

## Annual General Meeting of the Charity Retail Association

Tuesday 21 November 2023, 10am – 3.30pm, Hilton Leeds City, Neville Street, LS1 4BX

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### 1. Welcome and introduction

Emma Peake, Chair, Charity Retail Association, welcomed all and thanked the event sponsors for their support for the event, and ran through the agenda.

### 2. Supporting People to Drive Success by Nat Kidd, Business Development Manager, Acorns Children's Hospice (presentation available with these minutes and on the CRA website)

Acorns Children's Hospice was founded 1988 and is made up of 3 hospices costing £11m per annum to run. They run 45 shops.

Acorns retail's aim is to 'provide sustainable profit to provide care' and they do this via donated sales and Gift Aid only – the 'Shop Gift Model'. They achieve this aim via SPICE: *Supporting People to drive Income in the Community through Empowerment*. Acorns have a 3-year People Plan.

#### **The People Plan: 'Maximising profit to provide care by enabling shop teams'**

#### **The plan includes a:**

- New management structure
- Business coach for the Retail Senior Leadership Team
- Effective and regular communications and surveying of staff and volunteers
- Managers Working Group
- Values Awards (monthly, quarterly, annual)

**Pay and benefits:** These are benchmarked against national charity retail chains, especially locally, as Acorns aim to be the best. They are now a Real Living Wage employer.

They have introduced wellbeing initiatives, such as rolling out the CRA's Retail Trust provision to volunteers. They have also introduced bonuses based on My Career (the annual review system).

**Recruitment:** Acorns have established 'Welcome Days', 'Hiring for Retention' courses and implemented a new induction programme. On the Welcome Day you get to meet the CEO.

Acorns aim to have 'a great number one and a great number two' i.e., shops manager and assistant shop manager in every shop. They do this through talent mapping – asking the question 'Does the person have the ability and will to work at a higher level? They have also successfully taken on Kickstarters and apprentices.

There is an identified talent pathway – a route from volunteer all the way through to retail director.

**Performance standards:** Acorns conduct mystery shopper audits – where they celebrate the 100%. They also conduct business development visits, use My Career annual reviews, and implement Personal Improvement Plans.

**Training and development:** Acorns Academy has courses such as ‘9 things that leaders do’, ‘Wellbeing’ and ‘Coaching in the moment’.

**Volunteering:** There are new recruitment materials –where Acorns took into consideration what process people would prefer when applying to volunteer, asking questions such as ‘what should the landing page be?’

There are dozens of volunteer recruitment events with branded tools provided by the hospice to be able to do this.

Acorns have provision for young persons’ volunteering, corporate volunteering and those on probation.

They have 60 ‘Key Volunteers’ over 45 shops, who are in a great position to become new employees.

Almost all of the shops have been refitted to ensure it’s a nice space to sit down and have a cup of tea for volunteer breaks.

### **Outcomes: Acorns have achieved:**

- More volunteers – 30% up compared to pre-pandemic
- More Gift Aid – 48% with integrity, which is independently audited
- More sales – £800K 4 years ago – last year £1.9m with the same shops, which includes investing £500K in retail staff pay.
- A well-motivated workforce – they are surveyed every two weeks, and Acorns can get comparisons to other organisations that use the platform ‘Winning Temp’.
- Good retention - Only one member of staff left retail in 2022

They have shown that by investing in your people you should achieve sustainable profit to provide care.

### **Questions and answers**

**Q: How do you manage to survey your people very two weeks?**

A: Winning Temp (a platform)

**Q: What about volunteer retention**

A: Acorns don’t have an accurate way of measuring this – but the number of active volunteers is growing and they’re doing more hours as a group.

**Q: What do shop managers get paid?**

A: Doesn’t know on average but it starts at the Real Living Wage. Shop managers pay is dependent on how much the shop takes. The hours of the deputy shop manager increase as the shop gets busier.

