

Broomhall Centre - Chair's report to AGM Jan 20

Jillian Creasy 22.1.20

This report updates the report included in the accounts for the year ended 31st March.

The building

The Broomhall Centre is far more than a building, but maintaining a secular space, accessible both physically and financially to local people and others from further afield is very important. Renting out the building also provides us with an income.

We got a big grant (£34,000) from the Garfield Weston Foundation in late 2018 to implement the Broomhall Centre Vision (BCV2020 for short). This has allowed us to:

- Refit the kitchen with professional standard units and equipment
- Install modern audiovisual equipment (screen, speakers and projector, roll-down blackout blinds)
- Provide a gate for the basketball court to make it child-friendly and deter fly-tipping

We completed the work by the summer of 2019 so, as 2020 starts, we have better facilities which allow us to attract and charge high-paying users as well as benefitting our long term users and community bookings.

Over the last year, we have also redecorated the upstairs room (MR3), the classroom (MR1), the crèche (MR2) and office. All these were done by volunteers including members of the Girls Group and students from Sheffield Hallam, supervised by a professional painter and decorator (paid for by a grant from Sheffield City Council) and a team from the finance department at Sheffield University (under their "Voliday" scheme).

Meanwhile, Sheffield City Council continues to assist with major repairs and improvements including upgrading the radiators and attempting - again - to mend the leak in the crèche/lobby roof. They are supposed to be replacing the windows this financial year (i.e. before April 2020).

Bookings

Apart from some donations and small grants, our non-ring fenced income comes from renting out the building,

so having plenty of bookings is crucial.

- **Regular bookings** - weekday evenings and weekend daytimes are pretty full. Our stalwarts are: Yoga, Samba band, youth groups (currently four), homework club, a choir, the local Labour party, Habla Español and Life Drawing. Others come and go, for instance martial arts. Weekday daytimes are less full. We run Chairotics/Women's Health on Tuesdays; sadly the mental health drop-in run by MIND moved to new premises in December.
- **Once-off bookings** – we have many parties, fund-raisers, family and religious celebrations. We remain amazed and grateful that the Centre is used (and often beautifully decorated) in so many different ways and that, on the whole, people clear up after themselves and leave the place as they found it.
- **Long-term bookings** – we had a good experience with ProPlus English (a small language teaching business) using the classroom on a semi-exclusive basis. However, they found more suitable premises and moved out. We are now renting the upstairs room (MR3) to Link Learning, which runs a music education business. This has meant moving our IT/finance activities into the downstairs office. Thank goodness that we emptied and got rid of so many filing cabinets and cupboards over the last year or so, making room for three desks.

Activities

In January 2017 we reluctantly decided we could no longer afford to employ a community development worker and the Centre manager's job is now focussed on managing and letting out the building. However the Broomhall Centre is still a community hub, with educational, health and cultural events for local people, especially disadvantaged groups. These are provided in the following way:

- **Activities run by Broomhall Centre.** Our rule is that these must include funding for rent and someone to coordinate the project/activity.
 - (a) Homework Club – long-running and well-attended by local children with volunteers who are mostly university students. It is funded by Sheffield University and run by a paid coordinator, Emily Hearne, with IT support from Jeremy Ritchie (our voluntary IT officer and treasurer). Having access to computers and a printer is a vital resource as well as the one-to-one personal support.
 - (b) Coding Club – this was a year-long project funded by Awards for All, which ended in summer 2019. It was very popular, running on the same model as the Homework Club, i.e. bringing together volunteers to support children to learn (advanced) computer skills. We are seeking funding to restart it.
 - (c) Women's Health Day/Chairobics – this continues to run on Tuesday lunchtimes. The rent and tutor (Shahima Harif) are funded by the Southall Trust. It is coordinated by Saima Rehman who is seconded from Shipshape in Sharrow. It attracts up to a dozen women of different ages, ethnicities and physical abilities. Saima is keen to expand the activities, for instance setting up an art group.
 - (d) Conversation Club – this also ran alongside the Chairobics (on Tuesday mornings). It was supported by SAVTE (Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English) who provided a lead volunteer. She left in the autumn, but we are hoping to secure more funding and a new volunteer to lead others who cannot make a regular commitment but who are happy to help on an occasional basis.

- **Activities provided by others which are open to the public.** Many of our regular groups fall into this category (e.g. Yoga, Samba, Life Drawing). The following are worthy of special note:
 - (a) Youth Groups – run by the Girls Group committee based at St Mark's Church.
 - (b) Home Grown Ceilidh – run by the Well Dressed Band on a Sunday evening on a bi-monthly basis in association with a different local charity. They succeed in paying us rent, raising funds for the partner charity, and having a ball (dancing and eating together).
 - (c) The Film Club – run by Emily Hearne and Sarah Christie has restarted on a bi-monthly basis. Broomhall Centre provides the venue and equipment for free, any profits are donated to us.

- **Private bookings.** As mentioned above, many of these are family and religious celebrations or fund-raisers for good causes. We feel that these contribute to our role as a community hub.

There is a constant ebb and flow of sessional and once-off users. We try to juggle bookings to accommodate everyone and we try to favour activities which will benefit the local community and/or allow disadvantaged groups and small businesses to flourish. Occasionally we negotiate with regular users to cancel a session in order to accommodate special events, e.g. a particular ethnic/religious group or a very lucrative once-off booking.

