

## Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub (CaSH) Annual General Meeting Minutes

7-8.45pm, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019; St Julian's Church Hall, 3 Abbots Avenue, AL1 2HY

### Attendees:

Michelle Mackenzie  
Elaine Rainsford  
Kate Swindells  
Jo Cooney  
Janet Audley Charles  
Tina Swain

Gail Jackson  
Ed Jankowski  
County Cllr Sandy Walkington  
Sharon Linney  
Andrew Mackenzie  
Alison Pether

Sam Mackenzie  
Ben Mackenzie  
Janet McMillan  
Susan Devi  
Sabrina Henry

### Apologies:

Cllr Emma Matanle  
Sian Goodwin  
Cllr Janet Smith (Mayor)  
Andy Lunn (Assistant Treasurer)  
Laurence Charles

Chantal Burns  
Rev Becky Leach

### Minutes

<u>Agenda Item</u> <u>(related documents in</u> <u>parentheses)</u>	
a. Apologies, welcome and introduction	Current Chair of CaSH Michelle Mackenzie welcomed everyone to the first Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub Annual General Meeting (AGM). CaSH is a resident-led group working to improve facilities within our [Cottonmill and Sopwell's] community.
b. Annual report (Appendix 1)	Michelle Mackenzie (Chair) presented CaSH's Annual report, summarised in Appendix 1.
c. Survey results (Appendix 2)	Kate Swindells (Secretary) has spent the past year undertaking two formal surveys of Sopwell residents' needs. She thanked all the helpers who spread the word of the surveys through leafletting, putting up posts and posters and taking part online. She then presented a summary of her findings from the second survey, undertaken from January to July 2019. A summary of the report is included as Appendix 2.  Key findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The survey was representative by ward geography.</li> <li>• Younger and older were under-represented. Two online focus groups were conducted to get more views on youth and the elderly provision needs.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community supports a hub.</li> <li>• Residents want a cafe, group and community activities, to host parties and shop local.</li> <li>• Youth in particular (identified across every age group) and older people were most identified as having need of provision, but a need for a centre for all groups was also identified.</li> </ul> <p>The survey report including the results from both surveys is available on the CaSH website <a href="https://cottonmillandsopwellhub.org/survey/">https://cottonmillandsopwellhub.org/survey/</a></p>
<p>d. Forward plans and local Council statement (Appendix 3)</p>	<p>Michelle Mackenzie (Chair) noted that for the majority of the last year, the CaSH committee has been attending regular monthly meeting with the joint partners of St Albans and District Council (SADC), Sopwell Community Trust (SCT), Verulam Cycling Club (VCC), and other interested local parties.</p> <p>Due to confidential nature of the discussions, CaSH is unable to divulge more information at the present time. Michelle Mackenzie read out a statement issued by SADC on behalf of the group (included as Appendix 3).</p> <p>A question was asked about how this was being funded, although this is not a question we can answer now.</p> <p>A question was asked about whether CaSH would still be fundraising and the answer was yes, and the upcoming events were highlighted.</p> <p>A question was asked about whether a building could or would be sponsored. The feeling was that this would be a question for the Council.</p>
<p>e. Review of the past year</p>	<p>Elaine Rainsford (Vice Chair and Events co-ordinator) noted that CaSH had a massive learning curve over the past year. She summarised the key events involving CaSH from the past year, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Feb 19</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ We held our ‘Drop In’ event at the MP, asking for feedback in person and via the first survey (residents close to the Marlborough Pavilion were posted an invitation)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Mar 19</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Launched our 100 Club and agreed to bring Larks in the Parks back to Sopwell</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>May 19</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Teamed up with the Cottonmill and Nunnery Allotment Association to put on a joint event at the Cottonmill Allotments for the Sustainability Festival 2019 (providing refreshments for the allotment tours)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>June 19:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Helped out at St. Luke’s Repair Fair as part of the Sustainability Festival 2019.</li> <li>➤ Joined our friends at the Sopwell Communities Trust for their Eid in the Park celebrations</li> <li>➤ Volunteered as ‘Baggage Control’ at the St. Albans Half Marathon</li> <li>➤ Larks! Thanks to St Julians and St Stephens for the refreshments and SCT, who offered free block painting. VCC unfortunately</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>had commitments elsewhere. We felt it was a successful community day. A resident attendee noted it was a great day but it was felt that a lot of local people didn't know that the MP site was there; she felt that the raising of the profile of the site meant more children were using the bike trails there but they wanted somewhere on site to buy drinks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>July 19</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Community jam making – the jam was used at the AGM in the scones and fairy cakes for Macmillan</li> <li>➤ Marlborough Pavilion Open Evening to attract new renters</li> </ul> </li> </ul>										
