

MARKFIELD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Markfield Community and Sports Centre
Mayflower Close, Markfield
Leicestershire
LE67 9ST



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Web Site www.markfieldcommunitycentre.com

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2022

1. Reference and administration DETAILS OF THE Charity and its trustees.

The charity is a charitable unincorporated Organisation known as Markfield Community Association (MCA). Its registration number is 1017713.

The charity is registered at 60 Oakfield Avenue, Markfield, Leicestershire and operated from Markfield Community and Sports Centre, Mayflower Close, Markfield, Leicestershire LE67 9ST.

The trustees in place at the date of approval of this report are:

J. Bryan (appointed on 10th January 2022)

S. Beesley (appointed on 10th May 2018)

R. Grantham (appointed on 12th March 2011)

D. Grantham (appointed on 12th March 2011)

The Association has a trading arm known as Mercenfeld Trading Limited (MTL). The MTL is registered with Companies House as a limited company by guarantee. Its registration number is 02830817. The purpose of the trading arm is for the retail sale of alcohol on the premises with all profits going towards supporting the objectives and activities of the Association at Markfield Community and Sports Centre. The MTL has its own board of directors and submits annual accounts to Companies House. The MTL provides update reports on its finances and trading activities to the Trustees at meetings of the General Management Committee and to the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

2. Structure, governance and management.

The charity was constituted as a Charitable Un-Incorporated Organisation under a formal constitution made on 22nd January 1987.

The constitution requires that a General Management Committee be in place to manage the affairs of the Association at Markfield Community and Sports Centre. This Management Committee consists of the Trustees and allows for other relevant representatives from the Borough and Parish Councils, Centre users and other co-opted persons interested in the running and development of the Markfield Community and Sports Centre.

The General Management Committee is required to meet at least twice per year and to also hold an open Annual General Meeting in May each year. However, due to Corona Virus pandemic restrictions and other issues outlined in this report ALL General Management Committee Meetings of the Trustees were limited and the Annual General Meeting were postponed until further notice. Telephone meetings have taken place as and when required.

Trustees and members of the General Management Committee are elected on an annual basis at the Annual General Meeting of the Association. This has not taken place this year due to the pandemic and other difficulties.

The constitution also sets out Objects and Powers of the Association

3. Membership

The constitution contains rules on membership of the General Management Committee, honorary officers, rules and procedures relating to meetings, standing orders regarding the use of the Community Centre, finances, trust property, dissolution and alterations to the constitution.

Trustees of the Association and Directors of Mercefeld Trading Limited are appointed with regard to their skills, knowledge, and experience to ensure the effective administration of both.

Members of Markfield Parish Council are represented on the Association's Management Committee but are not Trustees.

4. Objectives and activities:

The main aim of the Association was to manage the daily running and development of Markfield Community and Sports Centre. The Centre provides sport, leisure, recreational, information, educational and community facilities for the people of Markfield and the surrounding rural areas and villages.

The objectives of the Markfield Community Association are set out in its constitution and equality statement as follows:

“To promote the benefit of Markfield without distinction of sex or political, religious or other opinions by associating the local authorities, voluntary organisations and inhabitants in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the condition of life for the said inhabitants.”

These objectives are enshrined in the Associations Equality Statement adopted in October 2010 and updated in October 2020 as follows:

“Within the Markfield Community Association's Constitution the Association operates an “open to all” and equitable service at Markfield Community and Sport's Centre as outlined below:

Not with standing or with prejudice to the Markfield Community Association's Constitution, Conditions of Hire, its Charitable Status, policies and any conditions of use imposed by the Charities Commission or other lawful authority; the Association and any associated or hosted project, activity or event, strives to deliver its services, activities and employment at Markfield Community and Sports Centre without discrimination against any person on the basis of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, faith, religious belief, disability or any discriminatory grounds and recognises the diversity of the local population and within any relevant legislation”.

