

# Newtown Community Association – What’s been happening? – Annual Report 2017

The past year has been an important milestone for Newtown Community Association in which we have celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, re-registered with the Charities Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (similar to a limited company and which limits the financial liability of our trustees), received planning consent for a revised new community building, hopefully raised sufficient funds to build it and begun that process.

Throughout the year the choir, social café and qigong groups have met and/or performed regularly, Sunday table-top swap cafes, the annual craft fayre and Winter Warmer events have been successfully held and the hut has been used an equivalent of at least once every day of the year (including Christmas Day!), and regularly 3 or 4 times in a single day. Our user groups continue to represent all ages and the multi-cultural nature of our community. The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event



held in conjunction with Transition Exeter’s 10 mile community feast was a great event combining imaginative home produced food with music from local musicians and drama written for the occasion by James Cotter a local playwright. The sun shone and over 100 community members of all ages enjoyed the celebration together, reflecting the constitutional aims of NCA. Our thanks go

particularly to Jackie Holdstock, our long serving hut bookings secretary, who has stood down from the role and we wish her well on her planned travels. Julia Crockett has now stepped in to the role and is already filling the calendar for 2018. It is of course essential that hut users appreciate their responsibilities in order that we can continue to have this facility for the benefit of the local community.



Our major focus for 2018 will be to take the ‘Vision’ building project through to completion and we are now well on the way with our Principal Designer and Architect, Simon Spencer, appointed and working to complete the finalized design submission for Building Regulations approval, tendering for the timber frame construction company complete and a further tender process for the main contractor underway. Our structural engineer has been appointed, tree protection survey completed and negotiations led by our appointed solicitor are underway with Exeter City Council to agree the necessary lease arrangements for building and on completion. We will be maintaining the availability of the current hut while the new building is constructed though inevitably there will be some impact on accessibility and a level of noise and disruption due to the construction activity. For neighbours and regular park users please be assured that we will be doing our best to make sure that this is kept to the minimum reasonably possible and we will be making sure that our builders meet all the requirements of the planning consent with regard to managing any noise and restriction on access. We are fully committed to making sure that temporary damage to pathways and grassed areas is repaired on completion and are hopeful that beyond the establishment of a new

'fit for purpose' and energy efficient community building, there will also be improvement to the park itself in due course. We are already supporting the development of a revised plan for the play equipment and fund raising led by Friends of Belmont Park. If you or any one you know has concerns about the building activity please do get in touch through our email [secretary@newtowncommunity.org.uk](mailto:secretary@newtowncommunity.org.uk) or the hut bookings number 07847 229194. Indeed, do get in touch if you have ideas and/or want to get involved with the community association, we would welcome your participation.

### **Change of Charity status**

NCA converted from an unincorporated charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The process was to develop a new constitution, following one of the Charity Commission models, and then register the new body, which was done on 8 June 2017 as charity no: 117331. Then at the last General Meeting of the old charity, held on 11 September 2017, members agreed to close the old charity and transfer assets to the new CIO. This was achieved, and the old charity (no: 299529) was registered as "Removed – funds transferred" on 26 November 2017. Note that for simplicity, the annual financial report covers the whole of 2017.

The name – Newtown Community Association (Exeter, Devon) – remains the same, and the Charitable Objects are the same. The reason for making the change was to implement limited liability for the Trustees and Members.

The other change is to Membership. The rules for Membership are now much simpler; Trustees must also be Members; organisations are Members through a representative person. There is a new requirement to establish a Register of Members, and to manage this Register in compliance with relevant legislation. People of any age can be Members (and now Trustees only need to be 16 or over). Membership is open to anyone who is interested in furthering the purposes of the NCA. The constitution makes explicit reference to Newtown and neighbouring area as the area of benefit.

### **Reach and engagement**

Five copies of Newtown News were produced during 2017. James Cotter did a great job in re-starting this, and has now handed over to Ella Westland. James continues to run the social media.

We have 410 followers on Twitter. One tweet for example was seen by 964 people and it engaged 12 with it. Which means clicked on a link.

On Facebook we have 307 likes on the page. All posts are different with how often they are viewed but one post was seen by 518 people. Some are only seen by 112 but have a number of engagements included being shared which increases the chances of being seen by a wider range of people.

The website <http://newtowncommunity.org.uk/> continues to be managed by Peter Montgomery, though this needs to be changed early in 2018.

## **NCA Belmont Hut Bookings for 2017**

Through the year 127 parties, special events, and one-off meetings were held, and one extended family booked the hut for all of Christmas Day so they could all eat together. They apparently had a brilliant time!

### **Regular groups and classes included:**

Malaylee Association  
Bulgarian families  
Greek School  
German families  
French classes  
Saudi Community gatherings  
Spanish classes  
SGI-UK Buddhist gatherings  
Home Education activities  
Woodcraft Folk - two groups per week  
Green Party meetings  
Pilates - two sessions per week  
Hatha Yoga - two sessions per week  
Piano practice - two plus sessions per week  
Dance practice  
Tango classes  
and many Violin lessons

### **NCA activities:**

Qigong - two sessions per week  
Choir  
Social Cafe