



Board Meeting

15 October 2019

6.00 pm Woodend, Scarborough

MINUTES

Present: Robert Sword (RS –Chair, Dave Evans (DE), 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, Alex Robinson (AR) - observer

1. **Apologies:** James Risker(JR), Julie Stewart (JS) **Action**

2. **Declarations of Interest:** SS declared an interest in Item 10 – 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 10 September 2019**

The minutes of the meeting on 10 September were **AGREED** as a true record with the following minor amendments:

- Item 13 – final bullet point should read: '*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*'
- Item 15 – final sentence should read: '*SS will also seek help from the SBC Cabinet holder*'.

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

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

RS had spoken to Will Watts (WW), Hidden Horizons and the outcomes of that conversation had been emailed to the Board.

The following was noted:

People's Health Trust funding

- As reported at the last Board Meeting, People's Health Trust (PHT) asked for £567.81 to be repaid. This cost was covered by Hidden Horizons.
- It was understood from WW that PHT had offered RWCE a further £3,000+ but WW accepts he got this wrong and that there was no more funding. This was a misunderstanding on his part which led to him giving RWCE incorrect information.
- In light of this misunderstanding WW has offered to give RWCE some additional time free of charge in order to support research and application for funding bids.
- The Board were happy with this approach.
- DE/SP/RP to contact WW to confirm the amount of time he is offering.
- RS to arrange a meeting with WW and RP to explore further funding options.

DE/SP/RP
RS

Stronger Communities

- In addition to the offer of additional time above, RWCE has already paid £1,250 from the Stronger Communities fund for WW's time to be used to support funding bids. There is c4/5 days' work left. He has been assisting RP, DE and SP on a "Power to Change" bid (see item 11 – Funding).

(ii) *Strapline* – it was agreed that the strapline should promote the idea of community enterprise. As JS was not at the meeting this action is to be carried forward.

JS

(iii) *Row Brow Archery* – RS confirmed that the licence had been returned. RS to email a copy to KG.

RS

(iv) *Rubbish in the woods* – A skip was hired for use on 5 October. 14 volunteers helped to clear a lot of the rubbish. A second volunteer day has been arranged for 19 October to

clear rhododendrons and more plastic tree protectors. It is hoped that the Council will remove the rubbish to avoid the need for another skip.

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, with the amendments noted above, will now be posted on the website.

AD

4. Governance

a) Confirmation Statement

AD confirmed that the annual Confirmation Statement has been filed at Companies House for the usual fee of £13.

b) Potential Co-optee

Alex Robinson (AR) provided a copy of his CV. His application will be considered by RS/JS in the first instance to match it against current skills gaps (as per the July meeting when RS/JS were tasked with reviewing skills gaps). RS/JS will then feedback to the Board and AR will be contacted in due course with the outcome.

RS/JS

5 Lease/National Nature Reserve Agreement (NNRA)

Lease

- The Board were pleased to note that the lease has now been signed and that RWCE is now the official leaseholder of Raincliffe Woods.
- A copy of the full document is being held by AD. It was noted that the Statutory Declaration is unsigned in the copy provided by SBC, however, RS confirmed that the declaration had, in fact, been signed.
- There is an aside letter in relation to RWCE's obligations in respect of the repair/maintenance of the boardwalks at Forge Valley and at Throxenby Mere. AD will email to DE for information.

AD

Natural England

- RS is waiting for a response from Natural England(NE) regarding possible dates for a meeting to be held. He will continue to chase and will keep the Board updated on any progress.
- It was noted that the draft vision which NE said it would circulate following the meeting held on 17 April in East Ayton has still not been issued and the necessary public consultation has not yet happened.

RS

6. Financial update

The current overall balance is now £16,333.69 allocated as below:

- *Wild About the Woods* - The current balance is £1,178.75. The virtual office service at Woodend is now being paid monthly by direct debit.
- *Unrestricted funds* - The current balance is £15,154.94. There has been some spend since the last meeting on brash clearance, coppicing and the hire of a skip to clear plastic tree protectors and rubbish.

