

Chairmans Report

Annual General meeting – 18 May 2023

This is a momentous year. This is the 25th anniversary of the first AGM held by the CEC and it is the 17th for the TOC. What a journey it has been since 1998 when Liz Moore in particular decided that the abandoned Methodist Chapel should be a village asset and be refurbished and extended for the use and benefit of the community. There were many involved at that time who put in a vast amount of dedication to make the Tolmen Centre into a Community Hall for all.

For those involved in that time; many of whom have now passed on, they would be rightly proud that the CEC and The Tolmen thrive in a way which may not have been fully anticipated in those embryonic days of ownership. A significant reason for the prosperity is the structure which was established not immediately at the outset but shortly afterwards. A clear vision saw the CEC created as an owner and facilitator. A governing body if you like. The CEC is not here to be at the forefront, its presence is to ensure stability. It is here to provide solid back up and strategic direction and support, initially and most importantly, for The Tolmen and The Museum, but now for many other projects too. In respect of The Tolmen, it is the TOC who make it such a success, and it is they who should receive the plaudits for what has been done over the last 25 years in terms of performance and use of this building. I can guarantee that for everyone here there will be treasured memories of events that have taken place in this building, whether it be a party, performance, film or anything. Those memories become part of our lives and we are extraordinarily lucky to have such a place in our village.

The CEC is extremely proud of the work that the TOC through Charlie, Barbara, Dougal and the whole of their committee. There is work to do: Tracey Clowes in her resignation speech last year talked of maintenance and work to external joinery, there is a need for new kitchen facilities, there are continuous upgrades required for fire systems, accessibility requirements and the CEC will and are helping with all those. A specific word also for Peter Tatham and the work put into the garden. This was purchased by the CEC a few years ago now for the

benefit of The Tolmen and is undoubtedly a really important part of the facility and asset. Next on the list is parking!

I also commend the work that takes place tirelessly in respect of the Museum. It is a vital part of our village and those little things we took for granted in our youth now become history for the following generations. Thanks to Jacqui Hessing for all her work and that of the volunteer team.

The CEC these days is so much more than just The Tolmen, and it is important it is seen as that. Before expanding I should say that the TOC is vital to the CEC in that it is its only source of funding. Take Bosahan Woods for example, the purchase of the woods may not have happened if it weren't for the structure of the CEC, but again it is the committee and foot soldiers that put in the hard yards that make it such a desirable place to go to. Our thanks go to the work that is done through that team.

While talking on matters arboreal. The Glebe Garden is another important asset. Run by the engaged team it is going through a transformation, with development of paths, dens, camps, along with the recovery of flora into a really engaging space and one to be enjoyed by all in the village.

Transition Constantine also continues to do great work including oversight of Glebe Garden. Chris Hussey has been unwavering in his commitment and thanks go to him and his team for the sterling work done each year.

So, what about the CEC. Well, the year has been very much one of Transition. I have taken over the treasurer post from Charlie with the able assistance of Henry Shaw and Henry himself has agreed to be Company Secretary. Henry has established a new state of the art accounting system which has become vital as responsibility expands and different groups have their own funds. There is still work to do here but the technology has been put in place. The next year will allow the refinement and management of individual funds.

The CEC continues to be the central body and needs to look at defining that role for the next generation of volunteers. Many of the CEC and the host of volunteers that serve all the individual committees weren't around 25 years ago, some weren't born; so, it is important there is 21st Century structure to manage the body for them to flourish.

We are currently going through an appointment process for new trustees, I believe it vital that there is diversity in the CEC covering all ages, genders and aspects of village life, as well as all sub groups, in order that we can cover all community desires and ambitions. I invite anyone interested to come forward. We already have irons in the fire but welcome all approaches.

Finally, I must thank all the members of the CEC for their unerring work, In particular Dougal for his preparation of minutes, and Peter for his relentless passion for steering a steady course and making sure all the ships papers are in order. In addition, and most importantly, the committee formed by the trustees for their enthusiastic input and dedication to the CEC in its sole overarching direction of providing benefit to the community.

Finally was a lie. I have one more message of thanks and that is to Charlie Pugh. I mentioned earlier about how the CEC was formed. The more observant of you will have noticed that the TOC has not been going as long. It was Charlie who with others and Liz Moore set it up. He became Treasurer of the CEC at that time and helped run The Tolmen. He became an essential part of The Tolmen and effectively was the guiding light and the beacon to its success. This is not an obituary as he remains on the board of both the TOC and CEC but he has been wanting to step back from some of the duties for several years, and has finally succeeded. If I think back to some of the extraordinary performances that have taken place here over the years, they would not have taken place without you and your enthusiasm.

When I talk about Constantine to people outside the village, they are all aware of The Tolmen and the performances it puts on. It is only second in the popularity stakes to the 'whiskey shop'. The Tolmen is something which we should all be very proud, and thankyou Charlie and Barbara, and all your team for making it such. Thank you for everything you have done as Treasurer for the CEC over the last 18 years, please take a rest, put your calculator away and relax.

As a token of our appreciation we have a couple of gifts.