



**MINUTES OF
THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF
CITY OF CHELMSFORD MENCAP
RCN245421
Held on Wednesday 5th April 2023 at 7.30pm
Mencap Centre
President: Sandra Morton-Nance**

Trustees attending:

Chris Newson

Neil Barnes

Alan Stoppard

Philip Preston

Anthony North

Sarah Sadler

Staff attending:

n/a

Members attending:

Bryan Powell

Pearl Powell

1. President's Welcome and Apologies

AN opened the proceedings by welcoming everyone to the meeting on behalf of the President, Sandra Morton-Nance, who was unable to attend. Apologies were received

from Rachel Scott (on holiday), Elliot Johnstone (work commitment) and Abi Krone (work commitment).

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th April 2022 were distributed and discussed. The minutes were **APPROVED** unanimously.

3. Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements

Copies of the Trustees Report were distributed. The report outlined the Structure, Governance and Management of the Charity and gave details of the Objectives and Activities.

3.1 Presentation of the Trustees Report by the Chair

Anthony North presented the Report of Trustees.

“Within the report, I describe 2022 as a transformative year for CCM. We emerged from the pandemic with both the charity and the CCM family largely in good health and our focus became the transition to a revised operating model. The safety and wellbeing of our service users, staff and volunteers is always our overriding concern but in this case it was particularly important given the inherent extra dangers of Covid-19 to people with a learning disability.

Our relaxation of our safety protocols was slower, much slower, than for the public at large and I acknowledge this caused some frustrations. However, the board remains comfortable that this was exactly the right thing to do and, in many ways, it made the final steps, towards the back end of the year even more pleasing. The Board would not have been able to make such decisions with good conscience without the expert guidance of our senior staff and we are indebted to our Services Manager and Senior Support Lead in this regard.

We ended the year with masks fully optional and only one service user was regularly choosing to wear one at that point. Any visitor to Mencap Centre will testify that the smiles on the faces of our service users are incredibly endearing and it was wonderful to be able to see them again. At around the same time we were able to relax our distancing policy and working in teams and groups was once again the norm.

Our team has worked extremely hard this year on rebuilding the confidence and social skills of our service users after what, for some, had been a dreadful period of lockdown and isolation. The results are incredible and there are many stories of individuals re-finding their voice and the personality we knew previously. Sometimes it's the small things that make all the difference.

In the boardroom, we have been able to move from crisis management (the board was meeting fortnightly at one point in the pandemic), to a focus on self-evaluation and preparing for growth. Bearing in mind that all trustees are unpaid volunteers, we have changed our own operating model with various groups undertaking research and project activity between meetings. The impact on our efficiency and therefore the benefit to our senior staff has been huge.

We have also moved to having two Vice Chairs who again meet regularly and I believe this is healthy for the charity too. We have welcomed Neil Barnes and Elliot Johnstone to the Board and CCM is already benefitting hugely from their talents and experience. We currently operate with a board of nine trustees plus our two ex-officio position holders, Sandie and Bryan. The board has a good balance, meetings are productive and cordial, and we feel that the charity is well governed.

CCM currently employs 15 staff as well as using the services of self-employed contractors. Board relations with staff are very positive and we are very proud of all that they do, often beyond their contractual commitments. We were particularly pleased to award all eligible staff a “cost of living bonus” in October and this was entirely in keeping with our philosophy of being an employer of choice or, put differently, it’s the CCM way of doing things.

It was a very busy year for our service delivery, once again. On the advocacy side, our caseload continued to grow and the charity once again handled some very complex and challenging cases in service users’ own settings. It is sometimes forgotten that this part of CCM’s userbase stretches across the entire central belt of the county, currently from Harlow to Burnham.

The Outreach Academy continued to welcome more students back to Mencap Centre and the building is once again a very full and lively place. It being jubilee year, there were plenty of activities focussed around that theme and I thought the Platinum City exhibition in the city centre, curated for us by artist Elaine Tribley, was a particular highlight and the perfect showcase for our students’ talents.

As we emerge from the pandemic it is important that we put our students back in the centre of the community - where they rightly belong - and public demonstrations of their talents such as this are very important.