f. Upcoming events	<p>Elaine Rainsford (Vice-Chair and Events Co-Ordinator) publicised two upcoming CaSH organised events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Family Friendly Fish &amp; Chip Quiz Night</i> – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October, 7pm-9pm at the MP. £10 per person which includes quiz entry, a fish and Chip supper and a small donation to CaSH. BYO drink and cups! Tickets can be bought from CaSH committee members or online on our website. Teams of up to six. We've budgeted for 60 tickets. Deadline is 13<sup>th</sup> October. <a href="https://cottonmillandsopwellhub.org/events-2/">https://cottonmillandsopwellhub.org/events-2/</a></li> <li>• <i>Christmas Capers</i> – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December from 3.30-5.30pm at the MP - A free family drop in event of festive arts and crafts and music to singalong to! CaSH'll also be collecting reverse advent calendars for St. Albans &amp; District Foodbank (you put something into box or basket each day rather than take out and then this is donated to the foodbank).</li> <li>• The Big Lunch on the first weekend in June is an idea where food brings people together. <a href="https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage">https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage</a></li> <li>• Larks is coming back to Sopwell on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2020.</li> </ul>										
g. Financial report (Appendix 4)	<p>Janet Audley Charles (Treasurer and Events Co-ordinator) noted that CaSH's constitution states the committee will appoint an auditor at the AGM. The auditor must be a volunteer from the community who is not related to any of the committee members to look over the accounts at the end of the next financial year (July 2020).</p> <p>Janet McMillan volunteered to look over the accounts at the end of the next financial year.</p> <p>The accounts detailing CaSH's finances from the past year are included as Appendix 4.</p>										
h. Committee review and election of new members	<p>Michelle Mackenzie (Chair) noted that our committee can hold their position for up to three years. Our current committee stands as:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Chairperson</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b><i>Michelle Mackenzie</i></b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Vice Chair &amp; Events Co-Ordinator</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b><i>Elaine Rainsford</i></b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Secretary</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b><i>Kate Swindells</i></b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Assistant Secretary</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b><i>Jo Cooney</i></b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Treasurer &amp; Events Co-Ordinator</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b><i>Janet Charles</i></b></td> </tr> </table>	Chairperson	<b><i>Michelle Mackenzie</i></b>	Vice Chair & Events Co-Ordinator	<b><i>Elaine Rainsford</i></b>	Secretary	<b><i>Kate Swindells</i></b>	Assistant Secretary	<b><i>Jo Cooney</i></b>	Treasurer & Events Co-Ordinator	<b><i>Janet Charles</i></b>
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	<p>Assistant Treasurer <b>Andy Lunn</b>  Committee Member <b>Gail Jackson</b></p> <p>CaSH is looking for more volunteers to join the committee or sub-committees, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Media Co-Ordinator – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter.</li> <li>• Community Engagement – schools, community groups, faith groups.</li> <li>• Events and fundraising – quiz nights, get togethers, Christmas events, Larks</li> </ul> <p>Elaine summed up some of the benefits to volunteering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from team who've been there from the start</li> <li>• Opportunity to work with councillors, county councillors, businesses and friends</li> <li>• Chance to add to your experience and CV</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Warm fuzzy feeling</li> </ul> <p>There were jars available at the AGM for people to put their name in rather than put their hand up during the meeting. Several people volunteered time and / or expertise, for which the CaSH committee are grateful.</p>
i. Any other business	<p>County Councillor Sandy Walkington asked about charity status. It was noted that this was still up in the air at the moment.</p>
j. Close of meeting	<p>Michelle Mackenzie (Chair) thanked attendees and directed them towards the tea and cake (donations from this are going to Macmillan).</p> <p>County Councillor Sandy Walkington praised CaSH's efforts and noted the strong sense of community in Sopwell.</p>

## **Appendix 1: Summary of the Annual Report as presented by Michelle Mackenzie (Chair)**

We began our campaign for a new community centre in January 2018. It was quickly suggested to us that we should raise a petition to the council and so we began six months of community engagement events to spread the word of our campaign and to collect signatures.

