

HILDA LANE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Trustees held on 23 September 2025 at 7.30pm at St Hugh's Community Centre

1. Present

Alix Bushnell (Chair & Treasurer)
Neisha Ebanks (Vice Chair)
Margaret Quarry
Linda Huggins
Olimpia Lopes da Veiga
Shelley (local resident)
Steph Gray (Secretary, minutes)

2. Apologies for absence

None.

3. Finance Report

The accountant has prepared our 2024 accounts. The final version has been agreed by the Trustees and will be sent to the accountants tomorrow to be filed before the deadline next week.

Account balances:

Co-op current: £4,955 - about £1k down on this point last year

Co-op savings: £1,014 - about £2.5k down on this point last year

NS&I reserves: £10,208 - unchanged except for accrued interest. We may aim to move to a higher interest-bearing account option.

Our income in 2024 was approximately £44k compared to £48k in 2023.

Our expenditure in 2024 was approximately £50k, down from about £58k in 2023.

Alix reported that we have worked hard to bring expenses down. Our reserves remain at pre-Covid levels, but there remains no spare cash to start rebuilding the reserves.

The cost of the PRS licence has gone down as we now simply host hirers playing music, and are not running community parties on our own account. Cheaper options have been found or are being sought for website, cleaning, and broadband.

Our Centre Manager Emma has submitted four funding applications, and has had two rejections with two still pending. Alix and Emma will continue to work towards finding new grant sources, potentially looking at smaller pots. The fundraising environment is challenging with very specific geographic and demographic criteria being imposed on applicants. We are wary of commitments that involve committing to run new projects, as these require a lot of staff time to co-ordinate.

4. Centre Management Report

Emma West, Centre Manager, provided a written report which was shared with the meeting by Alix:

Funding update

We have applied for 4 new funding bids over the summer, and had feedback from two to say we were unsuccessful due to high number of applicants applying. Most funding applications are match funded which we are currently not in a position to do. We have tried to apply for Big Issue funding but they were only able to approve 10 applications in total so again we were not successful. The Clarion Asset team sent us some funding links but when I tried to apply, Bromley was not in the geographical area covered. We still have around £6k left in the Wellbeing project funding. We urgently require new funding to be financially viable. Any advice or support with this would be very gratefully received.

New Hires

Clarice Fitness class started 8th September on Monday mornings. This was previously funded by our Wellbeing project when her budget of 12 sessions ended. Penge PCN (NHS) who came to observe a few sessions have provided new funding for 14 months of weekly sessions. Attendance is good, with 28 participants for the first session.

Penge PCN are planning to book a series of drop-in health workshops, with the first one due in October for menopausal women.

A new regular Saturday morning hire (children's special needs youth club) is due to start from 1st November.

Baby Yoga has sadly cancelled their planned hire – the third new regular hirer to do so at short notice in the past few weeks.

We also have an interest from a Kumon Math's Tutor group three evenings a week for the meeting room. A local youth club are interested in hiring the hall for two evenings a week.

Singing Mamas - a choir/support group for mum's - has been a successful new regular hire on Thursday mornings.

The diabetes support group has made a new regular booking for 2025/2026, starting from October 2025.

We continue to get lots of hire enquiries, viewings and bookings for Saturday parties

Emma met with Summer (yoga instructor) on 17th September to discuss a new Wellbeing Programme timetable for Oct/Nov as some of the previous workshop had seen a drop off in attendance numbers.

We continue to host It Takes a Village, three Church groups on Friday & Sundays, and Mayura Wellbeing sound bath events.

Other matters

Our new cleaner Corrine has been doing a great job for a reasonable rate. She has been very flexible with her working hours, coming in for at least two hours a week.

There are ongoing issues with the store cupboard being left in a terrible state. We will take photos of how it should be left, and Emma will send these to all regular hires.

Emma will follow up with Clarion to check the status of the gardening project previously led by Khorla.

5. Youth Club Report

Neisha reported that she, Amanda and Keisha have been running the Youth Club which continues to be well attended and has new applicants regularly registering to become a member. Before the school holiday, Emma had a meeting with Chris, Director from Play Place, who informed me that he was very short of staff experienced youth workers. Emma has contacted Play Place this week for an update on their staffing situation, but may need to look for a volunteer youth worker who is studying for their formal youth work qualification.

We continue to receive Jack Petchey funding which is used for food costs and new supplies. We used some of the Wellbeing budget to run a craft workshop in the Youth Club facilitated by a fully qualified art teacher from Croydon College.

Neisha has been bringing in some free pastries collected from a local business.

6. IT and Social Media report

Steph reported that we relaunched the website in February, and we have seen website traffic rise 90% compared to the previous six months, to around 600 users per month. We average about 15 enquiries per month for party hires via the website, and feedback from Emma is that the streamlined information on the site is helping to bring in the right kind of enquiries.

Steph and Emma have been continuing to liaise roughly every two weeks to establish priorities for social media promotion on Instagram and Facebook, mainly around regular hire slots, party hires and one off events e.g. Wellbeing programme, gardening project and one-off events for health or energy advice.

We are in the process of moving our broadband and phone package to a better deal which should speed up wifi in the building and save us money.

7. Plans for 2025/26

Alix set out plans for the coming year. She plans to focus on advertising for, and recruiting, new trustees in 2026 to help strengthen the Trustee board.

She will continue to seek funding for a new redesigned role covering centre management amongst other duties. Alix created Centre Manager role to develop HLCA after the COVID pandemic. We should review what type of role is needed to develop the next phase of St Hugh's. She noted that we need to keep Centre Manager motivated, as grant rejections can be demoralising.

Currently virtually all of our grant funding comes from Clarion, and we need to keep looking to diversify these income streams. Linda mentioned that she was in touch with Bromley Council.

Alix was clear that we don't want St Hugh's to become a place solely hired out to commercial hirers – we want to maintain a community focus.

8. Election of Officers

Chair – Alix Bushnell - Linda proposed, Neisha seconded

Vice Chair – Neisha Ebanks, Alix proposed, Neisha seconded

Company Secretary – Steph Gray, Alix proposed, Oli seconded

Treasurer – agreed to leave vacant, responsibilities covered by Chair

9. AOB

Linda raised an example of a hirer having a noisy party on the outdoor space using power from St Hugh's. We have since clarified the regulations in the terms of hire.

Steph reported the noticeboard has been back in action as of end of August after a repair.

Linda expressed thanks to the committee for their work this year.

Linda and Margaret offered to organise a Christmas get together for Trustees.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm