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# Minutes

**Place** SYDNI Centre, Sydenham, Leamington Spa

**Date** Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2013

**Time** 7.30pm

## 1 Attendance

Staff – 4; Board – 8; Volunteers – 14; Members – 2; Visitors – 8

**Staff:** L Male, P Kennedy, M Smith, L Smith.

**Board:** G Randall, G Davies, J Armstrong, R Edwards, D Hunt, C Pollock, R Twiney, K Sinfield.

**Volunteers:** R. Diba, B Ashworth, M Partridge, E Hunt, S. Moore, R Cleal, D Anderson, J Webber, J Colledge, A Goodwin, P. Austin, I Wood, L Drake, J Liddamore,

**Members:** K Naimo, J Pollock,

**Visitors:** S Dobson, J Knight Deputy Mayor Leamington Town Council, J Pollock, C Lancaster WCAVA, J Armstrong, B Weed, M Western Councillor Willes area, A Metcalfe Sustainability – Climate Change Officer

## Apologies

S Elvyhart, M Begg, R Wallsgrove, P Blackledge, A Jeffries, J Holmes

## 2 Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the last AGM were proposed as approved by Richard Edwards, seconded by Roger Twiney and approved unanimously by the attendees.

## 3 Matters arising

None

## 4 Adoption of Report and Financial Statements period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013

### 4.1 Trustees Report

John Armstrong (JA) spoke on Action 21's charitable aims and what the key areas for development were, as identified by the Board of Trustees' Strategy Group in 2011:

1. *Greater community awareness and engagement*
2. *More training and skills development*
3. *Greater financial and site security*

Louise Male (LM) gave the report on the charity's second full year of trading solely from The Re-Useful Centre. Thanks were extended to all volunteers and staff for their hard work and dedication.

**Volunteers:** Over the year, Action 21 averaged 65-80 regular volunteers at any time, aged between 14 and 72. Volunteers gave a total of 12,756 hours of their time, which exceeded the previous year by 1,870 hours. 57 regular volunteers were recruited in this period, and of those, 19 remained in their roles at the end of the financial year. The predominant reason for volunteers leaving Action 21 was finding employment.

Four new volunteer roles were created: Communications Assistant, PAT Assistant, Cashier and Schools' Green Champion. Additionally, three lapsed roles were revived: Article/Blog Writer,

Social Media Assistant and Designer. Four roles were also closed down as the charity could no longer support them: East Lodge Permaculture Gardener, East Lodge Sustainability Centre Assistant, Recycling Steward (taken on by ARC CIC) and Solar 300 Administrative Assistant.

**Re-use:** LM reported on key figures for the year: 103.5 tonnes of re-useable manufactured items were kept out of landfill. This figure was comprised of 513 bicycles, 856 electrical items and 23,347 furniture & bric-a-brac items. Additional funds were created during the year by developing the online sales department, which resulted in over £2340 being generated. Thanks were extended to the volunteers who helped to expand the department.

LM welcomed new Shop Supervisor Paul Kennedy, also reporting that the shop's van continued to run, and that training procedures for new PAT testing volunteers had been upgraded.

Two visits to the Re-Useful Centre gave Action 21 the opportunity to showcase its good work; the first was from 30+ national delegates via the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC), and the second was from eight Hong Kong dignitaries via Warwick University Business School.

Action 21 supported both local and national charities over the year. The charity donated wall-mounted toys to the SYDNI Centre and Sydenham Children's Centre; gave unwanted spectacles to Oxfam; supplied Tools for Self Reliance with old tools and hand sewing machines (to be sent on to Africa) and supported Operation Christmas Child's Shoebox Appeal.

LM also reported that Action 21 had continued to support GreenGeek over the year by providing rent-free office space.

This year also saw the introduction of free re-use themed events, with Swap Shops for clothes, toys and games, held in October and March.

**Recycling:** 12 tonnes were kept from landfill at the 2012 Peace Festival. The Re-Useful Centre continues to generate income from sorting scrap metal waste, which generated £551.50 over the year.

**Transport:** LM congratulated the Bike Workshop team from saving 513 bikes from landfill over the year, and reconditioning the charity's 1000<sup>th</sup> bike. The Bike Workshop's buddy scheme continues to enable more experienced bicycle volunteers to skill share and train up less experienced volunteers. The popular Dr. Bike volunteer service featured at Leamington Peace Festival, the Sydni Centre, Warwick University and the Lillies WI.

**Food:** LM reported on Dobson Lane Community Allotments and its allotment association (DLCAA), the continued success of the project and how over 400 trees had been planted on the site, in addition to numerous native bulbs being planted in Bramble Wood.

**East Lodge:** The building was opened to the public on Sundays, displaying vibrant information boards on biodiversity, compost, food, energy, transport, permaculture, water and re-use. Action 21 has the lease on the building until 2015 and after consideration, agreed that the best use of the space was to let other like-minded groups use it as office space, in exchange for providing Skill Share workshops. As of May 2013, Canalside Community Food, ARC CIC and South Warwickshire Food CIC used office space in East Lodge.

The Permaculture Garden also opened to the public on Sundays. After discussing the changes to East Lodge with Warwick District Council, the maintenance of the garden was returned to them. Thanks to volunteers John L, Bob C, Geraldine R and Gitta A, who were involved in the project.

**Education:** LM reported on the launch of the new Skill Share project in spring 2013, with introductory sewing workshops on knicker making and bunting making. Many thanks to Roisin M and Manjit S for running such great sessions.

