

Austwick Community Broadband Association
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12th December 2016 at
Austwick Parish Hall

Chairman: Paul Tibbatts

Vice-Chairman: Mark Hewgill

Hon. Secretary: Julian Cairns

Committee members present: Michael Southworth & Steve Ward

Members present: G R Bowring, M Barker, J Butler, G Cleverley, J B Dyson, S Edwards, R Edwards, P Goold, J Hickson, G Higginson, R Hordern, F & R Michaelis, M Percival, A Pickard, P Reynolds, J Sinclair, C Stockbridge, C Teller, B Tibbatts, S Wiltshire, S Wright (1), S Wright (2)

- 1. Apologies for absence.** Apologies had been received from: Veronica & Richard Caperon, Chris Ellison, Roland & Brenda Fudge, Christine & Mike Hartland, Mark Hewgill, Janet & Keith Millward, Floyd Schofield, Ian Smith, K Vaughan-Williams & C Watson.

- 2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.** The minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2015 had been circulated and were agreed as correct for the Chairman to sign.

- 3. Chairman's Report.** The Chairman reported that it had been a good year in terms of network service. Thanks were extended to the work done by committee members especially to Steve Ward & Mark Hewgill who continue to maintain the network and assist with members' technical problems.

Twelve months ago it was reported that there was sufficient support in the community served by ACBA to construct a fibre broadband network to connect into the B4RN infrastructure. Since then LEWFA volunteers and contractors have worked to install a considerable proportion of the required network. At the end of the formal ACBA meeting Michael Southworth, as chairman of the LEWFA project, had agreed to provide a more detailed update on progress.

It remains the recommendation of the committee that once all existing members that have requested a B4RN connection that LEWFA can deliver have been connected to the B4RN network then ACBA should be wound up. Based on current progress it is anticipated that ACBA will continue at least until the end of the current ACBA year – i.e. to 30th September, 2017.

4. **Secretary's Report.** The Secretary reported that there had been one routine committee meeting since the last AGM. The draft minutes of that meeting had been issued to committee members. Other correspondence and emails dealt with had been entirely of a routine nature. The membership database showed that on 30th September we had 115 full members – an increase of 3 on the 112 members reported at the last AGM.
5. **Treasurer's Report.** The Chairman reported that shortly after completing the year-end accounts our Honorary Treasurer, Floyd Schofield, advised that she had to stand down due to illness. The committee will be passing their thanks and best wishes to Floyd on the behalf of the members.

In the absence of the Hon. Treasurer the Secretary presented the accounts for the year ended 30th September 2016 copies of which were provided at the meeting. These showed that receipts exceeded payments for the year by £6,950 (rounded) and that cash funds held at the year-end were £35,025 (rounded). This reflected the decision to maintain rather than upgrade the existing network pending the availability of the B4RN fibre network.

After a helpful reminder from Peter Gould, the Secretary reported the committee's recommendation that members' subscriptions should be kept at the same level for the forthcoming year. This would avoid the considerable administration that would be required to replace the existing payments by standing order which would possibly be for only one more year of normal activity.

Giles Bowring proposed that the audited accounts and subscription levels for 2016/17 be accepted. This proposal was seconded by Barbara Tibbatts and carried unanimously.

Paul Tibbatts then stood down as Chairman and Michael Southworth took the Chair.

6. **Election of new Committee.**

Chairman: The Secretary reported that that Paul Tibbatts had been nominated to continue as Chairman. There were no other nominations.

Peter Goold proposed and John Dyson seconded the appointment of Paul Tibbatts and this was carried unanimously.

Vice-Chairman: The Secretary reported that Mark Hewgill had been nominated to continue as Vice-Chairman. There were no other nominations. Peter Goold proposed and John Dyson seconded the appointment of Mark Hewgill and this was carried unanimously.

Secretary: The Secretary reported that he had been nominated to continue as Secretary. There were no other nominations. Peter Goold proposed and John Dyson seconded the appointment of Julian Cairns and this was carried unanimously.

Treasurer: The Secretary reported that Ian Smith had been nominated to act as Treasurer. There were no other nominations. Peter Goold proposed and John Dyson seconded the appointment of Ian Smith and this was carried unanimously.

Committee: The Secretary reported that three existing Committee members had confirmed that they were willing to stand for another year: Chris Ellison, Michael Southworth & Steve Ward. The Chairman invited further nominations from among those present explaining that the ACBA constitution allowed for a maximum of six ordinary committee members and that it would be helpful to have a full committee complement when it came time to recommend the wind up arrangements to the members. Three members present agreed to be nominated as follows:

1. Gordon Higginson – Proposed by Michael Southworth & seconded by Steve Ward.
2. Stephen Wright (of Austwick) - Proposed by Gordon Higginson & seconded by Paul Tibbatts.
3. Barbara Tibbatts - Proposed by John Hickson & seconded by Sally Edwards.

As the number of nominated ordinary committee members did not exceed the six allowed a single resolution was proposed by Peter Goold and seconded by John Dyson to the effect that the nominated individuals be appointed to the committee and this was carried unanimously.

Michael Southworth then stood down as Chairman and Paul Tibbatts took the Chair.

7. Election of Accounts Examiner. The Chairman thanked John Dyson for his work examining the accounts for the year just ended. John confirmed that he would be willing to act in the role of examiner for another year. Giles Bowring proposed and Paul Tibbatts seconded the appointment of John Dyson and this was carried unanimously.

8. Annual Review of Service Provider. The Secretary reported that the committee had reviewed the service levels and charges over the past 12 months and were recommending that the existing service provider, Zen Internet, should be retained for another year. The recommendation was accepted.

9. Any other business

9.1 The future of austwick.org e mail addresses: Steve Ward reported that he and Mark Hewgill were making enquiries into the feasibility and cost of preserving members' "austwick.org" e mail addresses following the likely winding up of ACBA. This would require the renting of email service space on a commercial internet server. The cost of this is estimated to be between £10 to £20 per e mail address per annum. More information would be provided to members in due course. In the meantime any members wishing to avoid this annual cost would be advised to consider setting up a free e mail service account such as those presently offered by: Yahoo, Google (gmail) or Hotmail.

9.2 Disposal of Closing Balance as and when ACBA is wound up: Some members enquired about the way in which any surplus funds would be allocated as and when ACBA is wound up. The Chairman referred members to Article 11 of the ACBA Constitution – quoted here for convenience as follows:

"11. Winding up of the Association

- . (a) *The decision to wind up the Association may be taken only at an EGM.*
- . (b) *The funds of the Association shall, after the sale of all assets and the payment of all outstanding debts, be disposed of as directed by members at the final EGM. "*

The plan would be for the Committee to put a number of alternatives to the membership for a decision to be taken at an EGM.

Peter Goold asked that consideration be given to holding an ordinary members meeting to discuss the options to be put to the EGM. The Chairman said that this

suggestion would be considered by the committee but that no commitment could be given regarding its acceptance at this stage.

Another member pointed out that some existing full members might be connected to the B4RN network before others and might, therefore, cease to be ACBA members from the end of the 2016/17 year. It was, therefore, requested that a cut-off date be chosen so that all full members transferring to B4RN should be included in any apportionment of surplus ACBA funds. It was agreed that the committee would consider this request during their deliberations.

There being no further business, the formal ACBA meeting closed at 7.59 p.m.