

## Board Meeting

28 May 2019

6.20 pm Woodend, Scarborough



### MINUTES

Present: Robert Sword (RS) – Chair, Dave Evans (DE), Karl Gerhardsen (KG), Stephen Parker (SP), Robert Peacock (RP), James Risker (JR)

#### In attendance

Angela Doherty (AD) - Administrator and Company Secretary; Observers: Alex Robinson (Member); Subash Sharma (SBC)

1. **Apologies** Julie Stewart (JS), Ian Horton (IH) **Action**

2. **Declarations of Interest:** None

3. **Minutes of meeting on 26 March 2019**

The minutes of the meeting on 26 March 2019 were **AGREED** as a true record.

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

(i) *Stronger Communities/Wild About the Woods* – WW has emailed to confirm that the remaining WATW funding already in the bank can be used to cover admin and meeting costs as long as these relate to supporting the volunteer efforts of RWCE (this includes unpaid directors). WW also confirmed that the People's Health Trust would be happy with the remaining £3,594 (still to be claimed) being spent on any of the following: events in summer 2019; volunteer recruitment and training; equipment purchase.

The Board **AGREED** that the focus of the spend should be on volunteer recruitment and training and equipment purchase.

Some of WW's time which has already been paid for is still to be used. WW proposed that his outputs for this are: a fundraising strategy written; a minimum of one funding bid written; training in bid writing for RWCE.

The Board already have someone helping with bid writing so this would be excluded from any work to be done by WW. Consideration is to be given to using some of WW's time to run events.

AD to email WW to inform him of the outcome of the Board discussion.

**AD**

RP/FDE/SP to contact WW to discuss WATW spend and the use of his time.

**RP/DE/SP**

(ii) *Conversion to CIC* – the process is now complete. The new official name is Raincliffe Wood Community Enterprise C.I.C and this should be used on any formal documents/contracts. AD has received the new Certificate of Incorporation from Companies House. This will be scanned and sent to RS, RP and JS.

**AD**

As RWCE now has a new name consideration was given to whether or not the logo should be changed by adding CIC. It was noted that people may not know what CIC stood for and, from a practical point of view, it would mean a redesign of the logo. As an alternative, JS had suggested that perhaps a strapline could be used in addition to the logo. The Board **AGREED** that the logo should remain as now and that a strapline to reflect RWCE's purpose should be created. JS to circulate ideas to the Board.

**JS**

(iii) *Woodland Trust* – RS has written to the Woodland Trust regarding access to Mark Feather's expertise but, to date, has not had a reply other than confirmation that they have received his letter and will be in touch.

**b) Confirmation of Confidential items**

The Board agreed that no items on the last minutes were deemed to be confidential to the Board. The minutes will now be posted on the website.

AD

**4. Governance**

**a) Appointment of Co-optee**

Maria Arnold (MA), Scarborough Conservation Volunteers is keen to join the Board. Her appointment will help strengthen the relationship between RWCE and the Scarborough Conservation Volunteers

The Board **AGREED** that Maria Arnold be appointed to the Board as a Co-optee. AD will send the appropriate paperwork to MA to complete. Once received AD will record her appointment at Companies House.

AD

**b) Scarborough Borough Council Representatives**

Confirmation of the SBC representatives is expected this week.

**c) Expert Director Appointment**

RS has met with Simon Bowes (SB) and he was interested in joining the Board. He appears to have the appropriate level of expertise in forestry matters including practical skills. RS invited him to the AGM and the Board meeting but has not had a response. There was some concern that there might be a conflict of interest given his business is in forestry contracting. However, it is understood that he is selling his business - although it is not known if this has happened yet. SP will contact him to try to find out what the situation is and if he is still interested in joining the Board.

SP

**d) Nominated Director for Barrowcliff Big Local**

DE has spoken to Kerry Lee at Barrowcliff Big Local about the person who had expressed an interest in being the nominee but that person has not been in touch. Contact is via Kerry Lee and she is following this up. The Board recognised the importance of having a nominated representative from this group. DE aims to attend the Big Local meeting in June so can follow up then if no progress has been made.