Work has also continued to increase the visibility of CCM and this was rewarded with prestigious invitations to the declaration ceremony of the High Sheriff of Essex and the seating of the new Bishop of Chelmsford. For a small charity like us, this is really important and the board will be doing much more on this theme in the coming year.

And we were thrilled to FINALLY be represented at a Buckingham Palace garden party by Nick Ross and Sarah Sadler, the most senior members of the CCM Family when the Queens Award was confirmed in 2020.

Life is not easy in the small charity sector right now and CCM is not immune from those challenges. We rely on the generosity of our donors and grant-makers to provide our very important services and the current environment requires us to be smarter and more nimble in our applications than ever before. The board takes a cautious approach to the management of charity funds and, as Chris will no doubt mention, we are taking active steps to ensure we maximise the benefit of our balances where possible.

Our membership has remained steady at 199 and there are 60 individuals attending the Outreach Academy on a rotational basis.

Finally, it’s become traditional in these presentations that I give some feedback from the people that really matter – our service users. This week I learned that:

- Mencap is really good fun
- I love seeing my friends and learning new things
- We have been learning about staying healthy and I made a stress ball. It was really funny

This last person quoted here would not have vocalised to that degree when they first returned to Mencap Centre so it was great to hear them talking so confidently and enthusiastically about their experience of the Outreach Academy.

Members, in conclusion, your charity continues to meet and exceed its objectives and the Board proposes the adoption of its 2022 annual report.”

Questions were invited at this point, none were forthcoming.

3.2 Presentation of Financial Statements by the Treasurer

A summary of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022 was distributed and presented by Chris Newson, Treasurer.

“The final accounts had only been obtained in the last 24 hours. The independent examiner had initially proposed changes with which we did not agree and the persistence of Bernadette Bass convinced them to revert to the original format. We are greatly indebted to Bernadette for her help during a busy time for her.

The accounts reconcile fully with the management accounts previously agreed by the Board of Trustees, the presentation however is slightly different to comply with Charities Commission guidelines. I can confirm the accounts accurately represent the financial year for the charity and recommend their adoption.

I would like to highlight the work done during the year to ensure all funds are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme and are interest bearing where they are not needed in the short term.”

Questions were invited at this point, none were forthcoming.

Members **ADOPTED** unanimously both the Report of the Trustees and the Financial Statements.

4. Appointment of Independent Examiners

The charity’s gross income for the year to 31 December 2023 falls below the legal requirement level for the annual accounts to be audited. There is however, a requirement for independent examination of the accounts by a qualified accountant. Anthony North proposed NSO Associates LLP be reappointed as Independent Examiners of the charity. This was seconded by Chris Newson. The reappointment of NSO Associates LLP was **APPROVED** unanimously.

5. Election of Persons to be Trustees in accordance with Clause 7 of the Constitution of City of Chelmsford Mencap

In the absence of the charity’s President, Sandra Morton-Nance, the election was conducted by Vice President Bryan Powell.

5.1 Re-election of Present Board Members

Those Trustees standing for re-election were:

Abigail Krone:	Proposer: Anthony North	Secunder: Sarah Sadler
Alan Stoppard:	Proposer: Anthony North	Secunder: Neil Barnes
Anthony North:	Proposer: Neil Barnes	Secunder: Chris Newson
Chris Newson:	Proposer: Anthony North	Secunder: Phil Preston
Philip Preston:	Proposer: Anthony North	Secunder: Chris Newson
Rachel Scott:	Proposer: Anthony North	Secunder: Chris Newson
Sarah Sadler:	Proposer: Anthony North	Secunder: Alan Stoppard

The re-election of all Trustees to CCM's Board of Trustees was **APPROVED** unanimously.

5.2 Nominations to the Trustee Board

There were 2 new nominations to the Trustee Board this year.

Elliot Johnstone:	Proposer: Anthony North	Secunder: Sarah Sadler
Neil Barnes:	Proposer: Anthony North	Secunder: Alan Stoppard

The election of both nominations to CCM's Board of Trustees was **APPROVED** unanimously.

