

SOUTHWICK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Front cover illustration: **Some brief cheer between lockdowns !**

(August 2020)

Southwick Community Association

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2020-21

<i>President</i>	Maxine Coomber	
<i>Vice-President</i>	Michael Coomber	
<i>Chairman</i>	Malcolm Gough	
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	David Comber	
<i>Honorary Secretary</i>	Tony Brownings	
<i>Hon Treasurer</i>	Bob Ryder	
<i>Board Members</i>	Simon Armes	Maureen Cripps
	Philip Evans	Yvonne Fair
	John Garland	Roger Needham
	Ray Richards	Philip Simons
	Angus Dunn	(Adur District Council)
	David Simmons	(West Sussex County Council)
	Martin Oakley	(co-opted)

MEMBERS OF STAFF 2020-21

<i>Office Manager</i>	Sharon Watts
<i>Administrator</i>	Carol Comber (to Dec 2020) Kate Armes
<i>Premises Manager</i>	Adrian Kenward
<i>Caretaking Team</i>	Bill Clements, Malcolm Woodhams, John Derby, Stuart Fogden, Rod Nash, Terry McKanna-Maulkin
<i>Café Manager</i>	Rebecca Goffin (to Dec 2020)
<i>Café Cook</i>	Kim Drew
<i>Café Assistant</i>	Etsuko Morita

A HUGEY CHALLENGING YEAR

This Annual Report has been produced in the exceptional circumstances of the Covid pandemic, which throughout 2020-21 caused massive disruption to the normal business of the Community Centre.

It's a much shorter report than usual, because our usual activities were severely limited by the impact of the pandemic on everyday life.

Summary

Even at the very start of the financial year, in April 2020, it was clear that the Association would be facing a major threat to its existence. At that point the Community Centre was already effectively closed for business and most of its usual operating income had dried up. All the early indications were that the crisis would be long-running. And indeed, that has turned out to be the case.

By the end of March 2020 we had set up emergency arrangements for managing the crisis facing the Community Centre. The four honorary officers holding 'executive' roles (the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) were delegated to take the urgent actions that would be needed in the emergency. But new reporting and approval procedures were also put in place, so that the Board of Trustees remained well informed throughout the crisis, and were properly involved in the management of the Association's affairs.

Many of the emergency actions involved staffing matters. More than half the costs of operating the Community Centre are staffing costs (over many years, these have been in the range of 55-60% of our total operating costs). Potentially, the closure of the Centre could have quickly led to job losses across much of our workforce.

However, the quick intervention of a government "job retention" support scheme was extremely helpful. The "furlough grant" scheme enabled the Association to keep most of our experienced staff on the payroll, which meant there would be a better chance of rebuilding the work of the Community Centre once we were finally in a position to re-open to the public. We were concerned that the initial time-span of the scheme would be too short to achieve that benefit, but the two extensions subsequently made to the scheme raised our confidence.

From the outset of the crisis, we were able to salvage a small proportion of our income - from 'rental' uses of the Centre - such as users' storage spaces, community theatre workshops and office spaces. And we were gradually able to allow certain educational activities (such as pre-school education) from mid-

2020, as some national relaxations were introduced. But at several points after that, we were very frustrated that the “stop-go” nature of government controls made it almost impossible to plan for a steady resumption of our services. It also affected the public’s ability and confidence to make use of our facilities.

By the end of the financial year (in March 2021, and while things were still effectively in “lockdown”) the situation remained bleak. But the Trustees were able to feel more positive that the Association had survived the worst of the threat, and that we could start preparing to rebuild the life of the Community Centre - once we were allowed the opportunity to resume.

Among other things, the challenge ahead is to rebuild levels of activity to where they were before the onset of the pandemic. It is a very formidable challenge.

Financial overview, 2020-21

OPERATING FUND *(for the day-to-day running of the Community Centre)*

The result was a deficit of £9,000 for the year. This was a decline of £40,000 from the previous financial year, when we made a surplus of £31,000.

- **Income** (at £120,000) fell by £104,000 from the previous year (down 46%).

Our usual primary income stream, from the hire of our facilities and sales from our café, dropped by 80%.

Crucially, however, we received government emergency grants of £76,000. Without that exceptional grant support our income would have been just £44,000 - and our operating deficit would have been £85,000.

- **Expenditure** on running costs (at £129,000) was £63,000 lower than the previous year (down 33%).

The waiver of business rates for the year (£5,000) was helpful. But the main factor in our reduced costs was of course the greatly reduced day-to-day activity at the Centre during the year.

DEVELOPMENT FUND *(for improvements to our facilities and equipment)*

We received only £2,000 in income during the year, compared with £67,000 in the previous year. Nearly all of this £2,000 was from donations kindly made by affiliated groups, in lieu of membership fees (which we waived for the year).

It was impossible to hold our usual big fundraising events (principally the annual Beer Festival and Christmas Fair) under the Covid restrictions in force.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE for the year was relatively low, at £25,000.

This was confined to essential repairs and replacements to the fabric of the buildings, the fittings and the equipment. More than 90% of the expenditure was for surface drainage works, renewal of electrical circuits and replacement of flooring.

Not surprisingly, our **overall financial position** worsened over the year, with a fall of £32,000 in our net current assets.

However, without the benefit of government support (the grants in respect of “furlough pay” and “business closure”) these assets would have fallen by more than £100,000.

Thanking our staff, our volunteers and our members

Our report up to this point has been about the Community Centre as an organisation and as a place. An organisation that many people have long been accustomed to supporting, and a place they been used to enjoying.

And this year was a challenge to the Centre, for sure. But in the *bigger* picture, this was a year that severely challenged people and communities themselves. The pandemic - and the restrictions on social contact - placed enormous pressures on the personal lives of so many people.

So, in concluding this short report, we’d like to give our sincere thanks to everyone who has played a part in keeping the Community Centre on its feet during this very difficult time, even in the face of the many other pressures on them personally.



Some essential work: repair and reflooring in the Community Centre

Look to our future - use the Community Centre website !



Southwick Community Association is a registered charity (No 305370)