

Chair's Report

This Report covers just some of our activities and achievements during the financial year that ended 30 September 2019. However, the report comes at a time when the Hub has been closed due to the Covid-19 lockdown. The positive story from last year should provide some comfort at this difficult time.

The past reporting year was marked by a further consolidation of the Melbourn Community Hub in terms of both its financial strength and also through increased services to the public. The financial position showed a notable improvement. The underlying health of the business grew much stronger during the year. In particular our engagement with the public was never better.

Our Board of Directors has remained unchanged compared to the previous year. This stability has enabled us to deliver the operating plan in a very effective way. Similarly, the **Staff Team**, both Centre Manager and Catering functions, are benefitting from ever increasing experience and familiarity with the business. Lastly, our **Volunteers** remain the backbone of support to everything that the Hub provides, both in the *Bookmark Café* and the Library Access Point. My sincere thanks goes to everyone who has given their heart and soul to help make the enterprise a success.

Overview of the Year – footfall continued to steadily increase, with many new faces continuously adding to the number of visitors to our vibrant Bookmark Café. With the support of the Melbourn Parish Council the Hub management were able to give the café area a wonderful facelift during 2019, replacing all old seating both inside and outside the building. Coupled with this investment the Hub frontage was landscaped with added space to the external terrace area. These changes received excellent feedback from customers. Some significant special events during the year really benefitted from these improvements.

Healthcare and related initiatives assumed increased importance. These included regular sessions from MIND, the mental health charity and 'open-door' free access to the NHS service *Everyone Health* team, together with consultations and 'one off' presentations from hospital specialists on subjects ranging from dementia to breast health. In particular the Hub has begun developing a partnership with the locally driven support organisation *Community Support for Dementia*. The East of England Ambulance Service also regularly uses the Hub for meetings and training.

To summarise, our financial position continued to improve, although it remains difficult to break even on costs. Meanwhile the Hub engagement with and support to the community – our core mission as a registered charity – continued to expand and grow deeper roots.

Outlook and the future – It was hoped that 2020 and the year that followed would see a number of significant changes, as the Hub adapts to higher customer numbers and shifting demands for local services. The improvements planned are an upgrade the Hub kitchen, changing the layout and increasing the range of equipment. Another project hopes to create a two-floor storage annex by enclosing the rear foyer space. In 2021 we are scheduled to finally execute the approved planning that exists to increase and upgrade meeting rooms, storage space and staff facilities. These plans are all funded. We look forward to the time when these improvements begin to positively impact our financial position. More importantly, the changes will underpin the on-going utility of the Melbourn Hub to local residents and organisations.

Our future success is now dependent on the outcome of the present Covid-19 crisis. The Hub management team sincerely wish all our customers, staff and volunteer helpers the very best of health during these uncertain times. We look forward with the greatest anticipation to reopening the Hub to even greater success when the current emergency is over.