CEPL12

Firstly, since our last report we have had an AGM which was held in Isambard House for which we thank STC for the use of. The Chairman's Report was prepared by Chris Bailey and is attached hereto and summarises the year we had. Unfortunately, he had a bad virus and was unable to attend, so I gave the report on his behalf. Several questions had been raised by members prior to the AGM and these were also dealt by myself, ably supported by my fellow directors, Richard Bickford and Sue Ellingham. In brief, I detail some of the questions below and our responses.

1. Q. Why is CEPL12 not entrusting its very capable volunteers to take responsibility for/ carry out specific tasks?

   A. Upon induction we explore the skills that volunteers wish to make available and look to place them in roles appropriate to those skills. We often find volunteers, although qualified in a particular area, want to do voluntary work that is not/was not their day job.

2. Q. What benefits does CEPL12 offer its members?

   A. The requirement for members is established by the Companies Act. We offer benefits to the public by way of the services we provide for the community.

3. Q. Will the full annual accounts be available to members at the AGM?

   A. Yes, the accounts have been signed and copies are available on the table.

4. Q. How many volunteers are there because in various places on the website it ranges from 60 to 120?

   A. The number of volunteers changes, almost, weekly and unfortunately, we have scant resources to regularly update the website.

5. Q. What 20th Anniversary celebrations took place?

   A. We deferred the celebrations as it was felt it inappropriate to expend money, but did celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Memory Box Café and the 6th Anniversary of the Memory Box Singers.

6. Q. What green initiatives has CEPL12 undertaken?

   A. To stop food going to waste has been our major undertaking with the larder/pantry and the kitchen. Many of the crafters who sell through the shop are using recycled materials and we are a member of Town Team which is bringing forward green initiatives to the Fore Street e.g. planters.

7. Q. Can the directors explain why they believe CEPL12 should receive support from STC when it is clear there are many avenues left to explore, what is the future of the Kitchen and why do you need paid employees?

A. This can be summarised in the following answer:-

There has been a lot of speculation re. the kitchen and its future and I would confirm that there has been a difference of opinion at Board level as to the timing of what we should do, and there is no doubt that the issue has been worsened by the lack of directors to help run the enterprises.

Since the inception, the kitchen has made a loss, despite the efforts of a kitchen manager initially, and various other business models it has not proved financially sustainable. However, the Board does recognise the role that the kitchen provides in the community and following a meeting of volunteers, we are trying further new ideas which came from that meeting with a view to, at least, achieving a break-even situation by increasing turnover.

Unfortunately, to run a food business means compliance with so many rules and regulations, for example, temperature control, food handling, cleanliness, Health and Safety etc., the list seems endless but we have AI to ensure we maintain compliance.

We are fortunate that we have the net income from 18 Belle Vue Road which has offset some of the loss and, although I have never met her, I appear to have a good relationship with the landlady of the kitchen who has been helpful in her aspirations for income from the property. We are about to hold over on our lease of the unit to give us a chance to make it sustainable and, with the help of our able volunteers, will try to do so.

We had wondered whether our thoughts on the role of the kitchen/CEPL12, in the community was shared by others, and following discussion by the Town Council, it was obvious that our thinking was shared thereby and with 2 councillors willing to attend Board meetings to give us some additional business knowledge input.

Secondly, on behalf of the Board, I would thank STC for the support offered as a result of the report thereto.

It had been Chris Bailey's intention to step down as Chairman at the AGM, and although he wasn't in attendance he has done so and therefore, I am Acting Chairman until the next Board meeting on the 28th October 2026 when the first item will be to appoint a Chair person.

As an addendum to the above, we have made some amendments to operating the kitchen and already these are showing financial benefit. We hope to bring other initiatives forward over the next few months.

Peter Ryland
ACTING CHAIRMAN