Herefordshire Board Gamers
AGM 2020-2021
4/7/21 19:30

The Committee

- Chair : Ad Best
- Vice chair: Elaine Best
- Secretary: James Brandt
- Treasurer: Michael McCulloch
- Public relations: Emma Bardo
- Diversity / Child Protection: Nathan O'Grady

No officer changes so no elections required

Plus over 12 other key members

All ideas and volunteers welcome, this is a community, and we want it to work for you

Successes

- Fully reinvented from analogue to digital
- Grew, and maintained attendance
- 100s of events up from 30.
- Winter had only a few days each month without an event
- Doubled the number of guides (15)
- 5 radio interviews (some may be in last year)
- Interviewed by the UK Games Expo (third largest games convention in the world)
- Mental health article in Tabletop Gaming (international magazine)
- Growth of social events, paddle boarding, skating, gaming at the loft
- Growth of community and Discord
- £500 Welsh Water grant for accessible events
    - (£450 previous grants supporting the library)
- Stronger rules / code of conduct
- New helpers
- Community Charity Exercise Challenge
- Mental Health guide

WHERE DO BOARD GAMES FIT IN YOUR MENTAL HIERACHY OF HAPPINESS?

Adam Best takes us through the ways board games can help with mental health and happiness, and how we can all look after one another a little bit better

Words by **Adam Best**

I started Herefordshire Board Gamers five years ago to provide a safe, inclusive gaming space, to give back to the community and to raise money for charity (with just shy of £10,000 raised for Herefordshire Mind.) We also started a free community lending library a year ago as a way of providing more free social experiences and have nearly 250 items, which was invaluable during lockdown. We have also made lifesize (as in, you are the playing pieces) versions of *Tsuro*, *Hey That's My Fish* and *Terror in Meeple City*. We've taken them to a number of conventions around the country to help raise awareness and excitement about our hobby.

Being open about mental health issues and fundraising for Mind means we probably talk about this more than other communities. In the past 18 months we've helped several of our members who were dealing with a mental health crisis. We try to stay aware of our community's mental wellbeing – and I fear these incidents are usually happening behind closed doors with folks not getting support.

I hope we all agree gaming is good for our mental health, and a good community will help with the love, belonging and esteem stages of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. While I'm not a mental health professional, I wanted to offer some tips for supporting your friends, family and gaming community.

Build your culture to be open and honest. Support people in talking and demonstrate you can listen. Foster a positive culture which doesn't 'punch down' when encouraging people to talk about sensitive topics without fear of ridicule.

The most important thing is to keep an eye on each other and watch for behavioural changes, such as – if a regular stops attending, a usually happy, cheerful person becomes more negative or a quiet person suddenly becomes louder. These are key indicators something has changed. It may be nothing but a reaching out may really help.

Don't be frightened to ask if people are ok. In the current online world it is easier than ever to quietly check in on people. If you are seriously worried about someone, ask them if they are safe. If someone is in a bad place asking if they are safe will not make it worse and will help, as they know someone cares and wants to listen.

Remember everyone is different and has different needs – introverts vs extroverts. Those who prefer lighter games or heavier games. High energy vs exhausted by the time they arrive at games night. Be supportive, non-judgemental and mix up the type of games you play. Supporting your friends and family think about the playing environment. Dragging your introvert friend who is struggling to a busy and noisy pub may not work, whereas inviting them to a quiet park may.

Empower people. If someone wants to run a quiz, or a tournament support them if you can. Let them run their passion projects. They will likely enjoy it and give them an outlet. This can help take the load off the organisers and provide a wider range of events. Try to remember a games group shouldn't be a mirror of your exact taste.

When empowering people, it is important to make sure they have the support structure to help them, so perhaps make sure your code of conduct is up to date and there is a clear escalation and communication path. Sometimes social games i.e. 'would you rather?' or 'what would you choose?' can be great icebreakers and allow you to learn more about each other and let deeper conversations occur naturally. Keep this optional as this won't be for everyone

Make sure you actually listen to the person. Be careful to not belittle their experience. It's very tempting to offer examples or comparisons from your own life but try not to do this as it can take the focus of them and make it about you or others the person in crisis needs to be listened to right now. Show you are listening by rephrasing what they are telling you.

I like to think for every crisis or problem we had, our friendly welcoming community prevented many more. Keep on gaming, being kind to each other and the world will be a better place. You don't need to overthink the above, just keep an eye for danger signs and support each other.

Further Reading

More information

- https://herefordshireboardgamers.co.uk/6-month-look-back/
- https://herefordshireboardgamers.co.uk/lock-down-one-year-one-its-been-a-hell-of-a-year/

UK Games Expo Interview

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yzPFQ23dtA

https://herefordshireboardgamers.co.uk/mental-health-and-communities/

Finances 2020-2021

- Club Account: £12.50
- Project grants: £500

Income:

- £5 left from Tankard sales in 2020
- £30 donation

Out goings:

- £22.50 Meetup (Every 6 months we pay ¼ of a subscription between two other groups.)

