

**MINUTES OF THE 51ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
OLD FELIXSTOWE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION HELD ON
THURSDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2023 AT 7.30PM**

Present: Celia Page – Chairman, Administrator & Trustee
Doreen Savage – Chair of Trustees
Gillian Barnett - Trustee
Gina Cooper – Vice Chairman & Trustee
Terry Smith – Trustee
Victoria White – Treasurer
Mary Whiteley – Secretary
Dave Songhurst – Newsletter Editor & Website Manager
Linda Drouet - Administrator

Plus:
Angela Pratt, Barbara Bown, Bryan Whiteley, Elaine Wright, Hilary Unwin, Ken Hann, Jacky Fairweather, Janet Berry, Jill Gibbs, Lesley Songhurst, Liz Sampson, Lyn Osborne, Margaret Lamacraft, Pauline Varden.

Celia opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the 51st Annual General meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Eleanor Clark (Chair of Management Committee), Lorna Fraser (Accounts Administrator), Dawn Cheadle (Lone Star Line Dancers), Bobby Newman (Brackenhurst WI), Jenny Norman, Dave Norman.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mary read out a summary of the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th October 2023. The acceptance of these Minutes as a correct record was proposed Gina Cooper, seconded Elaine Wright and agreed unanimously.

3. Annual Accounts – Vickie White

Vickie explained that as Treasurer she takes care of the day-to-day administration and that Lorna had prepared the year end accounts. She read out Lorna's report as follows:

Income

- Subscriptions and affiliation fees have decreased when compared to last year – this is due to the change in treatment of the subscription fees paid by members. This is now being shown as donations as agreed.
- Hire income has increased on last year, this represents the significant increase in hiring activity in the hall.
- Income and expenses in relation to the 50th anniversary have been shown separately so that this can be seen clearly.
- The grant income of £3000 represented the funds received from Steve Wiles SCC budget for the lighting and door work done in the hall.
- Donations received were as follows:
 - Sally Ford Quiz - £264
 - Martello Circle donation - £80
 - Salvation Army Christmas Tree - £11.70
 - MCP - £500
 - Subscriptions now classified as donations - £453
 - TOTAL- £1,308

Expenditure

- The first expense that needs explanation is the repairs and renewals. You will note this is split between restricted and unrestricted income. The reason for this is the £3000 grant income was given for a specific purpose and so we must match the expenditure to this. Therefore, the restricted expenses are as follows:
 - £1,786 on replacement lighting in the hall
 - £2,568 on sound proofing the door in the MB lounge.
- The unrestricted expenses are those that were spent out of general funds. The main expense out of this total was £2,790 spent on painting the hall. The rest was made up of general repairs around the building.
- There are £1,261 of 50th anniversary costs – this includes the cost of the book printing.
- The remainder of the expenses are reasonable when compared to prior years and therefore as we would expect.

The bottom line of section A of the accounts shows the movements in funds and reconciles this to the movement in cash funds held during the year. The overall result shows an increase in cash funds on the prior year of £13,039 meaning that the cash balance held at the end of the year is £122,163 compared with £109,124 in the prior year.

Section B allows us to show the balance of any assets held. We can (if we choose to) show the cost of any assets owned by the Charity. This has not been included here as it is optional and so not necessary to be disclosed. However, Lorna has prepared a fixed asset register as these are the main assets owned by the Charity and this has been reviewed by the Trustees.

These look very different to the accounts that you are used to seeing and reviewing. However, hopefully they will be more useful, easier to understand and are more in line with the monthly figures prepared.

The accounts have been sent to Robert Digby for his independent review of the figures as usual.

Acceptance of these accounts was proposed Gillian Barnett, seconded Doreen Savage and agreed unanimously.

4. Reports of General Council/Management Committee and Tennis Section – Celia Page

At last year's AGM we celebrated the Association's 50th Anniversary, a golden theme has continued throughout this year at various events.

