

Community Enterprises PL12

Report to Saltash Town Council 30/10/2020

This month's report is taken from my Chair's Report for our AGM, summarising activities over the last 12 months.

AGM Chair's Report 2020

Governance

During the course of this year, 3 Directors have left, and 3 new Directors joined us at the beginning of the year; Jo Grail, David Landers and Sue Ellingham.

One Director, Peter Dungey, is now leaving us after 2 years. We would like to thank him for his work, and wish him all the very best for his future.

We therefore have 3 vacancies, and the Board have appointed 3 new Directors; Samantha Gardner, David Bremner and Julia Peggs, who will all join the Board after this AGM. This will bring our number of Directors to 12.

Covid-19

2020 has been a year without precedent, and all our plans have been disrupted.

All our activities ceased on March 18, with lockdown. However, we very quickly set up a Coronavirus Action Group, with a hastily-formed group of volunteers providing a shopping service, prescription collection service, dog walking, and errands. We also set up a library of books and jigsaws to lend out whilst shops & the library were closed.

This was supported by emergency grant funding from the Cornwall Community Foundation, and Waitrose and Partners.

Volunteers have been making face masks for us, these were initially given to the residents we were helping during lockdown, and since the Hub re-opened, we have been selling them at £3 each.

As a result of the activities during lockdown, we reviewed all our enterprises post-lockdown.

Enterprises

Below is a brief summary; lead Directors will explain in more detail during the meeting.

Transport.

Our Lead Director left early in the year, and transport is now headed up by Sue Ellingham. Our Hopper trips were proving to be popular and much-anticipated; however, the lockdown has meant that no trips have taken place since mid- March. We have just been awarded funding to re-start our trips, and will be creating a more community-wide service within PL12, organising free or heavily subsidised trips to benefit as many people as possible.

Our income from Transport has all but disappeared this year, and this will impact on all areas of our organisation during the coming months.

Community Hub

Although operations closed mid-March, the Hub continued to be the heart of our organisation

during lockdown, and became the HQ for the Coronavirus Action Group. The Community shop now provides selling opportunities for over 20 local crafters; sales have been buoyant, up approximately 65% year on year, despite lockdown. The twice-monthly produce markets continue to be popular. Foodshare continues to raise a small amount, from the sale of donated surplus fruit & veg from people's gardens. Our recycling schemes have raised around £200. We have been selling face masks made by volunteers; to date we have sold around 680 masks, which has raised over £2000. This will go towards projects like Digital Inclusion and the Community Fridge.

Dementia Voice

Until March, DVPL12 was going from strength to strength; we are all very saddened that the Coronavirus pandemic abruptly stopped all the good work. All activities have ceased for the foreseeable future; Carol and Rose are very keen to resume normal services, once it's safe to do so.

18 Belle Vue Road

As a result of the pandemic, Citizens Advice are preparing themselves for an upturn in demand for their services. We have therefore used the lockdown as an opportunity to renovate and rearrange their suite, providing the facilities for a service Saltash should be proud of. The new offices were officially opened by the Mayor on 28 September, in a socially-distanced ceremony. Our thanks go to Saltash Town Council, for their support and funding. The renovations have enabled us to create a Community Support Centre; a multi-use room which can be used by groups, organisations and clubs as a meeting room, training room or office. This will be available FREE to all Groups who are Members of CEPL12.

The Foodbank occupies the lower ground floor rooms, and they have been extremely busy during the last few months.

Belle Vue Project

The ex-toilet block in Belle Vue car park is currently used as storage for the books & jigsaws provided during lockdown; there may be a need for them again during the winter of 2020/21. Longer term uses of this building are being considered.

Digital Inclusion

A direct result of the pandemic, we are in the process of setting up this project to help our elderly residents benefit from all that technology and the internet can provide. Volunteers are being trained as digital champions, and we are appointing a Lead Director. This has been supported by funding of £2000 from Waitrose & Partners.

Future Projects

Projects under consideration include a Library of Things and a Community Fridge.

Partnerships

A key to our success as a community organisation is undoubtedly the positive relationships we have with members and officers of Saltash Town Council and Cornwall Council, and with numerous organisations including SEA, the Foodbank, Live at Home Scheme, Cecily Baker, Saltash churches and schools, and Saltash Age Concern, to name just a few. We have worked in partnership with many of these organisations this year, providing support for our community.

Our Directors are active members of the community, and many represent other key organisations as well as CEPL12.

We have one paid staff, Alan, & I would like to thank him for his hard work and diligence during a very difficult year of change.

I would also like to thank all the organisations that provided funding, to help us make everything happen.

Volunteers

Without a doubt, the most important part of our organisation is the people within it, and I would like to thank all our volunteers from the bottom of my heart. All our Directors devote their time for the benefit of our community. Whether helping out in the Hub for a few hours a week, driving the Hoppers, helping during lockdown whilst being furloughed, helping run Dementia Voice, or giving time freely to support in a myriad of other ways, all our Volunteers are equally important to Community Enterprises. Our organisation is run almost entirely by volunteers, and that is a massive achievement. Without you all, we wouldn't be able to do what we do. **Thank You to all you brilliant, hard-working, committed people.**

The Future

Whilst our financial Director has forecast trading losses for this financial year, our company finances are in a stable position as we have built up reserves to sustain us through difficult times. Financial security means we can focus our endeavours on what we do best, and continue with all our projects, as well as developing new ones like Digital Inclusion and the Community Fridge.

We should all be very proud of what we have achieved - and will continue to achieve, in a rapidly-changing world - to make Saltash a better place to live and work.

Our motto "Together We Can, Together We Do" could not have been more fitting this year.

Jo Baskott, Chair

28th September 2020