

## MINUTES

### Present:

Robert Sword (RS) - Chair, Roy Blenkin (RB), Dave Evans (DE), Karl Gerhardsen (KG), Stephen Parker (SP), Robert Peacock (RP), Julie Stewart (JS)

### In attendance

Rich McGuinn (RM) – Hidden Horizons Ltd, Mark Feather (MF) - Woodland Trust, Angela Doherty (AD) - Administrator and Company Secretary

## **Description**

## **Action**

### **1. Apologies**

Cllr Bill Chatt (BC), Cllr Andrew Jenkinson (AJ), Simon Marrington (SM), James Risker (JR) Ian Horton (IH).

This issue of confidentiality was raised again. The Board have all previously agreed and accepted that matters relating to Raincliffe Wood Community Enterprise which are deemed to be confidential to the RWCE Board will not be shared with any external parties. All the Board can do is monitor the situation and take action should any incidences of breach of confidentiality be proven.

RB voiced his concern that things had not moved forward over the past two years and that funders may be a concerned about investing in RWCE. However, RS reassured RB that, despite the lack of a lease he does not believe this to be the case. The Business Plan Review had been underway for the past few months and a Focus Group set up to move things forward (see item 10a). At the last meeting NL and MW also indicated that the Plunkett Foundation were encouraged by the progress made and were supportive of RWCE. They did not foresee any major problems for RWCE when applying for grants/funding.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

None

### **3. Minutes of meeting on 20 November 2017**

The minutes of the meeting on 20 November 2017 were **AGREED** as a true record.

#### **a) Matters Arising not on the Agenda**

There were no matters arising that are not on the Agenda.

#### **b) Confirmation of Confidential items**

The Board agreed the items on the minutes which are deemed to be confidential to the Board. The minutes will now be posted on the website, excluding those confidential items.

**AD**

### **4. Minutes of meeting on 11 December 2017**

The minutes of the meeting on 11 December 2017 were **AGREED** as a true record.

#### **a) Matters Arising not on the Agenda**

There were no matters arising that are not on the Agenda

#### **b) Confirmation of Confidential items**

The Board agreed the items on the minutes which are deemed to be confidential to the Board. The minutes will now be posted on the website, excluding those confidential items.

**AD**

## 5. Licence and lease update

Since the last meeting, AJ has been chasing up Martin Pedley as has RS but there has been no response other than a telephone call to RS to say that a meeting is to be arranged. RS will continue to chase to set up a meeting as soon as possible. RS will be accompanied by one other Board member.

RS

## 6 Stronger Communities/Wild about the Woods

WW had circulated his report prior to the meeting. RM attended the meeting on his behalf. The key points to note are as below:

- WW had today spoken to the current funders. The final tranche of funding from Stronger Communities is expected this week and People's Health Trust in the next couple of weeks.
- A dip in numbers of visitors had been expected post summer but numbers continue to be good despite poor weather.
- Hidden Horizons (HH) are in contact with a number of community centres and schools throughout the area. Half term activities are being planned.
- RM is registered as a tutor with Askham Bryan and is delivering an Employability and Bushcraft qualification for over 16-year-old NEETs (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) from across the area.
- The two bushcraft taster days planned are with world renowned expert, Joe Gilbert. They have been targeted at the Barrowcliff and Northstead areas and are already proving popular.
- Discussions are ongoing with a national climber who may want to run an activity in the woods and, for the first time, this weekend, HH are hosting a birthday part in the woods.
- HH will always clear away after their activities but it is acknowledged that other people use the woods as well and may not be quite so careful. Volunteers could be asked to help clear away any rubbish left by others.
- HH to send any good news stories to JS for the website.

WW

## 7. Woodland Management/Woodland Trust

MF gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Board reviewing the work of the Woodland Trust over the past 3 years, and proposals for the way forward. A copy of the presentation is being circulated to the Board with these minutes but, in summary, the achievements are:

- Assisted with the establishment of RWCE
- Production of the Management Plan
- Timber access road upgrade
- Restoration work on over 50 hectares
- Provided finance for uneconomical work
- Responded to public pressure

The following points were also noted:

- WREN funding was a 3-year grant for uneconomic woodland management operations for biodiversity (eg thinning steep slopes, deer exclusion fencing, tree planting, rhododendron control). The grant is now finished. There was a slight overspend of c£2/3k on the work done but this has been covered by the Woodland Trust.
- A further application for funding from North Yorkshire Moors National Park for track work was submitted but was turned down because of concerns about continuity. It might be worth applying again once the lease is in place.
- The Woodland Trust might be a possible funding source in the future – they do provide support for community projects.
- Information boards around the site provided by the Woodland Trust help explain the progress which has been made and these should be maintained.