DE

**5 Lease/National Nature Reserve Agreement (NNRA) update**

RS has now received the final version of the lease. The Board have seen various drafts and RP has been involved in the meetings with SBC. The following was noted:

- Boundaries - clearly marked boundary plans are now included.
- Third Parties - a list of all third party agreements is now included including Yorkshire Water. Sinkholes are excluded.
- Car parks – SBC have done some work on the car parks to get them to the standard they deem to be acceptable. There will be a schedule of condition with photographs to show the condition they are handed over in. RWCE will be responsible for maintaining them to that standard. This should be possible with careful management.
- Litter/fly tipping - A side letter to the lease confirms that SBC will be responsible for refuse collection for the first 18 months. The lease indicates that the situation will be reviewed after 18 months when the next steps would be agreed. Concerns were raised about the ability of RWCE to be able to fund litter collection and it is not something which volunteers can do. It was noted that the statutory powers of SBC should ensure that they will still play a part.
- Pathways – RWCE are responsible for pathways apart from those which are a public right of way -these remain the responsibility of the National Park/NYCC.
- Forge Valley Boardwalk – a side letter to the lease confirms that SBC remain responsible for the Boardwalk until such time as it is replaced. Once replaced RWCE would be responsible for its maintenance. KG pointed out that this is a public right of way so it is ultimately the National Park's responsibility. NYMNP are

supporting RWCE in putting in the bid for the Boardwalk as they are not able to do it themselves.

- Throxenby Mere boardwalk – SBC will carry out repairs if appropriate but removal may be considered. It was agreed that a track would be better and more suitable for walkers and cyclists – the only part which needs a boardwalk is the very small bit which is a public right of way. RS/RP/DE are due to meet with SBC at Throxenby Mere to inspect the condition of the boardwalk which RWCE believes is beyond repair. It was noted that there was a clause in the draft side letter stating that RWCE could remove the boardwalk if it was beyond repair but this has been missed from the final side letter included with the lease. RS will follow up with SBC to get this added back in.
- RP has spoken to the Mere Angling Club and they are keen to work with RWCE. He is due to meet them on 5 June with SP to discuss how the two organisations could work together. There could be some Section 106 money from the Throxenby housing development which could be used for any new paths/track around the Mere.
- Break clauses – RWCE has an annual break clause. SBC can break the agreement if RWCE does not follow its Business Plan and Woodland Management Plan, copies of which are included as appendices to the final lease.
- Monitoring – SBC will monitor RWCE's performance against its Business Plan. RWCE have to submit a report each year to SBC. It was confirmed that this can be the Chairman's Report presented to the AGM. There will also need to be a presentation annually to SBC Councillors (as has happened for the past couple of years).
- NNRA – still waiting for Natural England to send a draft agreement although they have indicated that they won't do this until RWCE becomes the leaseholder.

RS

The Board **AGREED** that RS and RP should sign the lease but it will not be returned to SBC until after the meeting at Throxenby Mere has taken place and the side letter has been amended.

RS

## 6. Financial update

The current overall balance is £19,410.85 allocated as below:

- *Wild About the Woods* - The current balance is £1,287.95. A final payment of £3,594 is due to be paid in two instalments - £2,396 and £1,198. See also 3.(a)(i).
- *Unrestricted funds* - The current balance is £18,122.90. Spend since the last meeting includes seeds for replanting to restore the woodland floor following the extraction work. The Locality membership (£100) for 2019 has also been renewed. Membership has been useful in the past as it gave RWCE access to organisations such as the Plunkett Foundation and Shared Assets. Whether or not to renew in 2020 (due April/May 2020) will be considered at a future Board meeting.

## 7. Business Plan Focus Group

(i) Woodland Management

a) *Timber felling update and review*

- 1100 tons have been extracted.
- Surplus generated is just over £21,000.
- There are about another 100 trees marked up but not felled and more trees to be marked up by MF for next year's felling.
- There are 5 compartments left to do.
- 2 volunteer days so far have been used to clear brash but it is a very time consuming job and more volunteers will be needed.
- To assist with the clear up Pete Wilson at Thorn Park Farm has been asked to clear some of the brash and to take it to the farm for burning. So far 5/6 tons have been collected with more waiting to be done.
- Edges have been reseeded and are already sprouting.

- Photographs of the work will be taken and put on the website.
- Working with the National Park, 6 students from CU Scarborough will be doing some maintenance work on the bridges and they are keen to work in other areas too.
- The felling done has been good financially but a lot of time is now being spent on clearing up.
- RWCE has shown it can manage commercial extraction and make it pay but there needs to be the right balance of a reasonable level of extraction which is financially viable and managing the woodland.
- Work is underway with Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society (SAHS) on developing a bid for Lottery Funding as a long term project – it will take 3 years to develop.

#### *Coming year*

- Proposed target of 400 tons for next year.
- If commercial extraction was undertaken the contracts would be more restrictive and would include clearing up – although it is recognised that this would put the costs up.
- There could be a split between commercial extraction and more community led work.
- There could be small Woodland Management Team using local contractors.

