

**MINUTES OF THE 50<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF  
OLD FELIXSTOWE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION HELD ON  
THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023 AT 7pm**

Present: Celia Page – Chairman, Administrator & Trustee  
Gina Cooper – Vice Chairman & Trustee  
Terry Smith – Trustee  
Victoria White – Treasurer  
Lorna Fraser – Accounts Administrator  
Mary Whiteley – Secretary  
Eleanor Clark - Chairman of Management Committee  
Elaine Wright – Membership Secretary  
Dave Songhurst – Newsletter Editor & Website Manager  
Linda Drouet - Administrator

Plus:

Seamus Bennett (Town Mayor), Alistair Marks, Angela Pratt, Ann Richer, Annie Matthews, Bobby Newman (Brackenburg WI), Brian Cutler, Bryan Whiteley, Carol Cox (Morning WI), Carroll Wallace (Garden Club), Dave Norman, Rev. David White (Table Tennis), Debbie Wink, Gillian Barnett, Ian Humphreys, Jacky Fairweather, Jan Ford (Garden Club), Janet Berry, Lesley Songhurst (Tennis), Margaret Lamacraft, Jennie Norman (Craft), Jerry Lacey, Joan Webber (Martello Ladies), John Varden, Judy Humphreys, Judy Jones (PCC), Liz Sampson, Lyn Osborne (Community Market), Lynn Lacey, Mike Osborne (Community Market), Nigel Pusey, Pam Meichen, Pat Pearson, Pauline Varden, Rosy Freeman (Martello Ladies), Stephen Fairweather, Steve Brewer (FAA), Sue Hazelwood, Sylvia Arnold (FASC), Sylvia Pearson (Brackenburg WI), Yvonne Barclay.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Jean Brackley, Barbara Durrance, Dawn Cheadle (Lone Star Line Dancers), Helen Swift (Rainbows & Guides). After the meeting apologies were also received from Doreen Savage (Chair of Trustees).

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mary Whiteley read a summary of the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th October 2022. The acceptance of these Minutes as a correct record was proposed Margaret Lamacraft, seconded Gina Cooper and agreed unanimously.

3. Annual Accounts – Lorna Fraser

I am presenting the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023. Vickie has done all the hard work with the day-to-day financials for OFCA, and will continue to do this. I will continue to put the figures into statutory format ready for independent examination. These figures have been finalised and Robert Digby has signed his independent review confirming no issues.

I will run through the 'headline' figures in these accounts:

You will see from the statement of financial activities (on page 4) that we are showing an overall deficit for the year. Please note that this is after depreciation of just over £7k and so overall the result is good considering the significant investment in the centre we have made during the year. I will run through these costs in more detail later in the report. You will note that there is a split between restricted and unrestricted income and expenses. This is to show the income & expenditure in relation to the grants we have received for a specific purpose

(and is an accounting standard requirement). These are explained further in note 7 where the different funds are broken down.

Moving on to the Balance Sheet on page 5. This is a snapshot of our assets and liabilities at the 30 June 2023. You will see that despite the deficit, the cash balance has remained consistent with the prior year. This is a great achievement considering the spend, and represents the hard work done through the various fundraising activities.

Further on into the accounts, note 2 breaks down the income. In 2022, the summer fair income was shown in the funds note, as designated funds as this was intended to be used for the courtyard. We did not receive any Government grants, as the Covid grants came to an end during 2022. Hiring income continues to increase which represents both the increased activity in the hall, but also these accounts are the first with the impact of the price increases on the hire rates. The restricted grant income is the money we received in relation to the warm room funding from East Suffolk Council. Although we did not continue with the warm room project, East Suffolk Council allowed us to keep this grant towards the cost of heating etc. We received £1,517 of donation income during the year and these are listed in the annual report.

Looking at note 3 – analysis of expenditure. The cleaning is actually slightly lower than in the prior year. This is mainly due to us having to carry out some irregular cleaning/deep cleans due to Covid in 2022. We did manage to fix our gas and electricity back in April/May 2022 and so we have been protected somewhat from the energy price increases. However, the gas and electricity costs are still significant figures in the accounts.

The repairs and renewals is by far the largest figure in the accounts, and this continues to show the investment needed in the upkeep of the building. £10k of this relates to the Courtyard, the biggest cost being the tarmac. £1,000 of this cost has been shown as restricted funding, due to us receiving a grant. The rest is funded by the 'designated' fund set up and OFCA own funds. There was a considerable amount of electrical work done in the building, including a new consumer unit, the total cost of all the electrical work £2.6k. In addition, there was various radiator, gas & boiler repair work needed, including replacing the water heater – total of these costs £2k. The blinds were replaced in the Margaret White Hall at a cost of £500 and the front entrance slope was improved at a cost of £1k. These have not been capitalised (and therefore included on the balance sheet) as these are generally replacement of existing fixtures and so contribute significantly to the results shown in the accounts.

I would like to recommend that Robert Digby is appointed as independent examiner again for the 2024 year end.