- There were issues with misinformation being spread but, when the public visited the woods, the feedback was generally positive. It is important to continue with public events to show the work being done.
- The summary done by MF highlighted the need for a Project Manager to be in post to maintain an overview of all operations. This has already been identified as a key priority in the Business Plan Review.
- There is around 50 hectares of thinning work still to be undertaken and repeat operations will be required, for example on areas where thinning has taken place and on rhododendron control. New planting will need to be maintained and the impact of deer will need to be kept under review.
- Moving forward Woodland Trust would be happy to provide additional support on key issues such as ash dieback disease and to work with RWCE again depending on the outcomes of the Business Plan review.

RS took this opportunity to thank the Woodland Trust and MF in particular for their input over the past 3 years and what they have achieved.

## 8. Governance

Following on from the Governance Review, RS proposed that a Focus Group be set up to look at the Governance structure of RWCE moving forward. The aim would be to have a proposal ready in time for the AGM in April. The following Board members were proposed for the Sub-Group: Robert Sword, Julie Stewart, Robert Peacock.

The Board **AGREED** that a Sub-Group of Board members as stated above should be set up to move things forward in respect of the Governance Review.

RS

## 9. Financial update

AD has been liaising with the accountants regarding the year end accounts. All being well the draft accounts will be presented to the next meeting of the Board in February.

THE REST OF THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL TO THE BOARD

## 10. Business Plan/Governance Review

### a) **Business Plan Review Focus Group update**

The following key points were noted:

- The group have met 3 times since being appointed and a copy of the minutes from their first meeting has been circulated to the Board along with the proposed student numbers based on income projections in the Business Plan presented by NL.
- SM is unfortunately unable to commit the time to attending regular meetings of the group but has indicated that he is more than happy to provide expert advice as needed.
- The group were concerned that the education income target of £50k in year 1 and £125k in year 2 might be overly optimistic, especially given the type of students being targeted who would require a lot of support. It was noted that the operation would only be viable at such volumes so, if the income target is reduced, then funding would need to be increased.
- The Board don't have the necessary expertise to be able to advise on this hence the need to appoint a Development Manager to look at such questions and to gauge the achievability.
- The initial bids which the Focus Group have been asked to develop are to fund the appointment of staff with the necessary expertise to be able to move things forward.
- There was some concern that the plan was based too closely on Hill Holt Wood but, from an education point of view, the number of educational establishments that feed Hill Holt is not dissimilar to the number in our area.

- There are a number of funding and delivery options which could be followed up (Big Local, BOP, Tyro Training). Considering all the options would be in the remit of the Development Manager.
- The group are seeking support from other Board members in respect of grant application submissions.
- Informal discussions have been held with Thorn Park about using their facilities – they have equipment for felling, a sawbed and they also have a building which could be used for education and storage. The Board **SUPPORTS** continued discussions with Thorn Park Farm and others and asked the Focus Group to bring a proposal to the next Board meeting, taking into account all health and safety matters, costs, potential income and supervision.

DE/SP/  
RP

b) **Governance Review Focus Group proposal**

See item 8 above

11. **Publicity, marketing and events**

a) **Press Release** – this is currently on hold.

b) JS reminded the Board to send her any news worthy items for the website.

ALL

12 **Health and Safety**

None

13. **Any other business**

None

14. **Date of next meetings**

- 20 February 2018
- 27 March 2018
- 24 April 2018- Annual General Meeting –still to be confirmed
- 29 May 2018
- 3 July 2018
- 11 September 2018
- 16 October 2018
- 20 November 2018

*All members of the Board are bound by the principle of Collective Responsibility. This means that whilst Board members are at liberty to express their individual points of view at Board meetings, and are encouraged to engage in full and frank discussion, once a matter has been agreed, that decision is then owned by the Board. All Board members should present a united front outside of the meetings taking collective responsibility for that decision whether they personally agreed with it or not. Board members should not share with people outside of the Board the views expressed by individual Board members in discussions, or how they voted. Only the decision should be shared as recorded in the minutes.*