**Q: Is retail staff pay benchmarked against hospice staff pay?**

A: No

**3. Approval of the Minutes of the 16 November 2022 Annual General Meeting** (These had been circulated with the AGM papers)

**Proposer:** Dawn Dungate, East London Textiles

**Seconded:** Gavin Anderson-Terry, Weldmar Hospicecare

**4. Approval of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023** (These had been circulated with the AGM papers)

**Proposer:** Robin Osterley, Charity Retail Association

**Seconded:** Terry Gardner, Acopia

**5. Notification of retiring Directors and Elections to the Board**

- There have been no resignations since the last AGM
- There has been a reconstitution of the Board. Historically *all* directors were elected from membership, but now certain skill sets have been bolstered by the following co-opted appointments:
  - Director of Sustainability: Alex Sutton
  - Director of Public Affairs: James Martin
  - Director of EDI: Ruth Blayze from Scope has moved from a Category C Board position to this position.
- There is a Category C vacancy due to Ruth Blayze's move to Director of EDI, for which the election period is taking place at the time of writing.
- There was a previous Category C vacancy to which Dermot McGilloway of St Vincent de Paul Ireland was elected.

**6. Appointment of accountants for the Company**

Robin proposed Kingston Smith, the current accountants and put their case to attendees.

**Proposer:** Robin Osterley, Charity Retail Association

**Seconded:** David Longmore, Barnardo's

**7. Review of the Year by Robin Osterley, Chief Executive, Charity Retail Association (presentation available with these minutes and on the CRA website)**

Robin's presentation referred to 2022-23 finances and up to date activities.

**Summary:** The CRA now has 489 members running 9776 shops. Robin showed graphs demonstrating the generally upward trend in numbers of members and income – with a slight downturn in 2022 due to the shop closures following Covid-19 lockdowns. Robin also ran through the CRA's achievements over the past year.

Jobs still to do include a new website, a new strategic plan, more events around SROI and celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRA.

The 2022-23 financials are good, but upcoming expensive activities (including the new website and investment in The Charity Shop Gift Card) mean the CRA needs to raise membership fees after 6 years of being held.

Overall, the CRA's finances remain in excellent health and there are substantial reserves. Robin finished by thanking all who help – staff, members, those who volunteer their time for the CRA, and partner organisations.

### **8. The Big Help Out by Jeremy Hughes CBE, Convenor, Better Communities**

**Summary:** The Big Help Out is about giving time rather than money. 2023's event was the first one and it was held on the bank holiday weekend of the coronation. Charity retail was a key part of it. A platform was developed with Do-It. 7.2m people took part. 67% said they were more likely to volunteer again and there were lots of great statistics in terms of engagement. There was a large amount of celebrity endorsement (Jeremy played a video demonstrating this) and, of course, royal backing.

The Big Help Out will run again in 2024, with fewer royals, but more time to plan. It will take place on the final weekend of Volunteers' Week, Friday 7 to Sunday 9 June. There will be improvements to the platform in terms of accessibility, searchability and links to participating charity volunteer management systems. There will also be an emphasis on linking up with voluntary organisations across all UK nations. There will be further emphasis on areas with little volunteering.

There is an established partnership with the BBC for extensive coverage, and corporate partners such as ASDA have committed. The provisional public launch is 30 January, when charities will be invited to start populating the platform.

## **The meeting broke for lunch and networking**

### **9. Charity Retail Association strategic plan: the next three years – group work and discussion – Robin Osterley, Chief Executive, Charity Retail Association**

Attendees filled in a grid on flip chart sheets about priorities for the next CRA strategic plan. Grid information will be collated with similar input from repeats of this exercise in other CRA forums.

### **10. Winter Warmers and Charity Retail Association by Tracey Robbins, Head of UK Delivery, Eden Project Communities**

Tracey introduced the diverse and sustainable work of Eden Project Communities, such as The Big Lunch and Winter Warmers, and how the charity retail sector can get involved. The presentation is available with these minutes and on our website.

### **11. Final Questions**

**Q - Will the presentations be made available**

**A - Yes**

## **Close of Meeting**