

## **Falcon Centre Action Group**

### **Minutes of the AGM held at the Falcon Centre on 8 December 2022**

#### **Members Present**

Steve Grinter (Chair), Robina Jacobson, John Jacobson, Tony Pierre, Susan Ewart, Cllr Holly Waddell, Jim Robertson, Bob Doughty, Gray Mytton, Vicki Strasshelm

#### **Observers Present**

Robyn Petrie

#### **Apologies**

Ruth Andrews, Andy Haddon, Chris Brogan, Gwen Tuck, Colin Percy, Jeremy Bacon

Steve Grinter welcomed members and declared the meeting quorate. During a round of introductions John Jacobson said that the last time he had been in the meeting room was 70 years ago when he was a pupil at that classroom!

#### **1. Report on the work of the Action Group for the last year**

Steve referred to the written report which had been prepared by Liz Gray from the Rural Design Centre, the report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Steve paid tribute to Liz and the Rural Design Centre for their valuable help in recent months. In particular the Rural Design Centre had secured £3,000 of funding towards the cost of a feasibility study/business plan, this money is dependant upon matching funding. Top priority for the Action Group is to raise the matching funds as soon as possible. Since the report was written the Northumberland CC officers from the Estates Department have

confirmed that their deadline to us to submit an application for a 'Community Asset Transfer' has now passed and they now intend to make their own plans for the future of the Falcon Centre. There is a strong implication that the NCC officers intend to propose to demolish the Centre for redevelopment. Their letter to us mentioned relocation of the library but not necessarily on the existing site.

In response to the letters from the NCC we have launched a petition which has recently gone online on the NCC website. We need to gather as many signatures as possible and all present were encouraged to circulate the petition as widely as possible via social media, email as well as the traditional means. These are the instructions for potential signatories:

1. Click on this link [Northumberland County Council - Get involved with the council](#)
2. Scroll down and select 'view current petitions'
3. The Falcon Centre appears first on the list. Click 'sign the petition' and follow the instructions.

**It was agreed** that we should aim to collect at least 200 signatures.

**It was further agreed** that we should request that the petition remain 'live' for three months ie until the end of February 2023.

## **2. Financial accounts for the last year**

Gray Mytton presented the Treasurer's report. Printed accounts which had been circulated showed a balance of £2,505. All but £5 of this balance represented a grant received early in 2022 from our application to the NCC Community Chest and was earmarked for purchase of furniture and other equipment for meeting facilities. We had decided not to spend this money until the future of the Centre had been clarified; we also will be required to raise 20% ie £500 as a counterpart contribution. The NCC have agreed to extend the deadline for spending these funds to the end of 2023. Since the accounts were circulated a further sum of £153.46 had been

deposited in our account from the net proceeds of our recent crowd funding appeal. Gray said that our main current debt was for costs associated with our website of approximately £120.

**It was agreed** to accept the accounts.

### **3. Election of Officers**

Prior to the elections a constitutional amendment which had been previously circulated was agreed. The proposal was to increase the number of ordinary members from 4 to 8.

The following were elected unanimously:

Chair	Steve Grinter
Secretary	(vacant)
Treasurer	Gray Mytton
Membership Secretary	(vacant) subsequently John Jacobson has volunteered to take on this role
Ordinary Members	Tony Pierre
	Jim Robertson
	John Jacobson
	Melanie Dunnett
	Andy Haddon
	Jeremy Bacon
	Ruth Andrews (TBC – elected in absentia)
	Mick Bowman (TBC – elected in absentia)

### **4. Open Discussion on the way forward**

The following points were noted during discussion:

- The urgent need for the new Committee is to urgently secure matched funding and commission the feasibility study/business plan
- Tony Pierre to post details of our petition on local FB sites
- Holly Waddell volunteered to design a poster with a QR code to promote the petition
- Steve, Holly and Tony to liaise with Jamie Driscoll's office regarding letter(s) from the NoT Mayor to NCC urging protection of the future of the FC as a community hub.
- Steve to write to our MP urging him to lobby the NCC regarding protection of the future of the FC as a community hub
- Andy Haddon has put us in contact with Kevan Carrick from JK Property Consultants. He is also Director of the North East Business Innovation Centre. He has advised us to consider applying to the UK Prosperity Fund. He also suggests a possible collaboration with the Newcastle University's Centre for Ageing and Vitality.
- Andy Haddon has suggested we pursue the Heritage Lottery Fund.

**5. Date of next meeting of the FCAG Committee Thursday 12 January 2023 at 7.30pm at the Falcon Centre**