



**Minutes from the first Raincliffe Wood Community Enterprise AGM
15th April 2015 (6.00pm to 8.00pm)
Venue: Barrowcliff School**

In attendance:

- Interim Board (5 of 8)
- Nominees for Board going forward (6 of 6)
- Members (48 of 119)
- Interested parties (11)

The following provides a brief note of the first RWCE AGM - associated papers are attached/post on the website alongside these notes (www.communitywoods.org.uk) including:

- Chairman's report
- Financial paper
- List of Interim board members and nominated board member

(Hard copies of the paperwork is available for collection from Claire Robinson @ The Street)

Introduction:

Cllr Bill Chatt opened proceedings by introducing Robert Sword our current Chairman of the RWCE Interim Board and Claire Robinson, Interim Company Secretary RWCE Board and outlining the agenda for the evening.

Chairman's Report (see Chairman's report)

Robert Sword talked attendees through his report pointing out highlights of the Enterprise's journey to-date and in particular paying tribute to the conviction of our founder member, John Bradley and his colleagues for reaching the Enterprise's current level of achievement/progress.

Robert noted that with the granting of an initial one year licence from SBC, our key driver moving forward is to demonstrate the positive impact RWCE can have on the woodland and within its local community/ies by listening and engaging key interest groups, current users and potential new audiences.

Financial Statement:

Claire Robinson presented a brief overview of the finances of RWCE from October 2013 to March 2015.

She noted the current balance: £69 (minus the expenditure of the AGM meeting expenses).

She thanked Sarah Thornton for undertaking the role of interim Treasurer and confirmed we would be seeking to appoint a new treasurer at the first board meeting.



Q&A:

- A question was raised around the sum stated for Security: The Security stated as £2,245 was to a consultative company supporting a grant application NOT 'security' services.
- Claire clarified Director Expenses (£945) included a wide range of expenditure: eg travel reimbursement when excessive travel had been required and where Directors had covered substantial bills such as insurance. Details available on request.

Main Agenda Item: Appoint Nominees, Appointed, Co-opted and Elected Directors

Cllr Bill Chatt thanked Robert for his report and his work over the last few months. He formally took charge of the meeting as the outgoing Chair.

Bill moved the meeting on to the main agenda item: the confirmation of our formal board members moving forward.

As per the information tabled, Bill noted the position of the interim Board and the process for election of the new 'Member' Board Directors - all Directors noted below will have full voting rights on the formal Board moving forward from this meeting:

SBC Nominated representative	Cllr Bill Chatt
SBC Nominated representative	Cllr Andrew Jenkinson
Newby and Scalby Parish Council representative	Remains under negotiation
Barrocliff Community Representative	Roy Blenkin
Expert Appointed	Mark Feather
Expert Appointed	Remains vacant
Co-opted Special Adviser	Mark Pickering
Co-opted Special Adviser	Robert Sword

Following a fair and open application process, RWCE received 6 nominations to the position of Member Director – as this number did not exceed the number of positions vacant Cllr Chatt requested a show of hands at the meeting to ensure there was a majority in favour of their immediate election. This process confirmed the election of:

Member Director	Ron Baxter (28 votes for counted)
Member Director	Tom Mutton (37 votes for counted)
Member Director	Matt Osburn (44 votes for counted)
Member Director	Julie Stewart (37 votes for counted)
Member Director	Tricia Colling (43 votes for counted)
Member Director	Steve Parker (42 votes for counted)



All Member Directors were welcomed on to the board

(No votes against or abstaining where counted or made).

Questions from the Floor

Q1: There was a concern about the over-working of the woodland, the over-use by 'interest groups' such as bikers - there was a plea to ensure the woods be managed as a place of tranquillity and reflection - used most lovingly by walkers, and those who cared significantly about the woodland being left to mother nature wherever possible.

A1: Bill reassured Members that the plans would allow for sensitive management of the land - but management was essential to help maintain, restore and re-introduce Broadleaf etc. There were areas under SSSI protection and the Board would be responsible for the approval of all management and development plans hereafter. Bill stressed the land/plans needed to be developed by, and supportive of **all** users – each caring for the forest area as deeply as the next.

Q2: Wood Extraction - the present Board were asked directly to state plans for wood extraction - there are a number of figures being discussed within the community which are shockingly high - this is creating a nervousness amongst supporters.

A2: Bill answered the question by stating wood extraction figures have **not** been finalised as yet. We have the logging Championship felling figures but nothing further has been finalised. Bill confirmed the wood extraction would not reach the figures mooted at the meeting. All wood extraction would be undertaken sympathetically (eg John B currently exploring horse extraction etc).

Q3: Educational Work: The questioning Member stated the success of the Secret Wood events and their engagement of families and young people - these were to be applauded and continue. BUT in terms of further engagement of school groups the lack of essential facilities (toilets) was a major barrier to engagement.

A3: Once we have the opportunity to apply for funds (through grant/trust applications) we will be looking at essential developments. A simple solution to limited toilet facilities would be a significant

addition to the wood and its use by school groups. We will look into eco-friendly solutions when doing this - the sawmill site may lend itself for this kind of development in time.

Q4: Educational Work: continuing with this theme we were questioned about plans to improve general public education (young, old, families etc) to ensure the woods is properly appreciated and looked after.



A4: We appreciate at present there are those who abuse and/or are not appreciative of the woods natural beauty - but we have a growing number of members who we hope will be actively supportive of us developing a 'general public' education programme. Possibly looking at the

development of volunteer 'Woodland Champions', appropriate signage and information boards, notices/requests etc.

Q5: Why does this plan have to happen at all?

A5: the management of the wood is essential - 'do nothing' is not an option - it could potentially lead to the wood dying, over felling as people 'helped themselves', degradation and loss of woodland and wildlife and of course H&S. Our plans are about restoring ancient broadleaf woodland, supporting the development and diversification of wildlife, engaging more interest and use of the wood from 'informed' users; protecting the interests of the wood/area so that it is preserved for future generations.

Tom Mutton talked about continuous cover - not of felling/clearing significant areas but managing the careful wilding and thinning of areas to allow new growth.

Our discussion broadened to include concern around 'over commercialism' of the area - this is not the intention of the Board and re-creating Daulby/Hill Holt is not on the plans at all. Any development of a 'facility' if required is likely to be seen on the brownfield site (the current sawmill area). We were described by one member as being on a knife edge in terms of the development – if we get the balance right between use and maintenance we will have many happy years in which to enjoy the wood.

Q6: Footpaths/walkways need maintenance and careful planning to ensure they do not over-take or spoil the woods

A6: We are aware that the planning, development and maintenance of pathways for different user groups will need careful consultation with those groups directly – the board will need to ensure sympathetic and collaborative planning is undertaken to allow users to effectively co-exist. Disabled access was discussed and will need to be factored appropriately into plans.

Conclusion:

Bill thanked the members for their attendance, continued commitment and support. He noted any previous mis-communications, mixed messages and especially negative discussions between user groups needed to be put to bed in the interests of moving forward together.

We are at the beginning of a really really exciting partnership, with huge potential to develop something very special for ourselves, our children and their families.

We will ensure we continue to communicate through the website and hope to see everyone soon.