Acceptance of these accounts was proposed Linda Drouet, seconded Elaine Wright and agreed unanimously.

#### 4. Reports of General Council/Management Committee and Tennis Section

##### a) General Council and Management Committee - Celia Page

Sadly, the past year has been an emotional one as we have lost several of our friends. Jeremy Pratt passed away in November. Jeremy had been involved with the Association for a long time being a member of the Allotment Association and the Garden Club as well as an Area Representative for many years. Jeremy served for several years on the Centre's Management Committee and carried out the role of handyman with enthusiasm, nothing was too much trouble for him. Councillor Graham Newman passed away in December, Graham

was Chair of the Association's Trustees, a member of General Council and printed the newsletter for us. Above all, Graham was a friend to us all and a great supporter of OFCA both with his time and financially. Sadly, Nettie Trigg has recently passed away; everyone knew Nettie and for many years she ran a stall at the Community Market raising money for her small animal rescue charity, she had also been a member of General Council. Now, on a personal note, in February I lost my partner, Bryan Boreham. Bryan played an active role in the Association and was a member of the Management Committee. This has highlighted what a close-knit family OFCA is, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the support you have shown me.

Fund raising events continued throughout the year with the Community Markets raising more than ever and an extremely successful Summer Fair was held in June. The Christmas Card scheme organised by Pauline Varden also raised valuable funds for the Association. Gina Cooper has introduced film afternoons; these are proving to be very popular and Gina plans to continue with this project to bring the community together.

The Trustees have been incredibly grateful for financial donations and grants received during the year from:

Amazon Smile

Maritime Cargo Processing

Ken Cuthbert

East Suffolk Council

Jean Brackley

Positive Pals

Sally Ford's aerobics group

Felixstowe Stroke Support group

The craft stall at the Summer Fair

Carol Sutherland

Last November Elaine Wright and a team of volunteers began an initiative to open a Warm Room three times a week during the winter months. Free tea/coffee and biscuits were provided along with books, magazines and games. We are grateful to East Suffolk Council who provided funds to set up the Warm Room. The winter was not as cold as expected and the Warm Room was not used as much as we had hoped so a decision was made to close it at the end of January. However, this once again proved how we come together in a time of need.

I would like to extend my thanks on behalf of the members of the Association to our hardworking Centre Management Committee chaired by Ellie Clark, Gina Cooper as Vice Chairman, Mary Whiteley, our Secretary, Elaine Wright, our Membership Secretary, Vickie White, our Treasurer, Lorna Fraser for producing the Annual Accounts and the Sports Committee chaired by Lesley Songhurst. My thanks also go to Anne Lee who prepares the invoices and Lyn Osborne who takes the Community Market bookings. My thanks go to Dave Songhurst, our Newsletter Editor and Website Manager. Dave raises valuable funds via the advertisements in the newsletter.

A special thanks must go to Dave Norman, "Odd Job" as he called himself. Dave has relinquished this role but has agreed to continue to carry out the monthly safety checks and help set up at the Community Markets. Thank you, Dave! We now welcome Rob Jackson, "Odd Job Rob" as he is known, and we thank him for joining the team.

Gillian Barnett has been working hard to produce a book entitled "Old Felixstowe Community Association, The First Fifty Years." As you can imagine, this has been a difficult task so thank you Gillian and we all look forward to reading the fascinating history of the Association.

In addition to those mentioned there is an army of people without whom the Centre would not run so smoothly. Numerous jobs are carried out behind the scenes and my thanks go to everyone who help in whatever way, it is most appreciated.

The main responsibility of the Centre Management Committee's work is to ensure the Centre is well maintained and some significant improvements have been completed this year.

One of the first tasks of each new year is to update the policy documents, these are often required in grant applications. A benefit of this is that it has improved our record keeping of safety inspections and certification. It is a legal requirement for OFCA to comply with current Health & Safety standards. The fire alarms and extinguishers are regularly inspected and serviced, the gas boiler and system checked, the defibrillator software updated, and the first aid box is kept fully equipped.

In January, a problem was identified with the paving outside the front entrance. Once it was established that this was the responsibility of OFCA, building work took place. In February the boiler fan and pipework plus the room control circuits needed replacing, this cost amounted to approximately £1000. This was an unexpected cost but funds through donations enabled us to cover the cost. In March, the wiring in the kitchen was extended to provide additional sockets. Testing throughout the building took place to certify the electrical circuits. During these surveys, some important remedial work to comply with current regulations was identified. Upgrades were needed to the emergency lighting, and this has taken place. In May the water heater in the gents' toilets sprang a leak and had to be replaced. The curtains in the Margaret White Hall were replaced with vertical blinds and later a recurring leak in the toilets called for a complete replumb. Gina Cooper offered to provide training sessions for groups who use the projector in the Wyn Brackley Hall. We would encourage more groups to seek help as it has proved beneficial for those taking part.

An expert surveyor visited the Centre and gave us guidance on what work needs to be done and what improvements could be made.

