

**Minutes of Hastings Voluntary Action’s AGM
held Friday 16th November 2021 on Zoom**

**Welcome and Apologies:**

Mike Cornish as Chair of Hastings Voluntary Action opened the event by welcoming those present. He explained that due to the complications of holding such a large event on Zoom, HVA’s member organisations were asked to vote in advance so there will be no votes during the AGM and that the event would be recorded. Mike confirmed with Peter Thorpe that the meeting was quorate.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting held 16th November 2020**

The minutes had been circulated to members and published on the HVA website. The approval of the minutes was agreed. Mike Cornish announced the outcome of the vote:

**Proposed: Mike Cornish (Winterbourne Close R A)**

**Seconded: Graham Goode (SLiC)**

**Votes for: 23**

**Votes against: 0**

**Abstentions: 1**

**Consideration and Adoption of the Annual Report for the year to 31st March 2021**

Steve Manwaring, Director of HVA, introduced himself and gave a presentation highlighting HVA’s work.

The Pandemic influenced everything we’ve done this year. Staff members took phones home and many practical and delivery challenges were overcome. We managed to deliver training online, £1Million+ funding was secured for the sector, 25 jobs created &/or secured. Increase in the number of complex cases reviewed as Covid created new challenges re: buildings and practices. There were 12,000 enquiries from non-profits.
We diversified how we communicated information and adapted our information provision service. A national organisation highlighted that HVA delivered some of the best quality information they had seen.

We brought people together remotely and Hastings Community Network met more regularly, offering themed events with local community. The Open Mic events helped organisations feel supported and less isolated.

Acknowledging we are an infrastructure organisation, we do also deliver community development projects. Big Local and Making it Happen offered various small grants schemes that supported activity during the last year. Broader grassroots work ensured communities were supported. ‘Connected communities are healthier communities’ and we continue to be supported by East Sussex Public Health.
Older people was a focus this year. The FOTOP assets were used to help continue services at Central Hall, and we are working to make Hastings gain Age Friendly status, and to continue to work with partners to develop the IBC centre into a functioning service in due course. Work with a range older people’s groups is ongoing.
We recognise the diversity of Hastings and continue to support the Links project which was online but is now face to face again at Central Hall. The Links project has also been offering support to people in Hastings and Eastbourne. Research was also undertaken around Covid and the BAME communities with ESCC to better understand the Covid related issues affecting some diverse communities.

HVA has also continued to value the Hate Crime Service which has been working to ensure it’s an initiative that offers sensitive and appropriate support.

HVA with partners facilitated 60 ‘Hastings Covid 19 Community Hub’ meetings, which enabled projects and organisations in voluntary and public sectors to come together to provide practical support throughout the pandemic. Helpline, befriending support, transport and food distribution was supported. Ongoing, the hub continues to meet and currently helps to promote information about the Covid 19 Vaccine ensuring it is reaching our community.

HVA became a food hub at one point during the lockdown and we are supporting the development of the Food Network to ensure people who need food are receiving it.

Volunteers are at the heart of our work and throughout the last year we supported many projects. We have partnered with Orbit to develop a hub approach to volunteering.

We wanted to learn from Covid – HVA has a strategic development plan to 2025, and are currently reviewing it to ensure that the services we offer in the future are appropriate. We are launching an online Members Survey, that we are encouraging people to complete in order to help with this.

Much of HVA’s work is hidden and free. To highlight this we would like to encourage organisations that have received support from us to use the new ‘supported by HVA’ logo we have that promotes that offer of advice and technical support that we regularly provide to local groups.

We have learnt that many of the voluntary and community sector organisations worked well and together over the time of the pandemic. But we acknowledge there is still work to be done in terms of reducing barriers for some groups. HVA has been working hard to look at how we can improve this and has been selected to receive £100,000 Community Renewal Funding via the Government, to look into resilience and volunteering.

Thank you’s and remembering – Dr Chris Beaumont who was a Trustee and great supporter of HVA for many years, and Jocelyn Tilbrook who contributed greatly and will be remembered for her energy in her work with HVA and the wider community. Pat Weaver is also being thought about today as we are missing her usual beavering about on AGM day and are sending our support to her at a difficult time.

In an exceptional year HVA is lucky to have amazing staff, volunteers, trustees, funders and stakeholders. We hope you feel that HVA has made a valid contribution to Hastings during this period. Many thanks to everyone.

**The vote was based on the Annual Report that is contained within the Annual Accounts with HVA’s work on their website and social media.**

Mike Cornish announced the outcome of the vote:

**Proposed: Gill Hazell (Broomgrove Community Centre)**

**Seconded: Julia Wells (HOPE-G)**

**Votes for: 23**

**Votes against: 0**

**Abstentions: 1**

**Consideration and adoption of the independently examined accounts for the year to 31st March 2021**

Graham Goode introduced himself as the Treasurer. The accounts are published on the HVA website and the full accounts have been distributed. Graham highlighted the important elements.

In summary, HVA’s finances are in ‘okay’ shape. Graham thanked Keith Miller, Pat Weaver and Peter Thorpe for their work and advice. The accounts have been independently examined by Ashdown Hurrey and have been approved by the Trustees. The accounts were accepted and agreed.

Mike Cornish announced the outcome of the vote:

**Proposed: Dawn Poole (Hastings & Rother Credit Union)**

**Seconded: Paula Radice (Enjoycation CIC)**

**Votes for: 23**

**Votes against: 0**

**Abstentions: 1**

**Appointment of Independent Examiners for 2022**

At a meeting on 1st September 2021, the HVA Trustees agreed to appoint Ashdown Hurrey as independent examiners.

**Proposed: Mike Cornish (Winterbourne Close R A)**

**Seconded: Graham Goode (SLiC)**

**Votes for: 23**

**Votes against: 0**

**Abstentions: 1**

**Announcement of Election of HVA Board of Directors:**

The nominations for the HVA Board were held in September 2021. HVA Trustees have a three-year term. Two independents have been co-opted during the last year.

Kenneth Hales (Hastings & St Leonards Seniors Forum) and Vic Kempner (Independent) are stepping down and Mike Cornish thanked them for their valued expertise and time as Trustees.

Mike Cornish announced the outcome of the confirmatory vote:

**Proposed: Gill Hazell (Broomgrove Community Centre)**

**Seconded: Jordan Meacher (Possability People)**

**Votes for: 24**

**Votes against: 0**

**Abstentions: 0**

The members of the Board are as below:

* Helen Barraclough (Education Training Consortium)
* Mary Carter (Independent)
* Dr. Nell Chang (Hastings Chinese Association)
* Mike Cornish (Winterbourne Close Residents Association)
* Graham Goode (Skills and Learning in the Community - SLIC)
* James Johnson (Friends of Africa and the Caribbean in England - FACE)
* Dawn Poole (Hastings & Rother Credit Union)
* Julia Wells (Hastings Older Peoples Ethnic Group - HOPEG)

**Close of AGM**

**Comments & Questions**

**Steve Hare – What are the emerging priorities for Hastings after Covid**?
Steve Manwaring - Hastings is quite dependent on visitors. HVA staff etc have done a SWOT analysis that has been published. Public finances are under pressure, the way the sector is funded may need to be revisited. Some areas face more pressure than others eg ..mental health and advice sectors. People have had more to pay out. Many challenges around benefits etc. We need to look at the whole voluntary sector being resourced appropriately.
Simon Hubbard has constructed a few documents for the Hastings hub and HVA and wider sector that is helping us to think about strategy going forward.

Mike Cornish – re: direction going forward after Covid - things are getting back to normal (but not) . How to have meetings is a fundamental question and the barriers and advantages of online meetings bring challenges.

**Alex – what is happening re: food security and water security?**

Steve M - In addition to an emergency food situation there is an ongoing need to support those who don’t regularly get appropriate food. There is a food network being developed to support the wider issues of cooking and education around food as well as access.

We are also live to the issues of water security with high rates for utilities generally. There are people who are experiencing ‘real time poverty’. Hastings has been targeted by ‘toxic lending’ (loan sharks).

We need to think how to link some of the food, energy and income issues together.

Thanks for being members of HVA as it is this membership that helps direct our work.

Val Batty – Thank you for the help you give to Hastings Dementia Action Alliance.

Dave Perry – Thank you for the work you have done with Seaview.

Nigel Sinden – Thank you for the work of HVA especially throughout the pandemic.