Paid workers and volunteers

We are immensely grateful to all our workers and volunteers:

- Our Centre admin worker, Jack D’Aguillar left in October 2019. He found a new job (as marketing manager for a charity) and moved to Nottingham after three very fruitful years with us. He has been responsible for promoting the Centre, especially via social media. He set up the original cinema club and inspired us to include high quality audio-visual equipment in the BCV2020 project. He also project-managed the whole refurbishment. Together we put in place robust systems for making bookings, keeping a calendar of activities and tracking payments/deposits. Above all, he continued the ethos of welcoming and accommodating all-comers to the Centre, maintaining our reputation as a friendly, accessible place.
- We appointed Miriam Schechter as our new Facilities and Lettings Manager in late November. She has made a great start and we look forward to the particular skills and enthusiasms she will bring to the job.
- Emily Hearne continues to coordinate the Homework Club (and run the Cinema Club with Sarah Christie on a voluntary basis).
- Patrick McCleod is our part-time cleaner, coming in every weekday evening (or early the following morning) to clean the hall and offices.
- Sheffield City Council provides a part-time cleaner for the kitchen, toilets and crèche who comes in three mornings a week.
- Board (committee) members are all volunteers. We have the following roles:
 - (a) Jeremy Ritchie, our treasurer/finance officer and IT worker
 - (b) Pete Sacker, our secretary, who also sits on the finance and fund-raising subgroups and links with HERB (see below)
 - (c) Jillian Creasy, our chair, is line manager for our workers and liaises with many partners
 - (d) Duncan Lennox who is our safe-guarding officer and liaises with the Homework Club
 - (e) Ian Cook, Andrew Woodhead, Maggie Wykes, who attend all the meetings and provide wise heads/link us (respectively) to St Andrew’s church, Hanover TARA and Sheffield University
 - (f) Miss Mavis Hamilton, our faithful supporter and great advocate for a multicultural, caring Broomhall
- Finance/admin volunteers, Ruth Oxley and Farah Alkhayat who help to input data into our accounting software.
- Jeffrey Feetham, who worked in reception and kept the Centre tidy for a couple of months during a difficult transitional period.
- Volunteers in Homework Club and Conversation Class
- Volunteers who have helped with once-off projects (decorating)

Partnership working

Many of our links are related to the activities described above – we have strong relationships with many of our user groups and the individuals or committees that run them. In particular, we work with:

- HERB, which provides environmental work in Broomhall, including keeping the garden and yard tidy. They are represented by Pete Sacker on the Board.
- Shipshape, based in Sharrow. Saima Rehman is a health-advice link worker and expanded the Tuesday “offer”, including taking women on walks in the local countryside in association with the Wildlife Trust. Shipshape has also passed on funding for the “Hunger Project” which will run in half term to provide/cook/share food for families linked to the Homework Club and Youth Groups.

- Hanover TARA. Andrew Woodhead, who is closely associated with Hanover Tenants has joined our Committee and hopes to make some joint funding bids (especially for job-seeking skills and assistance)
- Broomhall Group of Groups. This is a loose association of groups and venues based in Broomhall which meets to share information, concerns and ideas. We have hosted meetings and our chair is an active member of the Youth Forum (an off-shoot of GoGs) which is now employing a worker to try to encourage more activities for young people and their families. This will benefit the Centre if new groups can be established and more people are willing to become involved with them.

Governance

During the last year, Voluntary Action Sheffield helped us to improve with the way we were keeping our accounts. We had been late in submitting our 2017/18 accounts, but these – and the 2018/19 accounts – are now approved and have been submitted to the Charity Commission and Companies House. We have implemented new systems including setting up a finance sub-committee and upgrading our accounting soft-ware. We still need to do more to separate out the roles of day to day financial administration and treasurer, in order to have proper checks in place. We hope that our volunteers and centre manager can take on more of the former, allowing Jeremy and the finance sub-committee to spend more time monitoring/analysing. We have organised and upgraded all our policies, with particular a focus on the process for lettings and our safeguarding arrangements.

The main Board meets monthly. There are also finance and fund-raising sub-committees and sub-groups for special projects such as overseeing the refurbishment and appointing a new worker.

Funding and support

We are grateful to the following groups and individuals for specific donations and support, as well as to partners and users who support us in kind and by providing activities at the Centre as described above.

- Sheffield City Council provides building, repairs and some cleaning
- Sheffield University, grant used for Homework Club
- Garfield Weston, capital grant received in 2018
- Southall Trust, grant for Women’s Health sessions
- Awards for All, grant for Coding Club
- St Mark’s church, donations including to train our finance volunteers
- Private donations

Public benefit provided by the Broomhall Centre

In conclusion, this year we have continued to fulfil the aims set out in our constitution, namely to *“promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Broomhall district in the City of Sheffield without distinction of sex or political or other opinions ... to advance education; and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare, or recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants, to establish ...a community centre”*. The activities run by the Broomhall Centre itself are focussed on education and health promotion and reach dozens of young people and older women. But the space is used by others for a range of public and private leisure activities, with literally hundreds of beneficiaries a year. It is also a hub for cooperation between local agencies and for engaging people in existing and new projects. Including the Board members, we have over a dozen volunteers involved in running the centre, and many more helping with activities, whether regular groups (e.g. the homework club) or once off events. In this way, the Broomhall Centre contributes to a sense of community and cohesion within the diverse area of Broomhall.