This past year has seen a major change in the way the Newsletter and Membership scheme is run, and my thanks must go to the small Committee that was set up to oversee this change. Dave Songhurst has been instrumental in putting this into practice which has seen the newsletter being available online and sent to 314 households automatically six times a year. As we are no longer collecting an annual subscription from our members, we are always grateful for donations, and I am pleased to report that many have been received throughout the year. A big thank you to Dave for all his hard work in this respect.

The Community Centre continues to be extremely popular especially in the evenings so much so that potential regular hirers have been turned away. This is all very positive news looking forward and with the range of groups meeting at the Centre we really provide a great choice for the community. However, with success brings more demands so the role of

volunteers is extremely important. If you feel you would like to get involved, please have a chat with me after the meeting.

At last year's AGM Gillian Barnett's book entitled "Old Felixstowe Community Association the First Fifty Years" was launched. This fascinating history of the Association is still available, and you can purchase your copy following this meeting.

The Community Markets continue to be a great success, so my thanks go to Elaine Wright who coordinates this and Lyn Osborne who takes the bookings and has the unenviable task of organising the tables. Of course, this is a team effort, but special thanks must go to Dave Norman who helps set up and pack away the tables. Without all this help the Community Markets would not be the success they are. A great addition to the Markets is the presence of the Parish Nurses who offer advice and signpost people to the right service. Councillor Steve Wiles is also in attendance and answers a variety of residents questions concerning local matters.

This year's Summer Fair was also a great success and raised the magnificent total of £1,815. It was great to see the stall holders dress up in a golden theme and really enter into the spirit of things.

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

Aerobics Group – proceeds of Quiz Night
Martello Ladies Circle – Speaker donations
Salvation Army – Christmas Tree Festival
Christmas Card delivery scheme
Maritime Cargo Processing
Suffolk County Council – Councillor Wiles from his Locality budget
Film Shows organised by Gina Cooper – refreshment donations
50th Anniversary – book sales and donations
Various donations in lieu of membership fees

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, Vickie White, our Treasurer, Lorna Fraser for producing the Annual Accounts, Linda Drouet for sharing the administrative role with me and Lesley Songhurst who until recently has Chaired the Sports Committee. I would also like to extend my thanks to Rob Jackson who carries out various jobs at the Centre. In this regard we are always looking for more help with small jobs around the Centre so if you are interested in volunteering, please speak to me after the meeting.

In 1982 the OFCA Christmas Card scheme was established and twenty-one years ago Pauline Varden and her Tennis Club colleagues took over the running of this popular scheme. After all these years Pauline will no longer be at the helm, so we are looking for somebody to take over this annual operation. Our grateful thanks go to Pauline and her team for all their hard work over the years. There are over fifty "posties" ready and waiting to deliver the cards, but we need a team to sort the cards as they are handed into the Community Centre over a period of 3 days in December. If you, or your organisation are interested in taking over this excellent fundraiser for the Association, please contact me.

As reported at last year's AGM Nettie Trigg has sadly passed away. Nettie has kindly left a very generous legacy to the Association for which we are most grateful. As many of you

know Nettie was a regular stall holder at our monthly Community Markets raising money for her beloved Small Animal Rescue charity, she was also a member of General Council. The Management Committee will carefully consider how to use this legacy and will spend it wisely.

In addition to those mentioned there is an army of people who, without them 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.

This year has highlighted once again the importance of volunteers, and we welcomed Jackie Fairweather to the Committee in February and Paul Weavers in July, this brings the total to eleven members. Paul has an accounting background and as of August has taken over the monthly invoicing from Anne Lee. Many thanks to Anne for all her hard work over the past 10 years, she has worked with four Treasurers! Anne carried out this role in a conscientious and quiet manner and her help has been invaluable. There are still vacancies on the Committee, and we would welcome anyone who is interested in joining us to ensure the continued use of the Community Centre by a huge variety of groups.