The maintenance of the building really is a team effort here at OFCA with several people contributing their time to work with the contractors.

After several major works initiated by Terry Smith, followed by a virtual shut down for a year due to Covid, the building has needed some TLC. In July, a snag list was produced, and a list of priorities made. Painting of the hallway/lobby area, the Margaret White Hall and the kitchen has transformed the feel of the centre. The carpets and upholstery have been steamed cleaned; this has saved money on buying new items. A complete deep clean has brought a sparkle back to the whole Centre. There are some minor works already in progress and over the next three months other work will be prioritised commencing in 2024, an estimate of costs will be provided to the General Council.

With the Jubilee Courtyard looking great, it was felt that the front garden needed some attention. Mick Elmes carried out some major pruning and clearing work and cuts the grass for us. The Jubilee rowan tree was planted, and Mary has been working on the design and planting. Janet continues to provide a stunning display of flowers along the fence in Ferry Road.

The Community Centre is thriving with over thirty groups using the building on a regular basis and private bookings remain buoyant. We currently have two administrators and welcome back Linda Drouet to this role. The administrators work alternate months dealing with the bookings and answering queries from current and future hirers. There have been small problems with tidiness, storage and locking of the main doors, but generally the halls are treated with respect and the fees from hiring are our major source of income.

Volunteers run the Community Centre, and we are looking for more people to join our friendly team so please do not hesitate and speak to any Committee member, it really is rewarding to be a part of OFCA.

#### b) Sports Report - Lesley Songhurst

It has been an enjoyable year for the Tennis Club and the courts are in use every weekday morning as well as at weekends. We have been pleased to welcome the grass court people again who join us on half-yearly subs when the grass court season ends.

Our club has now entered the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as far as paying subs is concerned! We have a new Membership Secretary who has set up a facility for joining on line and paying by BACS. This has worked well, although not everyone is ready to tear up their cheque book!

The courts have been treated with weed and moss killer and we have sufficient funds to maintain the courts in good condition.

Acceptance of these reports was proposed Sylvia Arnold, seconded Janet Berry and agreed unanimously.

#### 5. Election of Officers 2023 – appended to these Minutes

Following the Election of Officers, Celia Page paid tribute to the following people: I would now like to make some presentations, firstly to Lorna Fraser who, whilst passing over the day to day running of the accounts to Vickie White, has agreed to produce our annual accounts. We are most grateful to Lorna for the professional way in which she carried out the role of Treasurer.

I would now like to once again thank Dave Norman for all his work carrying out a myriad of jobs at the Centre.

A huge thank you to Gillian Barnett, her book and a synopsis are on display in the Wyn Brackley Hall and orders can be taken.

As we have heard Elaine Wright wishes to relinquish her position as Membership Secretary. Elaine has spent a mere 21 years as Membership Secretary, and we thank her wholeheartedly. Elaine has kindly offered to continue organising the monthly Community Markets for which we are most grateful.

#### 6. Any Other Business - None

Before the meeting closed and we left to celebrate 50 successful years, on behalf of everyone Eleanor Clark thanked Celia for all her hard work during a particularly challenging year. Celia is a mover and shaker, and a ball of energy with the rare ability to make even the most tedious task a lot of fun. Thank you, Celia, from us all.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.35pm.

## Election of Officers 2023

Treasurer	Victoria White	Proposed Seconded	Elaine Wright Lorna Fraser
Accounts Administrator	Lorna Fraser	Proposed Seconded	Dave Norman Victoria White
Secretary	Mary Whiteley	Proposed Seconded	Celia Page Gillian Barnett
Membership Secretary	Post vacant		

Elaine Wright is standing down as Membership Secretary after 21 years of performing this role. She will, however, remain on General Council.

Administrator(s)	Celia Page Linda Drouet	Proposed Seconded	Gina Cooper Lorna Fraser
Newsletter Editor	Dave Songhurst	Proposed Seconded	Elaine Wright Margaret Lamacraft
Chair of General Council	Celia Page	Proposed Seconded	Gillian Barnett Gina Cooper
Vice Chair of Gen Council	Gina Cooper	Proposed Seconded	Victoria White Lorna Fraser
General Council Members due for re-election	Linda Drouet Jackie Fairweather Celia Page Dave Songhurst Elaine Wright	Proposed Seconded	Gillian Barnett Dave Norman
Chair of Management Committee	Eleanor Clark	Proposed Seconded	Elaine Wright Victoria White
Management Committee Members willing to continue	Celia Page Vickie White Gina Cooper Eleanor Clark Mary Whiteley Elaine Wright	Proposed Seconded	Pam Meichen Dave Norman
New Volunteers:	Linda Drouet	Proposed Seconded	Gillian Barnett Victoria White

Standing down from Management Committee: Dave Norman, Margaret Lamacraft

Independent Examiner of Accounts	Robert Digby	Proposed Seconded	Victoria White Lorna Fraser
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All officers were elected unanimously.