Activities undertaken by the Charity in accordance with the above objectives comprise principally of the operation of Markfield Community and Sports Centre providing activities and facilities each day of the week Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm and is also available for use and hire at the weekends at required times for third party hiring of the premises. All activities are undertaken in the interests of the public.

A programme of classes and activities was published on our website www.markfieldcommunitycentre.com and on our face-book pages.

5. Achievements and performance:

The financial year 2021 to 2022 as proven to be both a difficult and challenging year for the Association.

National COVID19 pandemic restrictions meant that the Community Centre was closed for all activities on 9th March 2020 a full week before the National lockdown that was enforced on the 16th March 2020.

Although some outdoor activities were allowed, a limited return to some indoor activities were not allowed until mid-May 2021 with all restrictions not being fully lifted until 19th July 2021.

After the full lifting of restriction in July 2021 business normality resumed though still with an element of caution. We made a conscious decision not to hold large “gathering” functions or community events in order to reduce the risk of infection as COVID was still evident in the community.

The Centre immediately undertook a COVID19 risk assessment and put into place an action plan aimed at minimising the risk of infection to staff, volunteers and Centre users. This has remained in place throughout the pandemic and continued into 2022.

The above was a threat to the finances and business continuity and is explained in more detail in section 6. Financial Review.

Although the Centre was closed or had restricted access it became a virtual Hub for our local community and our staff continued to be retained in order to assist with the following: Keeping the Centre sanitised and clean for and emergency use such as National Blood Service sessions, food storage or any other situation where the Centre could assist. This also enabled the Centre to be ready for any relaxations of Government restrictions enabling immediate re-opening as soon as restrictions were fully lifted.

As a virtual hub the Centre provided and continues to provide:

- Support for both statutory and voluntary agencies and organisations in tackling current and post COVID19 situations and referrals.
- Co-ordination and support to the Markfield COVID19 Voluntary Good Neighbours Help Scheme. This scheme provided a volunteer in every street in the village. The volunteers have and continue to provide acts of kindness to those who needed it most throughout the pandemic including, shopping, collection of prescriptions, befriending and much more.
- Co-ordination and support to the Markfield Mayflower Club providing continued support and information to elderly, vulnerable and lonely people in the village and beyond. It is now also supporting people with financial difficulties and especially the emergence of loneliness and isolation.

The provision of this community hub has been extremely successful and much appreciated by our local people and other organisations. We have received many expressions of thanks and appreciation. In addition, we were also pleased to receive a Making a Difference Award as well as a Local Hero award as well as letter of appreciation from the Lord Lieutenant of the County (The Queen’s Representative).

We continued to maintain a strict COVID19 Risk Action Plan in order to keep the Community Centre sanitised and safe as possible and retained staff in order to be able to respond

quickly to Government changes in restrictions. This has also enabled the Centre to restart activities both externally and internally as soon as restrictions were finally lifted.

During the latter part of 2021 and with the assistance and support of Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council the Charity started to review of its Governance, procedures and policies to ensure that they are updated and meet the Charity Commission's requirements and guidelines.

The review made 55 recommendations of which 52 were acted upon immediately and updated policies and procedures put into place with a view to becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation..

We also started to review, update and amend the Charity's Governance Document i.e. its outdated constitution written and agreed in 1987.

The outstanding critical items were:

- Agreeing a new Community Centre Lease agreement with Markfield Parish Council
- Continuation of the tri-party Management Agreement between the Association, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and Markfield Parish Council.
- Changing the Charity status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs)

However, the above processes were derailed due to the following:

Although the Charity had formed a working group to negotiate a new lease with the Parish Council. It became apparent that the Parish Council had no intention whatsoever, to enter into a new lease agreement with the Charity or even or even consult or discuss the matter with the Trustees. The Council totally ignored all requests by the Charity to enter into not any debate or discussions on a way forward ort even reveal their future plans for the Community Centre.