Other costs:

- Website: Every three years (split hosting costs with other groups I manage their websites for. We can further split the costs and share hosting with other game groups.)
- URL: Annual

Charity £4,018.02 (over £11,178.57 total)

May event:

- £1,626.92 (mostly raffle) (£1,877.19)
- £22 May Quiz (£27)

Misc:

- £30 June donation (£37.50)
- £86.66 Exercise challenge (£105.83)
- £325 Playtesting donation Jan 2021 (£325)
- £30 Merchandise (£33.75)

Minor events:

- £130 Feb Charity game day (£167.50)
- £195 July charity game day. (£237)
- £215 August Game day (£262)
- £140 July birthday party! (£175)
- £120 November (£128.25)
- £87.50 Quiz Dec (£111.25)
- £390.50 Raffle Dec (£468.25)
- £50 Bring and buy Dec (£62.50)
- £130 Feb Charity game day (£167.50)

mind
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Herefordshire

(Gift Aid total)

Herefordshire Mind is our permanent charity

Next year I will ask for feedback on having a second temporary charity

Games Library

- 200+ Board Games
- 30+ Puzzles
- 5+ RPGs
- Tabletop magazines
- Mental health books

Dedicated website created!

Herefordshire

Role Play Gamers

- Over 34 different systems run
- Two players levelled up from players to storytellers (DM / GM)

Systems played: Alice is missing, Alien, Are you my soul mate? Call of Chtulhu, Dungeon Crawl Classics, Cyber Punk classic, Delta Green, Dungeons and Dragons, Dungeon World, Fiasco, Forget about it,, Honey Heist, Hostile, Hypertellions,, Masks, Mork Borg, Mothership, Mutant year zero, Parslings, Savage worlds Adventurer and Explorer, Short lived Shenanigans, Soul mates., View scream, Warhammer Fantasy role play, We are room mates now, Zombie World, Warhammer 40k (FFG) , Paranoia, Dungeon Hearts, Honey Heist, Last Fleet.

Sponsors

Library Sponsors

Asmodee UK
Big Potato Games
Stuff By Bez
Welsh Water
Bed Sit Games
https://sussedcardgames.com/
Haba
Zatu Games

Event Sponsors

Foundry VTT Community
Sussed Card Games
Coiledspring Games
Board Game Arena
https://www.partylite.co.uk/
Big Potato
Cubicle 7 Entertainment
Stuff By Bez
Surprised Stare Games Ltd
Zatu Games
Chaos Cards
Goodmen Games
Chaosium
Franks Luxury Biscuits
Personalisedstore (Etsy)
https://luckyduckgames.com/
https://www.haba.de/en_GB
https://www.bedsitgames.co.uk/
https://czechgames.com/
3T-RPG-Publishing

Goals

- Accessibility / Inclusion
- Growth
- Community
- Funding the club
- Charity
- In person
- Library
- Share the hobby
- Long term

We need help

- We need your ideas, feedback, eyes on articles and adverts

Goal: Accessibility / Inclusion

- Update Safeguarding Policy
- Review Code of Conduct
- Review all materials and guides for accessibility
- Optional Pronouns identifier on Discord
- Member articles or interviews (we have one to publish)
- Grant for accessible venue

Goal: Growth

- Advertising ideas?
  - Local word of mouth is key
  - Sharing / like on social media is critical
- How to advertise, targeting all age groups
- Actively challenging the negative stereotypes
  - “Games are just for children”
  - “Games are boring / aren’t fun”
  - “Game clubs are unwelcoming”
  - “Games aren’t for me”
  - “Games are for nerds”
  - “Games are complicated”
- Dedicated / focused events / Introductory events.

Goal: Community

- Engage with community groups
  - Hereford Make CIC
  - Work closer with other game clubs
  - Closer ties to HVOSS and Hereford business groups
  - Schools / communities

- Grow the Discord
- Member articles or interviews (we have one to publish)
- Secret Summer Santa (Sign up this month)
- Beyond the city- market towns?

Goal: Funding the club

- Donations
- Tankards

Home Beverages
2021 Vaccine edition

Other ideas?

RPG tankard too?

Goal: Charity

- Mega charity event May 2022
- Minor charity events each quarter
- 24 hour game a thon
- Exercise challenge
- Quizzes
- More?
- Ideas?

