



Board Meeting

10 September 2019

6.00 pm Woodend, Scarborough

MINUTES

Present: – Julie Stewart (JS) - Chair, Karl Gerhardsen (KG), Ian Horton (IH), Cllr Phil Kershaw (PK) Stephen Parker (SP), Robert Peacock (RP), Cllr Subash Sharma (SS)

In attendance

Angela Doherty (AD) - Administrator and Company Secretary.

1. **Apologies:** Robert Sword (RS), Dave Evans (DE), James Risker(JR) **Action**
Updates from RS will be presented by JS.

2. **Declarations of Interest:** SS declared an interest in Item 9 – Boardwalk Project Update as he is on the Planning Committee. He will leave the room when the item is discussed.

3. **Minutes of meeting on 2 July 2019**

The minutes of the meeting on 2 July were **AGREED** as a true record.

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

(i) *Stronger Communities/Wild About the Woods.*

The People's Health Trust (PHT) funding has now ended. The Board were disappointed to note that the additional £3,500 which had been expected is now not going to be provided. From the balance of funds left, an amount of £567.81 was refunded to PHT. This cost was covered by Hidden Horizons so RWCE is not out of pocket.

It was noted that PHT will be visiting the project on 16th September. This is not a grant review visit. PHT are visiting a number of schemes to use as examples of the sort of work they fund to help local communities.

There was some confusion amongst Board members about whether or not any money was to be refunded by WW. It was also noted that some of WW's time has already been paid for to support bid writing but this has not yet been actioned. AD to email RS to seek to clarify the situation. **AD**

(ii) *Strapline* – it was agreed that the strapline should promote the idea of community enterprise. Action to be carried forward by JS. **JS**

b) *Open well, Row Brow Wood* – the Row Brow Archery Group have put up a barricade and there is now some cover on the well. The sleepers offered by KG will still be needed. KG is in the process of sorting out transport and it is hoped the sleepers can be moved within the next few weeks. **KG**

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) **Expert Director appointment**

RS has not tried to contact Simon Boyes again as the Woodland Trust may be able to provide the expertise required - see Item 7. If they are not able to help the appointment of an expert director can be looked at again.

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

PK had met with representatives of Barrowcliff Big Local. The Board were disappointed to note that they do not wish to put forward a nominee. However, PK felt that one of the

members might be keen on supporting RWCE moving forward. He will continue to attend meetings with the group and seek to gain support.

PK

PK sends out a newsletter every 6 months which goes to the whole Barrowcliff ward. He will include a piece about RWCE in the next issue which it is hoped will help engage the local community. It could well encourage the Big Local group to work with RWCE if they see the work RWCE is doing with other groups. PK will put together information for the newsletter from the website liaising with JS.

PK/JS

c) New Board Members

The Board remain keen to have a representative from the Scarborough Conservation Volunteers on the Board but to date no-one has come forward.

RS feels that a cooptee with an environmental background would be helpful. It was noted that Alex Robinson has experience in managing some woodland and has a small holding. He has expressed an interest in being on the Board however, he has not responded to requests to provide a short CV/statement on himself so that the Board can consider his suitability. SP will follow up with him.

SP

5 Lease/National Nature Reserve Agreement (NNRA)

The lease has been signed; however it has not yet been returned as there is a boundary query which is still to be sorted out by SBC. RS will contact SBC again when he is back from his holiday.

RS

There has been no progress with Natural England. RS will arrange a meeting when he is back from his holiday.

RS

6. Financial update

The current overall balance is now £17,054.08 allocated as below:

- *Wild About the Woods* - The current balance is £1,235.15. As noted above there will be no further payments from this funding stream. This balance to be used to cover office running costs. An amount of £567.81 was refunded to People's Health Trust but this cost was covered by Hidden Horizons.
- *Unrestricted funds* - The current balance is £15,818.93.

7. Woodland Trust

RS has been in touch with the Woodland Trust (WT) and they have confirmed that Mark Feather will not be involved with RWCE again due to a change in his role. However WT have expressed their willingness to provide support and the new contact for RWCE is Sian Atkinson. She has someone in mind (known to RS) who may be able to provide technical advice. This would be funded by WT. RS would like to invite Sian Atkinson to the next Board meeting in October to give a presentation of what WT can offer.

The Board **AGREED** that Sian Atkinson be invited to the next meeting. RS to arrange.

RS

8. Business Plan Focus Group

(i) Woodland Management

a) *Proposal for Woodland Management Team*

A draft contract, map, method statement and email from DE outlining the financial return had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following was noted:

- The proposal is for a team of two (Maria Arnold and Graham Norman) to carry out the felling (including leaving the areas in a tidy state) with equipment provided by Thorn Park Farm and the wood being purchased by Flixton Sawmill. They would be engaged as contractors and there would be no hourly rates to pay – payment is based on tons extracted.
- The contractors will be responsible for having their own insurance.