The legally binding Tri-Party Management Agreement was dissolved without the consensual agreement of the Association meaning that funding for a Community Manager's post and support from the Borough Council ceased. Consequently, the Association no longer had access to the Borough Council's Legal Services and needed to employ the services of a private Solicitors Company spending monies that would have been best better spent to support the community.

Due to untenable circumstances, the Centre Manager resigned in November 2021 however, continued to run the Community Centre on a voluntary basis until December 2022.

Without knowing or being made aware of the Parish Councils plans for the future of the Community Centre the Charity was left in a difficult situation.

It's main aims and objectives remit to run and develop the Community Centre would no longer exist. As a result, the Charity would need to revise it's aims, objectives and purpose before amending its Governance Document (Constitution) and status as a CIO.

The Trustees would have to consider dissolution of its current Charitable Status and the disposal of its financial and other assets.

Throughout the financial year the Association has continued to support and assist other statutory and voluntary organisations, community groups and local people especially regarding the well-being of the most vulnerable and isolated in our community.

6. Financial Review:

Closures and restrictions caused by the pandemic had a detrimental impact on the finances of the Association. The enforced lockdowns and other restrictions had led to a severe loss of income.

Although some outdoor activities were allowed, a limited return to some indoor activities were not allowed until mid-May 2021 with all restrictions lifted on 19th July 2021. Business normality resumed though still with caution especially relating to large community events. 2021.

This situation had a detrimental impact on the Association's finances as follows:

Income from lettings and hire fees amounted to £32,969 which, although up from the £8,820 income during the previous pandemic financial year, remained significantly lower than the £48,646 income achieved during the pre-pandemic financial year 2018/2019.

Income from bar takings amounted to £3,470 compared to £845 during the pandemic financial year though significantly lower than the pre-pandemic year of 2018/2019 in which bar takings amounted to £7,117.

Throughout the pandemic the Centre has continued to pay other expenses including all utility bills, staff wages, licenses and other required and ongoing expenditure.

In addition, the Centre had additional costs relating to Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and additional sanitising and cleaning items.

Expenditure for this financial year amounted to £46,141 compared to £38,199 during the previous pandemic year to 2020/2021 but significantly less than the pre-pandemic year of 2018-2019 where expenditure amounted to £54,140.

By careful and prudent financial management, we were able to restrict expenditure to £38,199 compared to £60,009 in the previous financial pre pandemic year.

Despite the first quarter of the financial year 2021/2022 being impacted by COVID 19 restrictions the Charity has recovered 76% of its booking's income compared to pre pandemic levels which is a major success. This has been achieved through a robust business recovery plan as set out in section 7 below.

7. COVID 19 Continuance of Business and Recovery Plan

In March 2021 and foreseeing financial threats and difficulties due to the Pandemic the Association produced a Business Continuity Plan for 2021 to 2023.

This Plan had provided both a robust continuity and recovery of business plan based on responses to lock downs and other Government restrictions experienced over the financial year. The plan includes both business and financial responses and targets.

The Association had adopted a target to achieve and maintain a financial reserve equal to three months operational expenditure as recommended by the Charity Commission. This has been achieved.

During this financial year the Association has also actively sought and been successful in securing external grant funding amounting to £13,932 to support its Business Recovery

Plan. Our appreciation goes to Hinckley and Bosworth VCS Partnership, Leicestershire County Council Communities Support Fund.

A down side to our recovery plan was the uncertainty caused by the Paris Council's position on the future of the Community Centre. The lack of a clear plan for the Centre has meant that we have been unable to secure or plan new or future bookings for the Centre. This negative situation will impact on the recovery plans target of achieving pre-pandemic income levels.

Prepared by:

Ron Grantham Treasurer to Markfield Community Association
Markfield Community Association
30/1/2023

APPROVED

Meeting of Trustees held on 31st January 2023

Approved and signed by:

J.Bryan Trustee

S. Beesley Trustee

R. Grantham Trustee

D. Grantham Trustee

Receipts and Payment Account for Financial Year ending 31st March 2022