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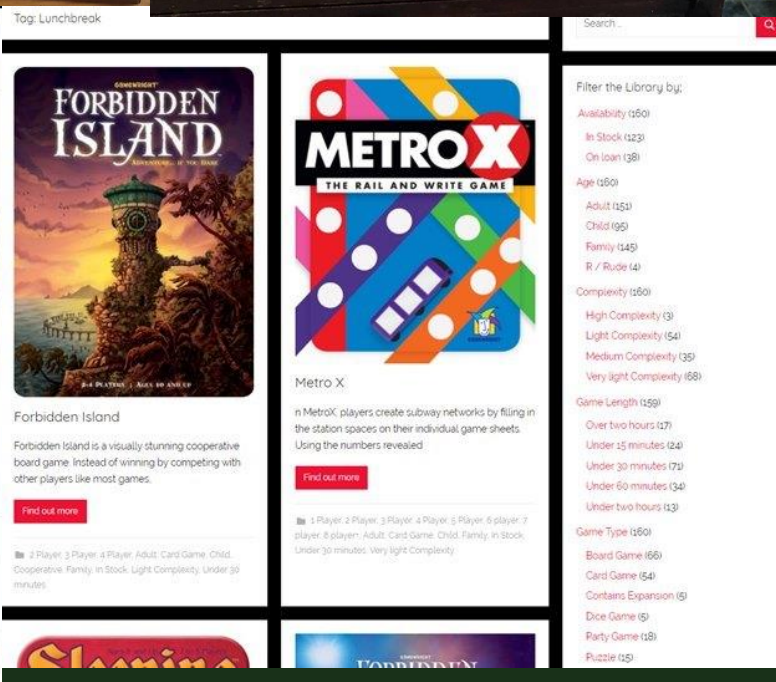
Goal: Back to in person gaming

- First official planned in person event(5th August provisional)
- We will be staying online as well (schedule to be decided)
- Discord community here to stay
- Support adhoc events with our library

Goal: Use the Library

- What next?
- How do we grow?
- Links to communities plus? (currently only lend to individuals)



Goal: Share the hobby

- More guides (board games for weddings is planned)
- Accessible venue event(s) (grant from Welsh Water)
- Gamer friendly venues list

Long term

- Change the legal format. CIC / CA / CIO?
  - More paperwork but more options
  - Enable us to get more grants

Gaming schedule

- First Thursday (Hopefully in person 5/8/21)
- Every other Monday (Online 12/7/21)
- Third Sunday (Online 19/7/21)

Schedule to be reviewed

Thank you for all your help and support
The successes and community is down to all of us

Next steps

- Read Our mental Health guide: https://herefordshireboardgamers.co.uk/mental-health-and-communities/
- Join the discord
- Use share the library
- Join the community exercise challenge
- Use the communities to organize your own events
- Join the secret santa

Minutes

Committee members present - Ad, Emma, Mike, James (Cousin)**, Elaine, Nathan, Peter, Andrew (Thiima), Vix, Andrew (Norse)
Non-committee members present - Toby, James (Science), Ollie

Start time: 19:37

No elections or change of roles scheduled before start of meeting
Toby inducted as diversity officer (Split role from Current safeguarding officer)
James (Cousin) volunteered as librarian during meeting
Discussion of successes
Treasurer's report
Best ever money raised for charity by £700
Potentially more quizzes (online and/or in person)
Second charity potentially
Games Library & Sponsors
Discussion of future goals:

Accessibility/inclusion -
review safeguarding & code of conduct
Grant for accessible venue; search around a bit
Nathan to host meeting solely on diversity/ LGBTQ+ and other inclusion
Pronouns and interests channel on discord
Potential need for UBS checks

Growth -
Work on advertising
Combat negative stereotypes by doing specific events and some more family orientated ideas and maybe going into schools/colleges*
Outside reaches of Hereford city

Community -
Engaging with other communities (Hereford make blacksmithing etc)
Work more closely with other games groups
*Offer to run games as a reward scheme and/or have a youth ambassador in more interested sites
Secret Summer Santa
Grow discord
Funding the club -
Push donations a bit better i.e. QR code at in person events
RPG tankards + tagline
Potentially use HB bank account more

Minutes

Charity -
Continuing with the incredible effort from previous year but more ideas welcome

Back to in-person gaming -
Provisionally planned 5th August as first in person event
Online platform staying (probably once a month, not including one off events) as well as discord
Reporting system (anonymous or otherwise) for incidents minor or otherwise
Suggestion/feedback box

Use library -
Relationship with larger companies
e.g. geek retreat run HB night on site? Give them a list of proposals of how to support each other
Official librarian role?

Share hobby -
Venue and safe spaces list for other gamers safe
More guides

Long term -
Changing legal format to CIC/CA/CIO?
Means more paperwork but probably worth it
More grants available
Research and make decision potentially next AGM

Conflict and de-escalating training for dealing with negative events effectively to be looked into

End Time: 21:32

Actions

- Review code of conduct
- Discuss the option of a second temporary charity
- Work on advertising, help and ideas needed
- Working with communities
- Hereford Make CIC activity event
- Actively combat negative stereotypes
- Host meeting centred around LGBTQ+, inclusion and diversity
- Host meeting regarding safeguarding
- Tankards for sale to raise club funds & RPG tagline
- Look into a relationship with the geek retreat and other game groups and communities
- Set up an incident report system for in person and online events
- Construct a list of venues and safe spaces
- Run more quizzes (interest dependent)
- Secret Summer Santa
- Effective conflict de-escalation training
- Put some thought and research into becoming a CIC or other format (long term)