

MINUTES OF TVCMI GENERAL MEETING

Held at Loddon Hall, Twyford on 13th February 2008

Present: Cedric Gilson (Chairman), Verne Magnusson (Finance Officer), Norman Raybone (Administrator), Josephine Blythe, Paul Burton, Stephen Conway, Bridget Ditcham, Sue Goddard, Dawn Goodhew, Pamela Graddon, Jennifer Hay, Paula Houghton, Mr D Hymers, John Illenden, Patricia Millwe, Alison Munro, Andy Nicholls, Frank Pepall, Geoff Pilgrim, Hugh & Anne Pinnock, Kathy Peck, Peter Rogers, Zeljana Schonauer, Mary Smith, Karen Walker, Denise Wilkin, Hilary Winter, Christian Wrigley.

Apologies: Annette Drake, Rick Sinfield.

1. Welcome

A warm welcome was extended to all present, the officers and other speakers were introduced and apologies were offered for confusion over the room.

2. Notice convening the meeting

3. Chairperson's report

TVCMI exists to attract money for projects of benefit to the local community that would be unavailable to local authorities, and receives an annual operating grant from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC).

The projects undertaken since the inception of TVCMI in 2001 include the Twyford Village Christmas Street Fayre, the Skate Park and Ball Court project, and obtaining CCTV cameras for the village centre. For the elderly, the Senior Citizens Open Forum (SCOF) - an idea born within TVCMI – has become a respected organisation in its own right. Another idea, created from a wish to form a response to the arrival of a large supermarket in the village, was to seek ways of encouraging retail business. One of our former Chairpersons envisaged a 'mini chamber of commerce' to unite the aims and ambitions of the local shops. This was not taken up, although more and more shops now identify with the Christmas Fayre.

It became evident during the development of TVCMI that it should be placed on a firmer legal footing. It was established as an unincorporated body without company or charity registration, however we found that its eligibility to apply for some types of external grants was limited by a weak constitution. The Steering Committee explored conversion of the organisation to charitable status, but by then we lacked the critical mass of people to undertake the work and plans were shelved. However, a change of legal status must remain a priority for TVCMI as it moves towards renewed involvement in community schemes and the need to apply for significant funds. The present constitution will be inappropriate for the way in which it is imagined that TVCMI should operate in future and the time for revising it is now.

I intend to retire as Chairman at this meeting. My Vice-Chairman, Robert Turner, Verne Magnusson, my Financial Officer and Norman Raybone, my administrator, have also indicated their wish to make room for others. I am grateful to Bob Turner for strong guidance during my Chairmanship, especially in moments of panic. Verne Magnusson and I cooperated extremely well and enjoyably to establish reliable procedures for good care of TVCMI finances and we have been able to present professional sets of accounts to WBC, duly independently examined and verified. I am most deeply indebted to Norman Raybone, who has provided advice through his knowledge of local authority matters, as well as for being an invaluable source of moral and material support. Norman has been administrator to TVCMI since its inception. I wish also to

give public acknowledgement to Geoff Pilgrim, Chairperson of the Special Events Working Group that puts on such a splendid Christmas Fayre each year, and his dependable team.

It remains for me to thank the Steering Committee for their contributions to the decisions and business of TVCMI during my term. Lastly, I encourage everyone to lend support to the organisation that is now facing such a promising future.

4. Financial summary

The financial year of TVCMI runs from 1st April to 31st March and the last set of accounts rendered to WBC was for the year ended 31st March 2007.

The accounts are finalised and submitted to the Independent Examiner in the September following the end of the accounting period. Any necessary corrections are then made and both the accounts and independent examiner's report are forwarded to WBC immediately afterwards. This is so that they will have been lodged before applications for the ensuing year's operating grants are due.

The TVCMI account is with HSBC bank in Reading. We follow a set of Financial Regulations issued by WBC on the processing of money. There are currently four signatories for cheques, any two of which constitute authority, except that the Financial Officer can only second-sign cheques already signed by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman. The Independent Examination is carried out by Accounting etc., of Station Road, Twyford. Independent examinations are now not compulsory for organisations as small as TVCMI but we insist on it as a mark of good practice and for the sake of transparency. I can answer individual queries, if required.

The annual operating grant has been £4,600 throughout my period of office and only in respect of our application for 2008/2009 has any allowance been requested for inflation. The main expenditure is on the Christmas Fayre. In recent years, the Fayre has cost approximately £4,600 but we subvent the expenditure by about £2,300 through income generation, donations and sponsorship, making the net cost of the event around £2,300. After deduction of general operating costs, most of the surplus is directed into reserves. These are to deal with contingencies that may arise, the principle category being an allowance of £2,500 against the initial costs of the Christmas Fayre for the ensuing year, should the anticipated grant from Wokingham be reduced. Recently we gave £2,000 to Wokingham to assist with the cost of a third CCTV camera for the village centre. A reserve of £600 also was held against the cost of restructuring TVCMI into a charity and a £750 allocation was made for equipment for a new Community Library. These funds can be redesignated in the future if desired. The Steering Committee is insured via Zurich Municipal for loss of money, public liability, libel and slander, a fidelity guarantee and personal accident, the annual premium being in the region of £600. The Christmas Fayre is separately insured on the day of the event only and the premium is about £550.

I am able to assure the Steering Committee, both its existing and future members and the public that the finances of TVCMI are robust and healthy. We await the decision of Wokingham Borough Council with regard to the operating grant for 2008/2009

5. Questions - None

6. Officers: retirements, nominations and elections

The retirement of the 'Executive' was announced. This consists of the three officers required to lead the steering group; a Chairman, Vice-Chair and Financial Officer.

Josephine Blythe was nominated for the post of Chairman and voted in by majority vote. Christian Wrigley was nominated for the post of Vice-Chair and was elected unopposed. There were no nominations for the post of Financial Officer.

Verne Magnusson agreed to continue as Financial Officer until 31st March 2008.

7. TVCMI - future plans

Tim Palmer from the Community Council for Berkshire (CCB) offered his help with community planning to support any group interested in engaging with their community to form an action plan. This process usually takes 12-18 months and can allow access to a £40,000 matched funding opportunity as well as potentially accessing many other funding opportunities.

Alison Munro (Income Generation Officer for WBC) explained that her role covers fundraising and looking at ways of bringing funding into the area, not just on behalf of WBC but the area as a whole, so she can assist in identifying where funding might be available.

Andy Nicholls (Economic Development Officer for WBC) deals with the grants to bodies such as TVCMI. The grant application for 2008/9 has received committee support and is awaiting a decision from the Executive who next meet on 21st February.

Cedric Gilson will attend 'All you need to know 2008' a Communities event to be held at Chieveley Village Hall on Saturday 8th March offering advice and information to groups considering a Parish Plan, and will report back.

8. Consultation and inclusive community membership

The constitution and membership of TVCMI needs to change and consideration should be given to which groups should be represented on the steering group.

9. Announcement: revision of constitution

It was suggested that the Charity Commission's model constitution could be a starting point.

10. Open Discussion: community needs

The issue of a new library for Twyford was discussed. It was agreed that while TVCMI could not pay for a new library, it could act as a means of raising money to contribute to the fund for establishing a new library in Twyford.

11. AOB

The composition of the new committee will be considered at the next meeting. It is hoped that those who attended this meeting will continue to attend future meetings, along with others representing the diverse community groups and organisations in and around Twyford.

12. Date of next meeting

Thursday 3rd April at 8.00pm. Venue: Annexe Room, Loddon Hall.