It was noted that there is still some clearing work to be done to improve accessibility as well as some general tidying up. The total cost is expected to be in the region of £1,000.

It was noted that the RWCE phone number is currently that of Hidden Horizons. It was agreed that it was timely for RWCE to have its own number.

One option discussed was to set up an 0844 number and have a mobile phone where messages could be left. The main disadvantage is that one of the Board would have to take responsibility for having the phone.

Another option might be to use the phone answering service at Woodend. The calls would be answered as if it was RWCE and messages would be passed on. There would be a cost involved (est £30 per month) which would be in addition to the monthly virtual office service and room hire costs . AD to find out what options there might be using Woodend.

AD

7. Woodland Trust

RS reported that Sian Atkinson (SA), Senior Outreach Manager (Northern Region) at the Woodland Trust (WT) had been unable to attend the meeting. However he had spoken to her and she confirmed WT's support for RWCE through their outreach programme.

The following was noted:

- As previously reported Mark Feather can no longer provide advice via the WT.
- The outreach programme includes supporting the restoration of ancient woodland and it is on this basis that they are able to provide advice and support either directly through SA or via her WT colleagues.
- WT can also offer technical support through their network of contractors/agents.
- SA is happy to attend occasional Board meetings as required.
- WT have agreed to provide 2 days of support to end of 2019 and 3 days per annum thereafter, all free of charge. The main contact for support will be Will Richardson (WR) – an expert in woodland management. It was noted that he does not live locally so the use of his time would need to be carefully planned.
- In return WT would like to cite RWCE as a example of community management. RWCE would need to be willing to share their experience with others.
- The Board felt that the help offered could also be useful when RWCE applies for the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Scheme.

The Board **AGREED** that they wished to take up the offer of help from the Woodland Trust as outlined above.

RS will email SA to confirm the Board's decision and to find out if all contact should go via SA in the first instance, or if RWCE can contact WR directly.

RS

8. Business Plan Focus Group

(i) Woodland Management

a) *Proposal for Woodland Management Team*

The revised felling contract had been circulated to the Board. The following was noted:

- The environmental considerations paragraph has been amended. It includes a dry conditions clause which allows RWCE to decide when it thinks it is appropriate for work to be undertaken to ensure no damage is done.
- DE has gone through the Method Statement with the proposed contractors. It will be amended to state that any contractors, as well as being experienced, must also be certified in the work they are carrying out.
- An insurance certificate had been provided for Graham Norman with a liability level of £2 million. Best practice is for the liability level to be £5million. DE will speak to Graham Norman re increasing the liability level.
- It was agreed that, as long as there was something in writing to say that the increased liability level has been applied for, work could start - assuming all other certificates had been received.
- DE is still waiting for the insurance certificate from MA.
- There will be a pre-commencement meeting on site to go through the Method Statement and Harvesting Checklist again.
- The proposed areas for thinning are mostly those which have not been thinned before. A representative from the Forestry Commission is doing a walk through the woods on Wednesday 16 October to carry out a final check on what is proposed.
- DE is getting a copy of the felling licence from MF.
- The start date will depend on all necessary documentation being received.

DE

The Board **AGREED** the revised felling contract.

Once all documentation has been received DE will email the Board to confirm the start date and will also send a map of the area being thinned.

DE

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

The proposed housing has now got planning permission but there is no start date yet.

c) Other

- DE has had an offer of some trees from Langdale Wood which he will collect and plant.
- There are c 200 poplars intermingled with other trees. It was noted that they are not worth very much. WT should be able to advise on how best to manage these.

(ii) Partnership Working

a) Scarborough Guiding

RP has had confirmation that the guides wish to proceed. They will 'take ownership' of the area allocated to them to ensure that any planting is looked after. They wish to hold a tree planting event on the third Saturday of September 2020 (to celebrate their local branch) . It is hoped that the Woodland Trust will be able to provide a good mix of c40 trees.

b) Coventry University Scarborough Campus Students' Union

RP has met with the lead for student community engagement at the university with a view to the students working with RWCE. They encourage students to participate in voluntary work.

c) Thrive Alive Charity

The charity have a classroom and welfare facility installed in a mobile trailer and would like to run events in the woods. They work with children across the Borough who suffer through health and educational deprivation. RP will follow up.