- Until any work starts and it is clear what the team can produce in an average week, the amount of timber to be felled is, at this stage, an estimate. RWCE would be aiming for between 400-800 tons of timber.
- The density of thinning will be 25-30% on average, with some viewpoints created in specific areas - this is part of our felling agreement.
- The financial return will depend on the volume of hard and soft wood felled. For each ton of hard wood RWCE would gain £11 and for softwood it would be £4.
- SP is pushing to get copies of the relevant certificates and insurances. Once these have been received, they will be sent to AD for safe keeping.
- It has been made clear to all those involved that no work can start until all the necessary certificates have been lodged with RWCE.

SP

The following points still need to be followed up/clarified:

- Environmental Law clause in contract – this needs to be more specific or removed.
- As well as the insurance documents, copies of chainsaw, tractor and forwarder and other certificates should also be lodged with RWCE.
- All parties to the Agreements should be named, i.e. Owner – RWCE and each of the contractors by name.
- As the Directors do not have any qualifications in Woodland Management, it is suggested that they liaise with overall crew of the Woodland Trust for supervision purposes.

The Board **AGREED** in principle to the proposal pending the changes to the contract as outlined above. DE to update the contract and circulate by email to the Board for final approval.

DE

The Board **AGREED** that, once the final contract has been approved, work can commence only if ALL necessary certificates and insurances from ALL parties have been lodged with RWCE.

It is hoped that work can commence w/c 22 September if all conditions have been met.

b) Joint foot/cycle path – Raincliffe School/Mere update

The current situation is that bidding for Section 106 money cannot happen until a minimum of 6 houses have been built and are occupied.

It was noted that the Cinder Track had received some funding and they are currently looking to set up volunteer teams. It would make sense to have some connectivity between the woods and the Cinder Track and the idea of a cycle path link up could be explored. SP will speak to Andy Shah to see what might be possible.

SP

(ii) Partnership Working

a) Kew Gardens - SP has had a request from Kew Gardens for them to collect a sample of berberis seeds from the woods to put in their seed bank. This could be a good PR opportunity for RWCE. The Board gave its permission for the collection to take place. SP will take forward.

SP

b) St Peter's gate – the area between the road and the farm at Hackness has poplars which could generate some income. Thorn Park Farm are happy to give access for them to be removed across their land. It is estimated that there are 50/60 tonnes. Stevensons will be coming to look at the area but it was noted that the tonnage may be too small for them to consider. SP will keep the Board updated on progress.

SP

c) Girl Guide Movement - a meeting was held with Guide Leaders for the Scarborough area to consider how they could work with RWCE in the woodland. In 2010 they did do some planting but the area has been poorly maintained. They would like to plant more

trees which they would maintain and would also like to use the woodland for activities. If this goes ahead, they would have a defined area which they would be responsible for. The area being considered has already had some thinning work done so would be a good area for replanting. It was noted that the Scouting Movement also have similar interest in an area adjacent to this where they could carry out activities.

The Board **ENDORSED** the development of this type of Community Engagement. RP will feed back to the Girl Guides.

RP

d) *Scarborough Rotary* - a presentation was given to Scarborough Rotary on Monday 2nd September about RWCE and its purpose and projects. The talk was very well received and they are keen to follow and support our work. The Rotary President has offered to approach the academic institutions at the University and Sports Complex to re-open the schemes to support students who may benefit from learning in a woodland environment.

e) *Sheffield Hallam University* – their Geography Department have confirmed they want to support RWCE in developing visitor and information packs on Forge Valley and Raincliffe Woods. This would involve working with their first year students probably starting in October this year.

f) *Kennel Club* – RP is in contact with someone from the Kennel Club who can help with getting the message over to dog owners about dogs on leads and dog fouling. They are supportive of RWCE's approach.

g) *Other* - RP has also made initial contact with RSPB, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Countryfile

9. Boardwalk Project update

SS left the room for this item.

RP updated the Board as follows:

- A significant problem has arisen due to lobbying from West Ayton Parish Council who oppose the car park and the bridge. There seems to be a lack of understanding on their part that the funding for the boardwalk is dependent on the car park and bridge being approved.
- East Ayton Parish Council are looking at how to reduce the speed of traffic and improve access but West Ayton seem reluctant to cooperate. RWCE are happy to work with West Ayton if they tell us their specific concerns.
- The area proposed for the new car park adjacent to the new bridge crossing has been identified as Ancient / Semi Ancient Woodland and lies outside the National Nature Reserve. It should be noted that quality of the land and its relevance in ancient woodland terms is debatable so it could be reclassified but this is by no means certain.
- Natural England raised no objection to the plans in this area as long as tree and ground loss were kept to a minimum and mitigation measures were taken elsewhere. However, at the last minute the Woodland Officer for NYMNP determined that this would be against planning guidance and would set a precedent which led to the Planning Officer changing their recommendation from approve to deny. There was no alternative but to withdraw from the September planning meeting and look to resubmit in October.
- A meeting is being arranged with the Planning Officer, Woodland Officer, SBC, NYMNP and Fairhurst to try to agree an alternative solution.
- The Funder is aware and there is still time to submit the final application by end October/beginning November.

