

Minutes of Annual General Meeting of Sheffield Hardware Hackers and Makers CIC

14th March 2016

Action items:

As ever, there's a lot to be done and we're a do-ocracy. Think what you can do for the space and pitch in!

Everyone: Think about workshops/talks you might want to run, or attend. Look at the funding opportunities, and suggest projects that might be eligible. Keep being awesome, engaged members.

Andy Kirby, Aaron (AJ) Ibbotson, Stephen Toms -- meet with PW representatives regarding expansion into cellar.

Chris (Bugs) Binny -- Chase Sharrow Festival organisers regarding our pitch. Circulate details of funding opportunities.

Trustees -- Submit accounts and CIC report to relevant authorities. Formalise an opening/closing schedule for open meetings. Investigate club alcohol licensing.

Summary of discussions:

1) Results of Trustees' election

Stephen Toms and Chris (Bugs) Binny were re-elected to their positions as Trustees (legally, company Directors) unopposed, for a further two years. Janine Kirby, Aaron (AJ) Ibbotson and Paul Beech also remain in their positions; their terms will expire at the next AGM, unless re-elected at that time.

2) Motions put before the AGM

The following motions were put to the members via the mailing list a full month before the AGM, and voted on online. Results of the votes were announced at the AGM as follows:

a) Starting from 1st April 2016, hold meetings every Monday evening 18:00-21:00 (previously held every other Monday) --
Votes Yes=12, No=0, No preference=2.
Motion PASSED

b) Starting from 1st April 2016, Saturday meetings will run 11:00-18:00 (previously 10:00-16:00) --
Votes Yes=13, No=0, No preference=1
Motion PASSED

c) Allow monthly payment for annual memberships (previously up-front payments) --
Votes Yes=12, No=0, No preference=2.
Motion PASSED

d) Allow Trustees to begin negotiations to lease the cellar beneath our hackspace, to extend our workshop space --
Votes Yes=14, No=0
Motion PASSED

3) Update on the Cellar

In advance of official negotiations, the trustees have been talking informally with representatives of Portland Works about leasing the cellar.

PW are willing to lease us the smaller room directly beneath us; they would keep control of the larger room.

PW will replace the first window, the door, and the staircase to give us safe access. Other two windows will be weatherproofed.

Rent will be £100/month, which is the minimum rate PW will charge for any unit. We've tried to persuade them to extend our current lease to include the cellar, rather than starting a new lease, in the hope that this would exempt us from this requirement. But PW maintain that it is a separate unit (has its own entranceway), and so this charge must apply. However, they are happy to arrange for identical expiry/renewal dates to our current lease, to keep our paperwork simpler. Presumably, this gives us an additional vote at the PW general meetings.

They've offered us 3 months of rent holiday after we've signed, in acknowledgment that considerable work will be needed to make the space usable. We won't sign until the room is emptied and available for us to work. A strong argument was made that we shouldn't sign until the PW committee and, ideally, the council have approved our plan of work for the space, so we don't lose those months just waiting for permissions. We'll negotiate for this.

We need to give serious thought to emergency egress: the single, small door is insufficient for safety. Also, that entrance is too small to accept standard size sheet goods, a problem for a wood workshop! For both these reasons, we must ensure that PW will allow us occasional use of the other door, which leads through the larger cellar room to its exit.

Plans for developing the cellar are at an early stage, and will be worked on with input from the whole group, as usual.

It was noted that the the cellar space -- accessed by steep stairs -- makes our accessibility for disabled people even worse. While we're not legally required to maintain accessibility, it's an important goal for us. Less importantly, accessibility may be a condition for funding opportunities. When we next think of expansion, we need to give serious thought to this requirement.

4) Approval of accounts + CIC Report

The Annual CIC Report was presented to the members via the mailing list, a month before the AGM. No objections were raised before or at the meeting. Stephen Toms proposed approval of the report, which was seconded by many members.

The accounts covering our previous financial year were presented to members via the mailing list, a month before the AGM. Members at the meeting were reminded of their right to request an external audit of the accounts. No objections were raised before or at the meeting. Andy Kirby proposed approval of the report, which was seconded by many members.

Thanks especially for Richard Langer for his expertise in helping to prepare the accounts.

A question was raised about the company's share assets. These are the voting shares in Portland Works that, as tenants, we're required to hold. They do not yield any dividends, and are not expected to increase in value in the foreseeable future.

5) Other Business

Sharrow festival -- Members were reminded of the Sharrow Festival, which we're planning to attend and for which we've requested a 3m x 3m (gazebo-sized) pitch. Chris (Bugs) Binny needs to chase up the organisers, to see whether our request has been received.

The owner of local electronics shop Bardwell's has been contacted about the possibility of a sponsorship / mutual advertising relationship, but doesn't seem interested.

Funding -- Chris (Bugs) Binny will circulate details of a couple of funding opportunities. Any ideas from members for qualifying projects would be great.

Formalised opening list -- Given that the proposal for more frequent Monday meetings has passed, it may be that they become less busy. As such, the trustees (and ideally other keyholders) should start to maintain a schedule of who's going to open and close the space for open sessions.

Running workshops -- We're keen to see the group running more workshops. Members are encouraged to think of workshops/talks that they could run, as well as ones they'd like to attend. A wiki-based solution was suggested, in which people could publicly list their offers/requests for workshops, making it easier to gauge interest. We have access to classroom space belonging to PW, in the event that we want more space and/or a less hazardous environment.

Possible changes to membership types -- Being a membership organisation simplifies our tax situation (enables Mutual Trading, which is based on the principle that income from members, being part-owners of the company, is not generally considered taxable profit), and also enables us to apply for an alcohol license, to sell e.g. bottled beers to members, for consumption on the premises during social events. This would cost £70 annually, and doesn't need a named licensee to oversee it.

Both of these become tricky to administer if we have day members, as they're not eligible for inclusion in these rules. As such, it was suggested that we end the £4/door membership charge, in favour of the new £6/month charge. This will be put to the wider membership over the mailing list for discussion, and may be voted on at an upcoming General Meeting.

6) Awards

AJ was presented with an extremely stylish monogrammed hard hat, in recognition of his contributions to reminding us all of why safety equipment is a good idea.

Steve was presented with a rather lovely and much-needed bar of soap, to celebrate his status as grubbiest member.

Their names and accomplishments will be immortalised in a small but tasteful commemorative plaque, if anyone particularly wants to do that. But probably not.

Members present at AGM:

Chris (Bugs) Binny (Chair/Trustee)

AJ Ibbotson (Trustee)

Steve Toms (Trustee)

Janine Kirby (Trustee)

Andy Kirby

David Keeble

Matt SB

James Muirhead

Alex Petersen

Darren Barker

Sarah Cullen (Late arrival)

Visitors:

Paul Nile (new member)

Chris Dymond (Digital Makers)

Apologies:

Paul Beech (Trustee - absent due to illness)