

Crediton Community Bookshop
BOARD MEMBERS' HANDBOOK

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objectives of Handbook

This handbook has been prepared as a useful tool for both current and prospective CCB Board members. Some of the materials included are available elsewhere as separate documents. All CCB official documents are stored on Dropbox and updated at regular intervals. Access to Dropbox will be sent to you by the Chair of the Board. In the guide you will find a number of CCB's policies as we believe that they apply to all Board members. We are committed to providing equal opportunities for Board members, staff and volunteers as fundamental to all that we do at CCB.

We hope that you will find this guide a useful document.

1.2 Mission and Objectives

Mission Statement

To provide a creative, sustainable social enterprise centred on an exceptional community bookshop whose purpose is not only to sell books but to offer a range of services that can transform lives and be of lasting benefit to the population whom we serve.

Objectives

To provide an exceptional bookshop with excellent customer service.

To act as a platform for the promotion of literature and arts and create a hub for the literary and arts community in Devon.

To strive to be a model of sustainable social enterprise.

To be an effective community-led organisation providing services and facilities identified by the community.

To provide activities and support for the improvement of reading and literacy.

To provide a robust volunteering programme.

1.3 History

The Crediton Community Bookshop began in 2012 with two community meetings which shaped the aims of the enterprise. With the help of the Plunkett Foundation we founded an Industrial and Provident Society (company registration no. IP031718) and launched a community share issue. To say 'the rest is history' is perhaps to underplay a period of intense activity and tremendous support from local individuals and organisations ... which successfully culminated in a lick of paint, the appointment of a part-time manager and suddenly we were open for business!

It became increasingly clear that our small shop at the edge of town could not provide the facilities for the business to prosper so (as in all good stories) we scaled high mountains, befriended fearsome dragons and worked hard while awaiting a timely opportunity...

Backed by a prestigious Power to Change award, we moved to a larger, more central premises where the Crediton Community Bookshop team set about developing the enterprise as a community resource including an event space for literary and arts exhibitions, a variety of workshops and development of our schools programme. Our aspiration is to become a community hub, with space for local people to host events & workshops and freelancers to work from.

Day-to-day activities are managed by our paid staff and fantastic team of volunteers who help with administrative and maintenance tasks, outreach activities, and help in the shop. Many projects are guided by our volunteers' strengths and passions.

1.4 Main funding sources

Our income comes mainly from book sales, at the shop, events and festivals, school visits and book fairs.

We are supported by small grants for specific projects.

We have income in the form of rent from the flat above the shop.

We intend to increase the diversity of our income streams by

- developing the buildings at the rear of the bookshop into a Creative Industries Work Hub and Resource Centre
- sourcing funding which expands areas of the business that can become self-sustaining
- creating a sponsorship scheme

exploring other areas of income diversification that are embraced by our mission statement.

1.5 Legal Structure

Crediton Community Bookshop was originally constituted as an Industrial and Provident Society in 2012. Following the enactment of The Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014 it became a registered society under that Act. The Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014, as it sounds, governs organisations set up as co-operatives or which operate for the benefit of the community. Registered societies are registered with and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

2 ROLE OF THE BOARD

2.1 Terms of Reference

The primary responsibilities of a CCB Board member are:

To ensure the proper administration of the business through compliance with the law and Crediton Community Bookshop Rules.

To accept ultimate responsibility for CCB

To act prudently and reasonably in all matters relating to CCB.

To safeguard and protect CCB's assets.

To act collectively as a Board, taking shared responsibility.

To act in the best interests of CCB.

To identify and make known any conflict between their personal interests and those of CCB.

Terms of Reference have been published for specific positions on the Board (e.g. Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer & Secretary). Additional task groups are formed as necessary for specific works and report to the Board.

Current versions of these Terms of Reference can be found on Dropbox

2.2 Principles of an effective board

The following principles underpin the work of the board:

- working efficiently both as individuals and as a team to deliver our organisational purpose
- exercising effective control of the organisation
- behaving with integrity at all times
- being open and accountable.

2.3 Policies of the Board

The Board endeavours to operate under the principles of the paragraphs above and comply with all relevant laws and regulations. To this end specific policies are published when considered necessary to reflect Board policy on such matters as Disclosure of Information, Intellectual Property Rights, Equal Opportunity & Diversity, etc.

Details of specific financial policies can be found in Dropbox.

The overarching financial policy of CCB can be summarised as:

Maintaining tight control of operating budgets by constant monitoring by the Manager and Treasurer. Quarterly reporting to the Chair and Board.

Planning strategic use of finances in relation to grant applications as appropriate.

Maintaining a cash reserve.

2.4 Role and Responsibilities of the Board

As a team the Board has the following role and responsibilities;

Together with the manager, the Board will set and safeguard the vision, values and reputation of CCB.

To oversee the work of CCB, through monitoring and meetings

To support the staff and volunteers as appropriate

Together with the manager to develop a long-term strategy and business plan

Together with the manager to review and amend the plan and budget as appropriate

To recruit, induct and train new Board members in line with the needs of CCB; reviewing their own performance as a Board against these needs.