- If we can't meet that deadline the funder indicated that there are plans to open up a new funding application opportunity but these plans could change given the current political climate.
- All partners believe that this is still a viable and worthwhile scheme and want to see this through.
- The location of the parking bays also need to be reconsidered, although the presence of chestnut trees further down the valley restricts where parking spaces can go.
- It is proposed that there is now a footpath rather than the original carpark which connects to a footbridge with 2 disabled parking bays – these sit just outside the ancient woodland. Consideration is also being given to having 3 laybys. Space still needs to be found for a further 6 parking bays.
- RP is due to meet with the National Parks team on 11/9 to look at options and he is confident a solution can be found.
- The next planning meeting is on 17 October at which it is hoped all objections can be addressed and the scheme will be recommended for approval
- RP wished the Board to note that there is a limit to the time and effort he can continue to put into this scheme. If the October planning application fails, he will not be able to commit any more time to this project.

10. Access

- *Derwent* - RS has now met with Briony Fox, the Conservation Director of NYMNP. It was noted that this would be a major project. It needs to be put on hold for now, as there are many stakeholders who would need to be involved. RP noted that most of the stakeholders are aware of the idea as they attended the meeting in East Ayton but it is the landowners who need to be engaged in the project. As noted at the last Board meeting Rye Vitalise took nearly 5 years to come to fruition.
- *Throxenby Mere* - the boardwalk at Throxenby Mere has been closed for safety reasons. There is a notice from SBC to say it is closed for repair until further notice. The Community Payback Team are carrying out the work.

11. Row Bow Archery

KG gave the following update:

- He has walked through the area and is happy with the work being done.
- It is being managed well.
- The Southern loop has been done and they are planning a northern path.
- 22 targets have now been erected and the signage suggests that up to 36 will be set up.
- Confirmation is needed on whether or not the licence has been returned. RS to confirm.

RS

12. Funding

Funding is on hold at the moment given the continuing uncertainty around Brexit and a possible general election.

13. Publicity, marketing and events

- Articles about RWCE's work have appeared in the Scarborough Review and the Scarborough News.
- The Scarborough Review is picking up items directly from our web site.
- Scarborough News are in contact directly.
- RP has made contact with BBC News Look North and Radio York.
- A group of local children had arranged a litter pick as part of a Summer scheme organised by North Yorkshire Police. Their news item will be posted on the web site.

RP

14. Health and Safety

The following was noted:

- There are a couple of larch hanging over the footpath up from Throxenby Mere. They are marked as if for felling but have not been removed. KG will email Alan Tomlinson at SBC. KG
- IH and JR were doing some strimming work a few weeks ago when they were challenged by Alan Tomlinson about what they were doing. He thought they were cutting down trees. They explained they were from RWCE and he seemed happy with that but he said he was going to email RWCE (it is assumed RS) about the incident. It was noted that any Board members working in the woods should wear RWCE high-vis jackets to be able to identify themselves. There is a stock of these held by DE. DE to provide for members of the Board as requested. DE
- There was an incident over the summer where there was some wire at neck height across a bike trail and one rider rode into it. There was no formal complaint but clearly this is a matter of concern.
- A woman and child nearly got knocked down by a rider and asked if there could be designated cycle paths or at least some signage. Dedicated paths will increase bike traffic but signage at points where bikes and pedestrians are likely to cross over have been discussed before. It was noted that if there is a sign warning of danger there is an obligation to show what is being done to mitigate the risk (eg good sight lines in place, information for users at access points). Once the lease has been finalised it is intended to do an access audit to identify areas where appropriate signage/information is required.

15. Any other business

a) *Rubbish in the woods* - there is a lot of plastic waste tree protectors and rubbish around the Sawmill site. RP will approach SBC in the first instance to explore options for the removal of rubbish, especially as some of it contains asbestos. SS will also seek help from the SBC Cabinet holder. RP/SS

The other option would be to hire a skip (cost c£220 plus VAT) and arrange a volunteer day where rubbish can be collected and taken to the skip.

13. Date of next meetings

- 15 October 2019
- 19 November 2019
- 14 January 2020
- 18 February 2020
- 24 March 2020
- 28 April 2020- (Annual General Meeting)
- 26 May 2020
- 30 June 2020
- 8 September 2020
- 13 October 2020
- 17 November 2020

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.