RP

d) Sheffield Hallam University update

6 groups of 7 students will carry out projects targeted to suit RWCE's needs and those of the wider community, looking at things which will be of benefit to all. They will then present their findings to the Directors at a presentation event planned for 27 March. Ideally there should be 6 Directors to match the 6 student groups.

e) Community Engagement

SP has met with Ed Asquith, Social Enterprise Ambassador. He is keen to engage with RWCE in community activities. SP has another meeting planned with him on 21 October.

f) Benches

- DE has been asked if memorial benches can be put in the woods.
- The Board thought this was a good idea – it would open up viewpoints and would be a good way of engaging with the community.
- A proper process and costings would need to be established to take this forward.
- DE is waiting for a response from SBC on how they manage this sort of thing.
- RS reported that Dawnay Estates allow memorial benches. They approve the design and location (must be next to a public right of way) but then it is up to the applicant to install and maintain their own bench.
- KG reported that the National Park give applicant the plaque with their logo on it and the rangers negotiate with the owner of the bench in respect of installation and maintenance. He thinks costs are in the region of £1k but more information will be on their website.
- It is also thought that Fylingthorpe Parish Council have such benches.
- DE will investigate options.

DE

9. Business Plan Review

- The Board is aware that a revised Business Plan needs to be created.
- SBC has also asked RWCE to present their revised Business Plan in February/March 2020.
- Initial draft ideas for a new business plan had been circulated to the Board but RP has now done more work on this pulling together a number of ideas.
- The plan needs to be strategic with key targets against which performance can be measured.
- Monitoring performance is one of the terms of the lease agreement with SBC.
- Once agreed by the Board the Business Plan should be subject to wider consultation.

It was **AGREED** that there needed to be a separate workshop meeting for the Board to develop the Business Plan at which all Board members needed to be present. It was suggested that WW be approached to facilitate this. RS will ask WW if he is able to assist with this in the first instance.

RS

10. Boardwalk Project update

SS left the room for this item.

RP updated the Board as follows:

- 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.
- At that meeting a representative of Fairhurst will speak first for SBC and then RP will speak as a supporter of the scheme in his capacity as RWCE Director.
- The National Park and Highways do not have any objections to the scheme.
- There will also be an opportunity for any objectors to speak – it was noted that West Ayton Parish Council are not supportive however, it is understood that East Ayton Parish Council have registered to make a statement of support.
- RP read out the statement he had prepared to present verbally to the planning committee in support of the application.
- The Board supported the statement with the following suggested amendments: it should mention the potential damage to the SSSI; it should focus only on the positive reasons for the scheme.
- As previously noted, the work on the boardwalk itself does not need planning permission however, the funding to do any work is totally dependent on the car park and bridge being approved.
- The tenders for the work will be opened midday 9 November and the target for submission of the final application is 18 November (assuming planning is granted).
- There is a risk that the funding may no longer be available given the time that has elapsed.
- It was also noted that if planning conditions are set these could impact on the scheme and an emergency Board meeting may be needed to consider the way forward.

11. Funding

- A funding bid has been submitted to the Community Business Power to Change Fund for £130k to cover the costs of a Woodland Project Manager for a period of 2 years plus some capital spend on equipment. DE will email the application to AD for circulation to the Board.

DE

12. Publicity, marketing and events

- RP is adding new items to the website and encouraged input from others.
- There will be a minor change to the Home Page so that the latest news and events is closer to the top of the page when scrolling.

- How to send Mailchimp emails directly from website is being looked at. It was noted that there may be a cost involved depending on the numbers.
- There is a need to consider how to use Facebook better.

13. Health and Safety

None

14. Any other business

DE has been offered a MDL Powerup machine which could be useful for thinning work – cost is £1,544. The Board felt this might be useful but did not wish to commit to its purchase at this stage. It can be reconsidered once the thinning work has begun to allow time to gauge if it is needed.

15. Date of next meetings

- 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.