



Annual General Meeting

of the members of Colne Valley Equitable Care Society Limited
trading as Co-operative Care Colne Valley

November 25th at 7pm

Meeting to be held online via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82903589764?pwd=V1QyZjZOWW5rQXR1ZDZYUmhKeEVvQT09>

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the last AGM - 19 Nov 2020 (see below)
4. Matters arising
5. Resolution to disapply the audit requirement.
Given that the level of assets and turnover of the society during the last account year 1 June 2020 to 31 May 2021 fall below the thresholds stated in Section 84 of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, and having taken advice on the matter, the meeting resolves to disapply the requirement to appoint auditors for the financial year referred to above.
6. Chair's Report
7. Operations Report
8. Financial Report
9. Resolution to accept and approve the accounts
10. Election of Directors
In accordance with our rules the three longest serving board members are standing down. These are: Graham Mitchell, Veronika Susedkova and Jan Walters. All three have put themselves forward for re-election. In addition we are pleased to report that we have received nominations from two additional board candidates: Tracy McHugh, and Jon Walker.
 - 10.1. Resolution: As we have sufficient vacant seats on our board to elect all five candidates, the meeting resolves to hold a single vote to elect all five 'en bloc'.
 - 10.2. Resolution: The meeting resolves that all five candidates named above be elected to serve on the board of directors. [Should the resolution above (10.1) not be supported we will carry out a poll for each board candidate.]
11. Close

Chair's Report

It seems that adult social care is rarely out of the news these days. Despite all of the media coverage however, care remains in a state of crisis. Indeed, since our previous AGM the crisis appears only to have deepened, with many commentators talking in terms of being on the edge of collapse, with many thousands of people in need of care across the country being unable to access services due to the difficulty in recruiting care professionals.

While all of this makes our task harder, I believe it also serves to vindicate the decision we took to establish this organisation, and our ambition to be part of the solution and set out a different approach.

The last year has also been challenging in respect of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on all of us as individuals as well as the additional pressures it has placed on our plans for this organisation. And yet despite all of that, we have remained on track and in line with the plans that we set out when we first invited investment in the society.

This is a huge achievement, and I want to place on record my admiration and deeply felt thanks to the team here for making that happen. Like any new organisation we've had our share of issues and tensions, but through that I can see that they have built a solid platform, a strong team with a shared vision and a genuine desire to make that vision real. The staff, led by Danielle, have been fantastic: we couldn't have hoped for more. And my colleagues on the board have put in an incredible amount of effort.

I also want to thank every one of our investor members for your support, your courageous decision to back this initiative. None of this could have been achieved without your investment.

Clearly there is still a long way to go before we can claim to have achieved our goals. But we've made a solid start, we've built the platform that we need. Our task for the year ahead is to reach break-even, and become a sustainable co-operative business. It's a significant challenge, but it is one that I believe we can rise to meet.

Graham Mitchell, Chair

Operations Report: The Journey so Far

It's a little over 12 months since we were notified of our successful application for Care Quality Commission Registration. Initially after this we needed to concentrate our efforts on recruiting our Registered Manager (RM) as the secondment of Sarah Nunns from Kirklees Council, who had navigated us through the considerable challenges of 2020, was due to finish at the end of the year (fortunately we were granted an extension for a further few months). We have been delivering services since March 2021 and our current RM Danielle Bolchover started with us towards the end of that month.

Since that time we have had a steady growth in user and staff members. Part of the challenge is in ensuring that these two grow together – it can be a difficult balance to strike. We also have a part-time finance officer who is developing her skills in both financial administration and Human Resources. We continue to support our care staff in acquiring and maintaining the skills they need to be excellent carers, but also developing their wider skills to contribute to the co-op and further their career.

It is pleasing to note that our current position in terms of care support delivered is in line with the projections we made before becoming operational.

The staff members have a variety of contractual and non-contractual hours and we work closely with them both individually and collectively to ensure that they have the flexibility and security they need while making sure that we can be sustainable as a business. A good example of this is the response to issues raised about payments for car mileage and travel time which we have recently changed to deliver a fairer approach which is also affordable to the organisation.

We worked closely with the local authority to deliver a community anchor role during the 1st phase of the pandemic, funded by Kirklees Council, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Primary Care Networks. At the beginning of 2021 the temporary Community Operations Manager resigned and the funding became less secure, however we had always intended to fund this role internally and we appointed a permanent community operations manager a little after the registered manager. There were some positive developments in terms of links with community and particularly in keeping a focus on user members having access to wider support, however there is no doubt that the pandemic has had an enormous impact on our ability to develop this as much as we want to.

The community operations manager left to take up a new role in the last month and we have decided to focus on developing our regulated services and to use the funding to appoint a care co-ordinator to support the registered manager and allow her to effectively link the two roles together. This does not mean that we are any less focused on delivering a broader more holistic approach to support at home, but we want to be very clear that – at this stage of our development – this is supporting user members and doesn't drift into wider community development which is unfunded.

The Highlights

- Very positive feedback from user members.
- The development of a staff team who understand the ethos of the co-op and are able to contribute to developing the co-operative.
- A registered manager who has picked up the gauntlet of business start-up in a very positive way. In particular the way we work with user members and their families and the way we develop relationships with staff members.
- The business has grown at the rate we expected – despite the pandemic.
- Positive feedback from commissioners.

The Challenges

- Recruitment is a limiting factor on the growth of the business. We are certainly not unusual in this as you will note from the news. We have proactively marketed the co-operative and reviewed our salary structure to be more attractive. We have also appointed a combination of experienced staff and staff with the right approach but limited experience who require more support.
- Reduction in funding for the community anchor role meant we have had to review the community manager role however we may return to this as the business grows.
- Growing the number of directors to increase both the capacity and diversity.

It's been a busy 12 months!

Sue Richards, Nominated Individual & Danielle Bolchover, Registered Manager

Financial Report: The Finances So Far

The 2020/21 Accounts are available and record our financial position as at 31st May. We have also attached to this Report an updated version of the spreadsheet which supported the Financial Projections used in our Share Offer to give a snapshot of the current income and expenditure position. We are aiming to hold an Investors Event in the next few months where the finances can be discussed in more detail.

There were various factors in 2020 that delayed us in starting to trade (approximately 6 months later than envisaged when we launched the Share Offer) – delay in CQC registration timescales, second lockdown and recruitment challenges. Inevitably this meant that our starting capital was less than we had originally calculated although various grants and the community anchor funding referred to above meant that we did not start using share capital until just before we started trading.

Perhaps inevitably (given the almost unprecedented events of the last 18 months) there are some significant differences between what we planned and what we are achieving. Notably:-

- Rate of growth. As you will all be aware the past year and pandemic effects have starkly exposed the deep faults in the social care system and this is continuing to have a negative impact on our ability to recruit. As referred to above there is a very fine balance between this and being able to build up user member numbers;
- Local Authority dynamics/dilemma – we have to achieve a certain number of care hours delivered before we can take on referrals from the Local Authority and although we are now approaching this threshold there is a considerable gap between what the Local Authority are paying per hour and what we need to keep the business viable;
- One positive outcome from the pandemic is that we are still currently able to access free PPE from the Local Authority/NHS.

Whilst we still have a very long way to go, the early signs are that we can succeed in our overall objectives of delivering holistic, quality care and providing fair and rewarding job opportunities to our care staff.

Jan Walters, Secretary