The charity's Schools' Green Champion project was also initiated. Volunteers and staff researched and developed workshops on sustainability-themed topics to be delivered to pupils in local schools. The first workshop was delivered to Sydenham Primary School in July 2013 by volunteers Tom C and Connor W, with very positive feedback from the school.

Laura, the Community Ranger in Jephson Gardens, continues to organise a wide variety of events. We ran a programme of 12 free nature-themed educational family events in Jephson

Gardens over the year. Smaller events included history walks, tree walks and a bat walk. Larger events included *Birds of Prey*, *Hive of Activity* and *A Leamington Ghost Walk: Historical and Hysterical*. The events drew a total of 1689 attendees. In addition, 234 pupils visited with their schools for ranger-led educational activities ranging from tree walks and learning about uses and adaptations of plants, to creative sessions including sketching, collage and photography.

Action 21 once again supported 2013 & Beyond, the annual sustainability-themed education event run in partnership with Warwickshire County Council, Coventry City Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council. The 11<sup>th</sup> event of its kind, it attracted over 1,300 pupils aged 9-11 years from 45 schools across Coventry and Warwickshire. The fun hands-on workshops included: global sustainability of food and water, sustainable fishing and resource depletion, wildlife and ecosystems, composting, healthy eating, energy efficiency and fair trade. (Please note the minutes for last year's AGM said it was the 11<sup>th</sup> year this project had run. It was in fact the 10<sup>th</sup>)

**Energy:** LM reported on the Solar 300 Challenge. Initiated in 2009, the project drew to a close in March 2013. It achieved a total installed PV capacity of over 183 kWp - responsible for generating a total of 146,400 units of electricity annually. This means that approximately 63,000 Kg less CO<sub>2</sub> per year is now being released into the atmosphere. Overall this project has generated approx £11,100 income for Action 21. Many thanks go to Keith Sinfield for leading on this project, and key volunteers Ian Wood & Ed Hunt.

**Marketing and Communications:** LM reported that the Re-Useful Centre's van was sign written with the shop's branding, thus helping to publicise the charity and shop in the local area. New signage was also created for the Re-Useful Centre building frontage and gates.

Other achievements include the development of a social media strategy including Action 21 news and events plus information on how to live sustainably; the recruitment of volunteer social media assistants to increase Facebook and Twitter presence; the re-launch *Practical Sustainability*, Action 21's blog; recruitment of volunteer blog team; regular press releases sent to local media. The newsletters *Transaction* and *Volunteer Voice* continued to be published.

LM reported that the new Action 21 website should be ready in the first week of August.

## 4.2 Financial Statements

Geoff Randall (GR) reminded people that last year he reported Action 21 had made a surplus of £38k in 2011/12, but that this result would not be repeated in 2012/13. This was indeed the case. The charity incurred a deficit of just over £6k in 2012/13. GR presented a slide comparing this outcome with the previous year, using the figures included in the accounts.

Action 21 had accumulated general reserves of over £69k by the end of 2011/12, and so were able to meet the 2012/13 deficit from that amount and carry forward over £63k. GR pointed out that some of this may be needed this year, because the budget shows a small deficit. The good news is that this year's RUC sales to the end of June are up on last year's.

**Income** reduced by over £25k – Re-Useful Centre sales by nearly £5k, grants by over £15k (mainly the core funding we used to receive from Warwick District Council) and other income by over £5k. Staff costs increased by about £16k – firstly due to employing the Volunteer & Marketing Officer for more hours from 1 April 2012, and secondly the charity had to meet the full year costs of staffing decisions taken in 2011/12. Other costs also increased because Action 21 had to start paying business rates on both the Re-Useful Centre and East Lodge. Governance costs reduced from 2011/12 because in that year, significant accountants' costs were paid to provide information to establish that there was no Corporation Tax liability for the old company that existed before the present charity was set up.

GR asked if the audience had any question regarding the finance. There were none.

The report and financial statements were proposed as approved by Mick Partridge, seconded by Richard Edwards and approved unanimously by the attendees.

## 4.3 Issues

JA reported on continued uncertainty regarding long term security of tenure at Ramsey Road and that a team of Trustees were looking at how to secure Action 21's future tenure.

#### **4.4 Future focus**

Action 21 aims to continue its good work on all active projects and work towards achieving some security of tenure for the re-use operation.

#### **5 Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Geoff Randall proposed we continue to use Dafferns. This was seconded by Mick Partridge and approved unanimously by the attendees.

#### **6 Election of Trustees**

Donna Hunt, Roger Twiney, Richard Edwards, Geoff Randall stood down by rotation and, being willing to stand again, were re-elected. This was proposed by Mick Partridge, seconded by Gitta Ashworth and approved unanimously by the attendees.

N. Jones stepped down due to illness. The Board, staff and volunteers sent their best wishes to her.

K. Sinfield has stepped down. Thanks were expressed for all K. Sinfield's contributions during his time spent as a Trustee.

#### **7 Any Other Business**

M Partridge asked if bees could be kept at Dobson Lane Allotments and if help could be given watering Brunswick Healthy Living Centre's (BHLC) Action for Health plot. LM will raise this with BHLC and at DLCAA Committee Meeting next week.

G. Ashworth asked if scrap metal could be brought to the Re-Useful Centre for scrap income. Agreed.

A Goodwin and S. Moore spoke of how beneficial their volunteering experience had been to them.

#### **8 Date of next meeting**

Will be announced a month in advance of the meeting date.