All money raised or donated is vital for us to be able to make improvements as well as to continue to be able to use the building. Heating, lighting and maintenance costs as well as compliance with Health & Safety regulations impose even greater financial demands. Certificates must be issued for the Gas, Building Insurance, Fire Safety, and even simple electrical work must be done to legal standards.

The increasing use of the Community Centre mean things wear out quicker or develop faults. Luckily the groups using the Centre are generally respectful and report issues so that the Committee can act quickly.

We have had to replace coffee cups and glasses and are now committed to doing that regularly. There have been problems with the hot water urn in the kitchen with taps, pipes, sockets and switches needing attention.

Two major problems happened last winter. In January, the front door lock broke and all 50 keys had to be replaced and distributed. In February, a bad case of wood worm was discovered in the storeroom. The woodworm problem had an unexpected benefit because the storeroom was cleared of things left and forgotten over many years. It has also focused the Committee's mind on other under used storage areas in the Centre.

The gardens around the Centre continue to provide an all-year round display of colour and many thanks go to Janet and Mary for all their hard work.

The Committee discussed Solar Panels in depth this Spring. There are potential extra costs if they are put on the Victorian slate roof, and there is an ongoing maintenance cost. As the boiler is 10 years old and the heating is not very efficient in power consumption, an Air Source Heat pump was also considered. These two green initiatives are often installed by the same firms and during the last year the Committee has done research as well as attending a 'Green event'. However, the Committee felt that the current technology was unstandardised, evolving very fast, and reducing in costs, so our options will be monitored over the next year or two.

During the last year we have continued the work to improve the internal part of the Centre: The following projects were financed by Councillor Steve Wiles from his Suffolk County Councillor's Locality Budget. Eight fluorescent lights in the kitchen and the lights in the Wyn Brackley Hall were replaced with LEDs, these are easier to maintain and cheaper to run. The wall lights in the Baskerville Lounge area were also replaced with more decorative and brighter lights. The double doors between the Jane Bolton Lounge and the Margaret White Hall were replaced at the end of May in the hope that it would create a better sound barrier between the two areas.

However, it has not worked as well as we thought so the Committee have decided to add double doors on the Margaret White Hall side to close off the storage space. This work is being carried out in the Autumn, we feel this will solve the problem of sound and enhance the Margaret White Hall for hirers.

It was reported to the Committee that Felixstowe Town Council and in particular Councillor Steve Wiles had received several comments regarding disabled access to the Community Centre from Margery Girling House. Following consultation with the Town Council it was decided to go ahead with a paved pathway from the play area, across OFCA's land to create disabled access to the Community Centre. The Association will fund 50% of the cost with the Town Council overseeing the work and maintaining the path in the future.

The old brown letter boxes in the hallway have been replaced by a leaflet holder, designed and made by the Men's Shed in Felixstowe.

The next project planned is a refresh of the Jane Bolton Lounge furnishings, this will include replacing some chairs with ones with arms as this had been specifically requested by users. The Committee think that the feel of the Lounge area is important and are making efforts to co-ordinate the furnishing in a tasteful manner.

The following sports report has been produced by Lesley Songhurst:

The Tennis Club continues to thrive. We've welcomed several new members this year and as well as club mornings on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, there are regular group meetings on other days too. A £40 annual membership for 7 days a week is such a bargain! One of our members suggested a social event, so we spent an afternoon with tea and cake and tennis...not a tournament as such, but the will to win was definitely a feature! Funds are healthy and sufficient to maintain the courts in good condition. Our accounts no longer include table tennis as they have appointed their own Treasurer and formed their own club which meets in the Margaret White Hall on Thursday evenings.