In July 2018 we presented our 1200 signature petition at a full council meeting and received unanimous support from the members of the council chamber. The portfolio holder and the deputy Chief Executive for Commercial and Development at the council were assigned to work with us.

Since then we have formed a partnership with St. Albans District Council, Sopwell Communities Trust and Verulam Cycling Club, to provide a long-promised community centre and improved the facilities at the Marlborough Pavilion Open Space, off Cottonmill Lane. Since last summer we have spent a lot of time researching. We've been visiting other local community centres and organisations to help us gain valuable insight into the day to day running of a community facility and what works, what doesn't work, what they wished they could do better etc. We've also been researching the needs of our community, by talking to residents, other local organisations and via our online survey.



## Appendix 2: Survey results as presented by Kate Swindells (Secretary)

### Final Survey Results Summary

based on 180 responses from Sopwell residents  
out of 226 total responses

SURVEY RESULTS  
FINAL REPORT SEPT 2019



Simple survey designed to assess satisfaction with current facilities, needs, and what a community centre would be used for



- Survey followed on from previous, more open-ended study conducted in June 2018
- Survey opened in January and closed July 2019
- Majority of administration online
  - <https://cottonmillandsopwellhub.org/survey/>
  - Promoted on various community Facebook groups, whole area leaflet drop, and through communications by local schools and faith groups
  - A simple 10-question format, taking less than 3 minutes to complete
- Respondents were requested to state their postcode. Only respondents with verified Sopwell postcodes were included in analysis

### Key Messages

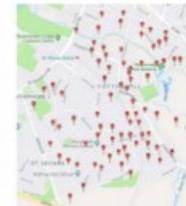


- Our survey is **representative** of the ward by geography
- **Younger** and **older** groups are under-represented. We conducted focus groups to bridge this gap
- The Sopwell community **support** a hub
- Residents want a **cafe, group & community activities, to host parties and shop local**
- Key sections of the community with need are **youth and older people**
- There is a need for an **inclusive** facility

### Good distribution around the ward



High number of respondents live close to the Marlborough Pavilion site in regions 17B and E



Source: CADP user survey 2019



### **Appendix 3: St Albans District Council statement on behalf of the partners involved in the project to improve community facilities in Sopwell**

The Council has been working with CaSH and other partners in the Sopwell Ward in redeveloping the Marlborough Pavilion.

The Council with partners including CaSH over the past six months has been accelerating the Marlborough Pavilion redevelopment that includes the following facilities mix:

- Main Hall
- Small Hall
- Kitchen
- Office
- Toilet facilities
- Bike Workshop
- Cafeteria for 30 people
- Meeting Rooms
- New Outdoor Cycle Track

A project management team has now been commissioned and the next phase is looking at the cost analysis of the building facility mix, which the Council is confident in redeveloping Marlborough Pavilion over the next couple of years.

Richard Shwe (Deputy Chief Executive) has really appreciated the support of partners from CaSH, the Sopwell Community Trust and Verulam Cycling Club in working proactively together and developing this scheme with ward councillors.

**Appendix 4: Financial report as presented by Janet Audley Charles (Treasurer and Events Co-Ordinator)**

Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub Accounts

12 04.18- 31.07.19

Income (£)		Expenditure (£)	
Fundraising	255.59	Printing	268.74
Donations	500	Events	50.00
Grants	5,000		
Events	1,074.10		
Interest	8.28	100 club outgoing	67.50
100 club	556		
Net income	9568.15	Total outgoing	386.24
Balance brought forward	00.00		
Balance in bank as at 31.07.2019	£9568.15		

12/04/18 We opened a Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub account at Virgin Money. During the following year we realised that this bank wasn't suitable for our needs- we couldn't bank actual cash or use online banking, so on 14/01/19 We closed the Virgin account and transferred all funds to a new Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub account with Metro bank.

Janet Audley Charles