Chopwell Regeneration CIO

Annual General Meeting

22.11.25

At 4.00 p.m. at The Bank

Minutes

- Welcome and Apologies
  Welcome from John, 13 people in attendance, including trustees John Coburn, Jodie Barwick-Bell, Mark Bell, Tom Brazier, Stacey Forster, Bob Donaldson, Jacky Quincey.

  Apologies were received from Adrien Bischoff-Dyson, Barnie Andrews, Marie Imlach, Ronnie Stewart, Dawn McNestry

- Minutes of 2024 AGM accepted. (No actions arising)

- Chairman's report
  John (attached)
  Action: Correction needed to Chairman's Report Section 5e re Community Allotment
  (Now corrected, JQ 26.11.25)

- Treasurer's report
  Jodie (attached)
  Accounts are ready to be submitted to the Charity Commission

- Election of trustees:
  Trustees standing for re-election: Stacey Forster, Mark Bell, John Coburn.
  All were re-elected
  Appeal for new trustees – please speak to one of the current trustees if you are interested.

- Election of Officers:
  Chair: (Acting) John Coburn
  Treasurer: Jodie Barwick-Bell
  Secretary: Jacky Quincey
  All were re-elected

- AOB – there was none.

Chopwell Regeneration CIO

Public Meeting

22.11.25

At 4.30 p.m. at The Bank

Minutes

- Welcome & Apologies
  Tom welcomed everyone to the meeting. 14 people were in attendance.
  Apologies had been received from Adrien Bischoff-Dyson, Marie Imlach, Barnie Andrews, Ronnie Stewart, Dawn McNestry.

- Minutes of last meeting (6th September)
- Actions from last meeting:
  - Update on energy costs (Bob)

See Bob's presentation (attached) There has been a 21% reduction in energy consumption and a 6% reduction in costs. Further research will be carried out to see if these figures can be reduced further. In 6 months there will be greater savings because we were previously on an emergency tariff.

Research re feeding back into the grid: it is felt (Tom) that there is unlikely to be much spare energy because of the Bank's high levels of consumption. More answers to follow.

  - Update on alternative education provision

(Sarah) Progress is slows; we are all set up, but there are many complications – parents need to be pushing for alternative education, and unless they do their children are not being referred.

We are currently working with one child externally, and an excluded child working as a volunteer, but neither of these is being paid for by Council. The Council is struggling to find the finances.

  - Questionnaire & meeting with new hotel owners

Completed questionnaires have now been sent to the new owners. They are hoping to have completed a business plan by the new year and will then share their ideas with the whole community.

  - Update re brass band

A meeting is to take place between the potential funder and a number of local musicians who have come forward in the new year (info from Dawn McNestry 23.11.25).

- **Programme Manager's report**

Some highlights:

- Teeside University grant – research into youth well-being & food insecurity. We are planning after school activities in December, make Xmas presents, hampers for families etc., working with the school. The funding will subsidise Christmas Day meals etc. If anyone knows of anyone who might benefit, please let Sarah / café know (food / Christmas treats).
- We now have a couple of young volunteers, who are 14, helping on Saturdays. Their hours have to be reduced because of their age and there are certain restrictions about what they are allowed to do for Health & Safety.
- Digital Poverty Alliance – old IT equipment from businesses / households can be donated at The Shop, everything is securely stored & wiped. Refurbished for those who don't have their own equipment. Again if anyone knows of people in need , please say. According to the most recent IMD figures, Chopwell is now even more deprived than before (Jodie)
- Donations of tins etc for Community Market are always gratefully received.
- (Jamie Park): Feeding Families is a useful link. Sarah will get in touch with them again.

- <u>The Bank update</u>
  - We have a new team of volunteers as many of the previous ones had moved on, and they are working well. Katie has been training the new volunteers - & they are thriving.
  - (Jodie) Fraser & Katie are trying to ensure not too much abuse of our facilities. Their local knowledge & experience are invaluable.
  - Katie has made a proposal to support people recovering from alcohol & drug abuse which should go to the next trustees meeting for detailed discussion
  - (Stacey) Her daughter feels very safe as one of the new young volunteers at The Bank café – she is being well looked after.
- <u>The Regeneration Shop & search for new premises</u>

The Shop is performing above & beyond expectations – there is a high level of expertise in the volunteers. However, space is very limited. The aim is to relocate: a survey of a potential building is being carried out on Thursday – we can then look into finances & make an offer. This will be another big project.

Jamie commented on the advantage of higher levels of visibility with being on the main road.

If this offer is not successful, we'll try elsewhere. The volunteers are very proactive & they persuaded trustees to go for this building despite its very obvious drawbacks.

Sarah – much thinking is taking place about the wide range of potential activities that could be offered!

- Chopwell Food Project

Jolene Donkin is being employed for 4 hrs per week for 6 months; she is an experienced project manager, involving work in communities, talking to people. She will be overseeing several mini projects- a recipe booklet, herbs & plants, basic cooking, children's food growing activities and the development of the tool library, as well as drawing up the Food Strategy Implementation Plan. Gateshead Food Partnership has funded this project – thanks to them.

- Brightening Chopwell & the arch
  - 4 of 8 planters made by the Men's Shed are now in place. They contain edible plants, pots of herbs. The plan is to use some for Xmas sage & onion stuffing!
  - Litter picking dates are in the newsletter. The litter pickers are using leaves for composting. They are looking for any new ideas e.g. litter bins
  - 7.5 kilos of assorted bulbs have been donated - all are now planted, in River Streets, Marx / Lenin Terraces etc.
  - The Arch should be ready by the end of November. It will be sited in Richard's field off the verge, close to where it was before.
  - Sign at top of village: permission has now been given to put a mosaic on it. Any offers of expertise will be very welcome!
  - Miners Memorial fruit garden – discussions are to take place
  - A survey of pavement access from top of village has been carried out

Other points raised

- Dropped kerbs south of the chip shop are included on a programme for improvement (Jamie)
- Mill Road parking by bus stop (Stacey) – Jamie: the Council is looking into bus stop 'cages' to solve this – consultation is under way
- Parking on double yellow lines also being followed up, but there is insufficient staff to enforce. Yellow lines on South Road - Jamie will follow up.
- Congratulations from Jamie on good work being done.

- AOB

1. Mick raised the issue of starting a Credit Union. Sarah explained that 2 years ago there was a consultation with NE First / Moneywise. But we couldn't find volunteers who were comfortable / confident to do it.

Action: Sarah will follow this up again and Jamie will put Sarah in touch with existing volunteers.

This work could include a financial literacy programme, budgeting etc.

Mick pointed out that anyone can safely save with a credit union, then the money can be loaned to people who need to borrow.

This should be followed up in 2026 (Jodie)

2. The Xmas Trees are now ready after a lot of work from a team of volunteers. The living trees are to be decorated on 5th December
3. The tool library is now up & running e.g. drills, power tools, leaf blowers, jet wash, lawn mower, for a small cost. The electric cargo bike is also now available for use.
4. Xmas Day meals are going to be organised by Barnie, at the Bank or delivered. Please get in touch if anyone knows of people in need.

The meeting ended at 17.30.