To ensure that CCB complies with its legal requirements, through the use of appropriate financial and management controls.

To delegate authority to the manager and working groups as appropriate; ensuring the proper use of delegated powers.

To individually undertake any appeals and grievances as dictated by best practice and the law and/or as requested by the Chair of CCB.

NOTE: No Board members are paid for their work as it is always undertaken on a voluntary basis. They are allowed pre-agreed reasonable and receipted out-of-pocket expenses for additional events.

3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

3.1 Board Meetings

The Board meets quarterly and holds a formal AGM within 6 months of receipt of the annual accounts. Board members are elected for a term of three years after which time they must stand down, but can put themselves forward for re-election. The Board comprises no less than four and no more than 12 members.

Copies of all Board minutes can be found on Dropbox.

3.2 Exec Committee

A working group comprising key staff and, when appropriate, relevant Board members, volunteers and advisers meets monthly to address organisational and operational issues including overseeing the work of project groups on specific tasks and plans for the forthcoming period.

Copies of all Exec Committee notes can be found on Dropbox

4 WORK OF THE BOARD

4.1 Specific Role Descriptions

This Guide has a general description of the role and responsibilities of the Board as a whole as above. There are also specific role descriptions for the Chair of the Board, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary on Dropbox.

4.2 Skills of the Board

The overall skills of board members obviously vary from time to time. In general, the skills of the board need to broadly reflect the work that they undertake in section 2 above and need to be commensurate with the requirements of CCB.

4.3 Purpose of Annual General Meeting

The AGM is a legally-required meeting of the Board at which:

Board members are elected or re-elected

Annual Accounts are formally adopted

Accountants are formally appointed

The Annual report & Calendar are approved

Minutes of previous AGMs can be found on Dropbox.

4.4 Annual Report and Accounts

CCB produces an annual calendar that includes the annual report and accounts, a copy of which can be made available to board member.

4.5 Handling Complaints, Appeals and Grievances

Complaints against the Board would normally be handled by the Chief Executive and reported, if appropriate, to the Board.

If an employee (or in certain instances a volunteer) raised a grievance or appealed against a disciplinary or capability decision it could be appropriate that one or two board members are asked to hear the grievance or appeal. It would normally depend on whether a grievance was raised against another, more senior

employee or the appeal was against a decision made by the manager. A copy of the grievance procedure from the employment handbook is below.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. It is important that if you feel dissatisfied with any matter relating to your employment you should have an effective means by which such a grievance can be aired and, where appropriate, resolved.
2. Nothing in this procedure is intended to prevent you from informally raising any matter you may wish to mention. Informal discussion can frequently solve problems without the need for a written record. However, if you wish to raise a formal grievance you should normally do so in writing from the outset.
3. You have the right to be accompanied at any stage of the procedure by a fellow employee who may act as a witness or speak on your behalf to explain the situation more clearly.
4. If you feel aggrieved at any matter relating to your work (except personal harassment, for which there is a separate procedure following this section), you should first raise the matter with the person specified in your Statement of Main Terms of Employment, explaining fully the nature and extent of your grievance. You will then be invited to a meeting at a reasonable time and location at which your grievance will be investigated fully. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. You will be notified of the decision, in writing, normally within ten working days of the meeting, including your right of appeal.
5. If you wish to appeal you must inform the Chief Executive Officer within five working days. You will then be invited to a further meeting, which you must take all reasonable steps to attend. As far as reasonably practicable, the Trust will be represented by a more senior Manager than attended the first meeting (unless the most senior Manager attended that meeting).
6. Following the appeal meeting you will be informed of the final decision, normally within ten working days, which will be confirmed in writing.

5 RECRUITMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS

5.1 Recruitment Decision

The decision to recruit new board members will depend on the skills and numbers of those required on the board and the resignation of members. The decision to recruit new members will be taken by the Chair of the Board.

Good practice in advertising for possible candidates will involve a wide variety of sources in order to increase diversity of backgrounds, experience and knowledge.

5.2 Interview format and panels

There is no reason not to follow good practice in interviewing, questioning and selection as used for candidates for employment. Panels for interviewing of potential Board members should therefore be made of at least 2 people, preferably 3, of which one should be the Chair or Vice Chair and another the manager if possible.

As far as possible the panel should be made of a mix of genders and race.

Questions should be based on whether the candidate is fulfilling a specific role on the board or a more general one. The format and questions should be broadly the same if a number of candidates are interviewed to ensure fairness and equality.

5.3 Conflicts of interest

All board candidates should consider whether they have any possible conflicts of interest with the aims and objectives of CCB and raise them as soon as they arise.

6 INDUCTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Useful Documents

6.1 Current business plan

The current business plan can be found in Dropbox

6.2 Contact Details

Each new Board member will be given access to contact details of Board and key staff.

These will be stored in Dropbox

6.3 Training/Development of New Trustees

Each new Board member will be asked to consider what training and/or development they would like to undertake on an individual basis. Other training may be undertaken on a group basis.

6.4 Dates of Board meetings

Forthcoming dates for Board meetings can be found on Dropbox