#### *Proposal*

- A Woodland Management Team is set up (just a couple of contractors) to supervise volunteers, look after the day to day maintenance and do the felling. The team would work throughout the year rather than only for a block of time. The Board would still oversee the activity but would not need to be there every day. Appropriate Service Level Agreements would need to be in place.
- The whole of the tree would be used – for firewood, for woodland furniture, for creating noticeboards etc and woodchip could be converted to brash with the right kit. The estimated return per tree is c£100/£150. Some coppicing could also be done.
- Thorn Park have kit for small scale extraction which is low impact. They also have a secure compound where wood can be stored (this could also be where the Boardwalk holding area could be). They are building a tractor for extraction. Given their location they could also keep an eye on the woods on a daily basis.
- Sparks are organisation who have a Pathways to Work programme. They provide people who are in need to work who have gone through appropriate training.
- Scarborough Conservation Volunteers would like to get involved in felling activities and would have appropriately trained volunteers.
- This proposal is in keeping with the direction of travel for RWCE towards community enterprise and managing the woodland sustainably.

RS will ask the Wykeham estates contractor for his advice on the proposal and will feedback to the Board.

**RS**

#### *b) Improvements to woodland*

It is proposed that the some of the surplus generated by the felling be used to pay for the clearing up, to pay for some furniture in the woods (eg seating, noticeboards) and for better signs for the car park. DE will send an outline of the estimated cost to RS so that a final decision can be made on the spend. It is important that RWCE maintains an appropriate level of reserves in its account.

**DE**

The Board **AGREED** that the unrestricted funds reserve level should be no less than £10,000.



c) *Joint foot/cycle path – Raincliffe School/Mere update.*

This is pending a decision on where the Section 106 money will be allocated.

(ii) *Partnership Working*

- Tyro Training (Craven College) offer Apprenticeships in Woodland Skills. RP has already been in touch with them about the idea of Woodland Stewards.
- It may be worth contacting the Cranedale Centre.
- East Ayton School contact is developing. The school could become the hub for other schools to access the woods.
- Barrowcliff school is struggling to fund its Forest Schools. There could be an option for schools to get together to bid for funding from the Area Opportunities Fund.

**8. Boardwalk Project update**

RP gave an update and the following key points were noted:

- The recent meeting at East Ayton with all the key partners was a good starting point.
- The public consultation at West Ayton was well attended although it was noted that there were some negative comments. In particular West Ayton Parish Council do not currently feel able to support the project.
- The plans are being redesigned based on feedback from the consultation and RP will circulate these to the Board.
- Social media will be used to generate support for the project.
- Planning permission is needed for the bridge as this is deemed to be an improvement rather than just repair or restoration. The rest of the project does not require planning permission.
- If there are more than 3 valid objections, it will have to go to the full Planning Committee which could add c8 weeks to the decision time.
- The latest position in respect of the funding is that there is no guarantee that funding will be available after the end of September.
- If planning permission has not been granted by September, the bid will be submitted to just replace the Boardwalk without the bridge. The partners are aware of the situation.

RP

**9. Access**

RS raised the idea of 'Derwent Vitalise' along the lines of 'Rye Vitalise'. There is a lack of a coordinated approach which RWCE could perhaps help with. It was agreed that RS should contact Bryony Fox, the Conservation Director of NYMNP, to ask for a meeting with her and the CEO Andy Wilson. DE/RP/SP would also like to be involved.

RS

**10. Row Brow Archery update**

KG updated the Board on the Row Brow Archery project. The key points noted were:

- The Club is now formally established with all the appropriate insurances in place.
- KG met with them on 23 May and they have now agreed to sign the licence.
- KG has walked around the area with them and they have now agreed a describable boundary which RS will add to the licence.
- RS will send the final licence with boundary map to them before 9 June.

RS

**11. Funding**

The following was noted in respect of funding:

- DE/RP are due to meet with Forestry England who will advise on possible funding streams which RWCE may be able to tap in to.
- Let's Grow Fund – part of LEP. New bidding round opens in September. Any bid must be able to demonstrate sustainability.

## **12. Publicity, marketing and events**

Charcoal event will take place later in the year. It was suggested that there could be a Secret Wood event at the same time but it was agreed that this would be better considered next year when there is time to plan and cost it properly. It was noted that the costs for staging the event in the past have been very high (c£6k) with no income generated.

## **13. Health and Safety**

Cyclists building jumps is again causing health and safety concerns especially as some have been placed in very dangerous positions. JR has spoken to those concerned and they have promised to remove them. JR continues to monitor the situation and have ongoing dialogue with other cyclists.

## **14. Any other business**

None.

## **13. Date of next meetings**

- 2 July 2019
- No meeting August
- 10 September 2019
- 15 October 2019
- 19 November 2019

*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.*