like to get started please complete our short welcome form, following which a member of our customer success team will be in touch to gather all your listing info.

<https://www.sharesy.com/welcome>

c. Question and Answer Session

Various questions were raised around how Sharesy operated, what the financial model was and how much profit was being made and what the offer could be to Haringey Community Centres.

Felix confirmed Sharesy had yet to make a profit and was there to provide a service to community resources. Sharesy could cope with different rates for different markets and even 100% discounts on fee structures. Felix suggested that if there was a group of Centres who wanted to join a reduced commission fee structure could be considered.

AJ argued that a dedicated Sharesy site would be mutually beneficial for those times when we cannot host bookings as we are already full we could easily re-direct people to each other's centres for example centres that can host late night bookings (which The Engine Room does not). Those present agreed.

It was agreed that individual centres would need to consider the offer and explore with Sharesy if this was something they could benefit from and would want to work with. AJ to share the slides with all in the group.

5. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 17th May 1.00pm to 3.00pm at LUOS if available if not at The Engine Room.

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT MODEL LEASE FOR COMMUNITY CENTRES

Extract of report of HCCN/LBH Negotiation Meeting, 13.5.2022

- **New draft Heads of Terms for Community Impact Lease - headlines**
 - **Lease term: starting point of 5 years – negotiation for up to 25** with business case & rationale (e.g. capital investment)
 - **Feedback:** HCCN prefer the 25yr lease to be the default or at least the expectation
 - Tenant not able to assign: **but may share occupation or formally sub-let** part of the property subject to obtaining Landlord's formal consent in a form of a Licence
 - No structural alterations
 - **Community Impact Rent: discount of 40% on community market rent – only offered for tenants offering community benefit**
 - **Feedback:** HCCN seek value of community services provided to be able to offset rent up to 100%
 - Possible negotiation for initial rent-free period
 - Rent review at five years, Community Impact discount applied after rent reviewed
 - Landlord insures building and pays premiums
 - **Feedback:** Welcomed
 - **Landlord responsible for all external repairs & maintenance and statutory compliance works**
 - **Feedback:** Welcomed
 - **The general waste and recycling collection will be arranged by the Council as Landlord under its Corporate Contract with the Waste Management company**
 - **Feedback:** Welcomed
 - Tenant liable for business rates & utilities
 - **Use: tenant to permit 200 hours per annum of free use of space to share with other voluntary and public sector organisations directed by the Landlord**
 - **In the event of a Borough wide emergency, epidemic or pandemic to permit the Landlord to use the building for emergency services at no additional cost**
 - The Tenant will have an option to break, for any reason, at any time after the first year by giving 3 months notice
 - If the Council requires the site for redevelopment then notice to be served will not be less than 12 months
 - **Feedback:** Concern about this. If it goes ahead, can commitment for Council to find alternative premises in these circumstances, be included?
 - The Landlord will request to see a Business Case for new and existing community and voluntary sector organisations
 - The Lease will be excluded from the security of tenure provisions of Part 11 sections 24-28 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 (right to renew)
 - The Tenant can request to extend the lease for a maximum period of 5 years. The request must be made in writing within the last 6 months of the existing lease term.
 - **Feedback:** this should be stronger, the default position being extension – Council should have to provide reason not to renew lease – “Council could not reasonably refuse”
- **New draft Heads of Terms for Community Model Lease – further discussion**
 - Social value offset represented in 40% discount, and in CML covering maintenance costs – this principle not lost
 - Discount is only offered to leaseholders with community benefit
 - Extending social value offset further would mean Council needing to find funds to cover this, by making savings elsewhere

- When taking previous paper to Cabinet (March 2020) – had questions from Members about complexity and feasibility of total social value offset model – monitoring, capacity, equity
- **Dave:** As with the Lordship Hub lease, a simplified method is already in place for calculating the value of various pre-agreed services (eg availability of public toilets, volunteering hours, specific time or space devoted to services congruent to Council priorities etc)
- **Leyla:** It is vital to recognise the substantial resources (grants, partnerships etc) that Centres bring into Haringey
- **Charlotte:** social value offset may not result in 100% discount for everyone – and requires community centres to deliver in line with Council priorities, so need to recognise this dynamic
- **Poppy:** believe Lordship Hub lease social value offset is on annual basis – not guaranteed – community model leaseholders would need to be comfortable with this
- **Shehnaz:** note that Lordship Hub lease is a specific case, negotiated to secure capital investment
- **Poppy:** need to recognise capacity required to monitor social value offset – both for Council and community model leaseholder
- **Action:** Council will go back and reconsider different ways of expressing and giving a financial value to the social value offset proposed here. Recognise the principle and the need for it to be visibly reflected

END OF EXTRACT