6. Election of Officers in accordance with Clause 5 of the Constitution of City of Chelmsford Mencap

Nomination for the election of Vice President: Sandra Morton-Nance

The election of Sandra Morton-Nance as Charity President was proposed by Sarah Sadler and seconded by Philip Preston

Nomination for the election of Chair: Anthony North

The election of Anthony North as Chair was proposed by Chris Newson and seconded by Alan Stoppard.

Nomination for the election of Vice-Chair: Alan Stoppard

The election of Alan Stoppard as Vice-Chair was proposed by Neil Barnes and seconded by Anthony North.

Nomination for the election of Vice-Chair: Sarah Sadler

The election of Sarah Sadler as Vice-Chair was proposed by Anthony North and seconded by Philip Preston.

Nomination for the election of Treasurer: Chris Newson

The election of Chris Newson as Treasurer was proposed by Neil Barnes and seconded by Sarah Sadler.

Nomination for the election of Secretary: Neil Barnes

The election of Neil Barnes as Secretary was proposed by Chris Newson and seconded by Alan Stoppard.

Nomination for the election of Vice President: Bryan Powell

Anthony North conducted the vote for the election of Bryan Powell as Vice President, proposed by Alan Stoppard and seconded by Phil Preston.

The election of all Officers was **APPROVED** unanimously.

7. Any Other Business

None

8. Vote of Thanks

The vote of thanks was given by Anthony North:

“In tonight’s meeting we have reported on a successful year for our charity. However, such amazing results for our service users require the skill, dedication of many people both paid and unpaid. This is the point that I get to thank them directly:

- Thanks to all our support staff and tutors. Yet again they have surpassed themselves with the attention, stimulation and care they have given to our service users week in, week out. They are all inspirational and their dedication to the charity and to each other is unflinching
- Thanks to Bernadette for another year of meticulous bookkeeping and accounts management. Her attention to detail is legendary and we all benefit from that. It’s perhaps unfair to single out any individual thing she has done this year. but I will. The fact we are holding this AGM right now is down to her tenacity over the last 24 hours – a day I’d prefer not to re-live but she pulled us through. Thank you.
- To Jan, now with her new fancy title of Advocacy and Community Support Manager, many thanks. Whilst the Outreach Academy often gets the headlines, this increasingly important part of our offering is making a vital difference to those who are often at crisis point. It’s really important and valuable work and we are grateful to her.
- Volunteers are the lifeblood of any charity and we are not different. We have a wonderful brigade of willing helpers who regularly give their free time to CCM. Some have been with us for many years, but it really pleasing to new joiners in the building all the time, one as recently as today. Thank you to all our volunteers.
- Next, our trustees. I’m so thrilled to work with all our trustees – both individually and as a committee. They are all passionate about CCM and ambitious about where we might go next now that we have come through the pandemic. A highly-functioning board facilitates free and open discussion with every member’s contributions treated with respect and courtesy. That is exactly what we have at

CCM and it a pleasure to work with such a fine set of talented and committed individuals. Thank you for your support over another interesting year. With the Board now re-constituted, I look forward to getting going tomorrow morning.

- And on to Grace. Anybody who knows CCM knows Grace. She is at the centre of everything we do and any success we have owes a small or large (usually large) amount to her. Her ceaseless supply of ideas and initiatives is inspirational and the entire CCM family is grateful to her, nobody more so than me. She is always incredibly generous with her advice, support, cups of coffee, fascinating anecdotes and encyclopaedic knowledge of every individual who comes through our doors as well as their parents, carers and support network. In thanking her for her contribution to CCM, I'd also like to thank her personally everything she does for me and for the board.
- And finally, to the “stars of our show”, our wonderful service users. I really want to praise them this year for the way they have been willing to work with us as we changed our operational procedures and our safety protocols multiple times. Whilst change is challenging for many of them, they worked hard to embrace our protocols, even where that meant some favourite elements being withdrawn. They continue to inspire us all to do our very best for them and they reward us with their hard work, their laughter, their talents and their progress. Thank you to each and every one of them.

Please join me a round of applause for all the above.

9. Close

Anthony North officially closed the 2023 AGM.

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