5. Election of Officers 2024

TRUSTEES

Chair of Trustees	Doreen Savage	Proposed Seconded	Celia Page Victoria White
Trustees	Gina Cooper Celia Page Terry Smith	Proposed Seconded	Elaine Wright Janet Berry
New Trustee:	Gillin Barnett	Proposed Seconded	Elaine Wright Doreen Savage

HONARY OFFICERS / GENERAL COUNCIL

Treasurer	Victoria White	Proposed Seconded	Margaret Lamacraft Gina Cooper
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Accounts Administrator	Lorna Fraser	Proposed Seconded	Gina Cooper Elaine Wright
Secretary	Mary Whiteley	Proposed Seconded	Celia Page Victoria White
Administrator(s)	Celia Page Linda Drouet	Proposed Seconded	Doreen Savage Gillian Barnett
Newsletter Editor	Dave Songhurst	Proposed Seconded	Elaine Wright Terry Smith
Chair of General Council	Celia Page	Proposed Seconded	Gina Cooper Victoria White
Vice Chair of Gen Council	Gina Cooper	Proposed Seconded	Celia Page Dave Songhurst
General Council Members due for re-election	Eleanor Clark Mary Whiteley Lesley Songhurst	Proposed Seconded	Bryan Whiteley Margaret Lamacraft
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE			
Chair of Management Committee	Eleanor Clark	Proposed Seconded	Elaine Wright Gina Cooper
Management Committee Members willing to continue	Celia Page Vickie White Gina Cooper Eleanor Clark Barbara Bown Linda Drouet Mary Whiteley Elaine Wright	Proposed Seconded	Terry Smith Doreen Savage
New Volunteers:	Jackie Fairweather	Proposed Seconded	Gina Cooper Elaine Wright
	Paul Weavers	Proposed Seconded	Victoria White Elaine Wright
Independent Examiner of Accounts	Robert Digby	Proposed Seconded	Doreen Savage Gina Cooper

All officers were elected unanimously.

6. Amendments to Rules & Constitution

The amendments to both OFCA's Rules and Constitution had been made in line with the proposals to change the Membership rules approved by General Council on 18th January 2024. The amendments to the two documents had subsequently been approved by the Trustees on 6th March 2024.

a) OFCA Rules

The amended Rules were read out by Mary (copy attached to the Minutes).

b) OFCA Constitution

Mary read out the Resolution to be submitted to the Charity Commission (copy attached to these Minutes) which replaced the wording of Clause 9 of OFCA's Constitution dated 1st June 2015.

The changes as reflected in both the Rules and Resolution to amend the Constitution were unanimously approved.

7. Any Other Business

- a) Film Afternoons: Gina Cooper advised that an agreement had been reached with the Church to host joint film afternoons at the Centre. Requests had been received for more musical-based films, so the next film will be "Mama Mia!" on 17th November 2024, followed by "Nativity!" on 8th December 2024. Since the Centre is so booked up, the films are being held on Sunday afternoons. Refreshments will be available and any donations will be most welcome. The Church is providing people to help with the organisation, but Gina would welcome more volunteers.
- b) Electronic Newsletter: Ken Hann raised an objection to the fact that the Newsletter is now only available electronically because, like many others, he does not have access to a computer. Celia explained that it had been a difficult decision to take but that nobody on the current committee had the capacity to take on managing the printing and distribution of newsletters. However, as had been mentioned previously, anyone unable to access the electronic version could ask someone to do this on their behalf. Gina agreed to print off a copy for Ken, and we will try to make sure that some printed copies are available at the Centre.
- c) Capacity of OFCA Rooms: Angela Pratt questioned the room capacities indicated on the current Conditions of Hire document on the OFCA website, as she felt these were overstated. Celia agreed that these figures needed to be reviewed and that it might be necessary to involve the Fire Service to assist in this matter.

Before the meeting closed Doreen extended her thanks to everyone involved in the running of OFCA, and in particular to the Management Committee for all the work carried out to make the Centre such a pleasant place to be in. She also thanked all her fellow Trustees and Mary for the work undertaken to update the Rules and Constitution.

Terry extended special thanks to Celia for everything she does on behalf of OFCA.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm.