

CCC

Croydon Communities Consortium

Annual General Meeting

Croydon Town Hall

Wednesday, 24th July, 2013 at 7pm

NOTES OF MEETING in absence of minutes from the Secretary

Present: Elizabeth Ash, John Cheetham (Chair), Syd Cheeswright (Treasurer) joined the meeting 5 mins late, Ken Coates, Peter Collier and Charlotte Davies left the meeting early, Katherine Garner, Clive Locke, Marzia Nicodemi-Ehikioya, Elizabeth Radcliffe (Secretary), Peter Staveley.

In attendance: Margot Rohan (Democratic Services – Croydon Council), 2 Croydon police officers

Apologies for absence: none

Preliminary discussion:

The members queried the lack of notice and minutes. It was confirmed that the Treasurer had produced the minutes. The Secretary stated that she was only a Minutes Secretary as no one had been willing to take on the role.

There was challenge from the membership at the outset:

- Holding the AGM behind closed doors was unconstitutional as not listed in the Constitution.
- The officers were reminded that that some two members present had helped to calm the anger expressed at the previous public meeting following the AGM of 2012, on the basis that CCC would be more engaging of the membership but this had not been the experience of those present.
- Members were clear that they were not prepared to leave the AGM, as directed by the Treasurer, this year, without good cause.
- It was noted that great persistence of two members had been required to ensure that the papers for the meeting were circulated, and that this had only been done late on the day of the meeting.
- It was noted that the minutes that had been uploaded and circulated were that of the general meeting only and not that of the AGM 2012. The minutes of the 2012 AGM were only tabled in the meeting, giving little time to consider them.
- Publicity had been poor. It was noted that established groups, such as South Croydon Community Association, had received no notice of the meeting, learning of it by chance via other residents in another meeting at the Town Hall.

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

There was no written or verbal report on the year's activities. At the request for a report of the previous year's activities, the Treasurer stated that much has been done but he, and other officers, did not elaborate when asked by the members to do so.

Election of committee:

The Chair and the Treasurer moved to vote the existing committee in en bloc. There was dissent and issues raised by the members present, as follows:

- The existing committee members were not present and had not even sent apologies for their absence.
- The committee had failed to hold public meetings, as publicly agreed.
- The committee had not produced any report for the membership.
- Members, Elizabeth Ash and Marzia Nicodemi-Ehikioya, had been accepted on to the CCC steering group at the public meeting following last year's AGM but had heard nothing, despite repeated requests put to the Chair and the Treasurer for information and meeting dates over the year since the last meeting.
- The existing constitution was flawed, and did not bar members from the AGM in any case.
- Issues of accountability, transparency and proper procedure were repeatedly tabled by the members present.

The meeting fell into disarray, with several members leaving during the heated debate.

It was, however, agreed to proceed with the vote.

Election of officers:

John Cheetham indicated his willingness to stand as Chair. He was proposed by Ken Coates and seconded by Marzia Nicodemi-Ehikioya.

Elizabeth Ash was proposed as Vice Chair by Marzia Nicodemi-Ehikioya and was seconded by Clive Locke.

The elections were halted at this point.

It was proposed, and agreed, that that the main body of the AGM would be postponed, with a view to advertising the reconvened meeting more widely, and ensuring that reports and notices were circulated, with sufficient notice to allow members to consider them prior to the meeting.

It was agreed that the elections would proceed at the reconvened AGM, after all papers were available, good notice of the meeting had been given and a working group had produced a more robust, transparent constitution to propose for adoption.

There was a discussion on the type of constitution best suited to CCC. It was agreed to look at the Charity Commission model constitution with a view to seek charitable status for CCC in the future.

The working group was established from the members present. The members and officers committing to work on the Constitution were:

Elizabeth Ash

Syd Cheeswright

John Cheetham

Ken Coates

Clive Locke

Marzia Nicodemi-Ehikioya

Peter Staveley

Accounts:

Despite agreeing to call the AGM to a halt, the Treasurer firmly and repeatedly insisted that the accounts be approved at this current meeting.

The Chair allowed the accounts to be considered.

The Treasurer explained that the accounts covered a 10 month period and there was no requirement for them to be audited.

In response to a question tabled, the Treasurer explained that one travelling microphone had been purchased for CCC public meetings and had been depreciated by 50%, as is standard practice. The Treasurer added that he held an amplifier that could be used, but that he intended charging for insurance of his equipment. The microphone alone would not work without this.

John Cheetham proposed the accounts. Ken Coates seconded them.

Next steps:

Members of the working group queried how to contact the membership in order to properly advertise the reconvened AGM. The Secretary and the Chair admitted holding no details but intended to ask other organisations and the council to share their lists. The intention was also to copy recipients of emails in publicly, which met with clear concern from members.

One of the police officers in attendance intervened, drawing to the attention of the Chair and Secretary that it was a criminal offence under section 55.2 of the Data Protection Act (DPA) which would not allow other groups or organisations to share their contact lists with CCC. Further, it was noted that to share email addresses without prior consent also constituted a serious breach of DPA. Either matter could be referred to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), who could impose heavy fines for breaches of DPA.

Clive Locke stressed the importance of effective communication.

Tuesday 13th August, at 6pm, was agreed as the first meeting for the working group. The Chair asked that all comments on the Constitution be sent to the Secretary.

Elizabeth Ash raised the issue of CCC's social media. It was agreed that the accounts and email account would be handed back to CCC, as it was not appropriate for a council employee to continue to operate accounts that purported to be community accounts. Thanks were offered to Margot for her ongoing support of Neighbourhood Partnerships and the CCC.

Meeting closed 9.30pm