

## Board Meeting

30 June 2020

6.00 pm Woodend, Scarborough



RAINCLIFFE  
WOOD  
COMMUNITY  
ENTERPRISE

The meeting was conducted in accordance with Government workplace guidance and all appropriate measures were put in place to ensure as safe a working environment as possible. Additionally a thorough risk assessment was carried out, a copy of which was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. The layout of the room ensured 2 metre social distancing between attendees, everyone had their own table, no tables were directly opposite each other, hand sanitizer was available at both entrances, the door was open so its surface was not touched by any of the attendees. Jane Lowery, the new General Manager at Woodend, was also on site to ensure that procedures were being followed.

### MINUTES

Present: Robert Sword (RS)–Chair, Dave Evans (DE), Karl Gerhardsen (KG), Ian Horton (IH), Stephen Parker (SP), Robert Peacock (RP)

#### In attendance

Angela Doherty (AD) - Administrator and Company Secretary,

1. **Apologies:** James Risker(JR), Alex Robinson (AR), Julie Stewart (JS),  
Cllr Phil Kershaw (PK), Cllr Subash Sharma (SS)

Action

2. **Declarations of Interest:** None

#### 3. **Minutes**

##### **(i) Minutes of meeting on 18 February 2020**

The minutes of the meeting on 18 February 2020 were **AGREED** as a true record.

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

All matters are covered by the Agenda.

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

The Board agreed the confidential items on the last minutes. The non-confidential minutes will now be posted on the website.

AD

##### **(ii) File note March 2020 to June 2020**

In the absence of Board meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions, the business of RWCE was conducted by email. A record of key decisions/actions/updates was kept. The file note covering the period March 2020 to June 2020 was **AGREED** as a true record.

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

All matters are covered by the Agenda.

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

The Board agreed that the file note should be posted on the website. There were no confidential items.

AD

#### 4. **Governance**

##### **(i) AGM**

Due to COVID-19 restrictions it has not yet been possible to hold an AGM in 2020. In accordance with the Articles, the AGM must take place within 15 months of the previous AGM meaning that it can be held any time up to 28 August 2020. However, the Board were keen that the AGM be held as soon as possible, ideally in July.

Woodend, the usual venue, have confirmed that restrictions on number of attendees for meetings are still in place and will not be changing in the foreseeable future and therefore,

it would not be able to host the AGM. It is likely to be the same for other venues. Additionally people may be reluctant to attend a large meeting.

The RWCE Articles (Articles 33.3, 33.4, 33.5) allow for alternatives to face to face meetings for the AGM (eg by email, online) but the same notice period and quorum rules still apply.

Although unable to attend the Board meeting, JS had emailed a suggestion that some sort of online voting system via the website could be set up to manage the business of the AGM. This would include an election for the Member Director vacancies as there are four nominees and only three vacancies

The Board **AGREED** that the AGM be held virtually for 2020 and were in favour of the idea put forward by JS. AD to let JS know and ask her to proceed with contacting StudioExcel regarding setting up an online voting system.

JS

RS will produce his Chairman's report which will be uploaded on to the website as soon as possible.

RS

*[Post meeting note: As noted above, at the time of the meeting there were four nominees for the three Member Director vacancies. Sadly, shortly after this meeting, one of the nominees, Alex Robinson, passed away. The Board has sent its condolences to his family].*

#### **(ii) Expenses Policy**

A new Expenses Policy had been drafted and circulated to the Board prior to the meeting for comments. There being no amendments to be made, the Board **APPROVED** the Expenses Policy.

#### **5. Financial update**

The current overall balance is £13,317.09 allocated as below:

- *Wild About the Woods* - The current balance is £772.19 - virtual office costs are being allocated to this fund.
- *Unrestricted funds* - The current balance is £12,544.90.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there has been no income generated since March 2020. Now that restrictions are slowly being lifted it may be possible to start to undertake some work in the woods again– see item 9(ii).

It may also be possible to claim for loss income from March to September via the Power to Change COVID-19 Financial Support. The Board **AGREED** that a claim for loss of income should be submitted. RP will collate the necessary information and will submit the claim as soon as possible.

RP

#### **6. Power to Change**

The following was noted in respect of the Power to Change bid:

##### *General*

- The Board have had copies of all the documentation in relation to the Power to Change application.
- The funding is conditional on a successful application to the Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme.
- A database needs to be set up to record the hours spent by Board members and volunteers on RWCE work. RWCE needs to be able to evidence that the appointment of the Community Woodland Officer is taking the burden off the Board.

### *Expenditure*

- DE and RP visited Rosedale Abbey to visit a Polaris dealer. This has informed the proposed capital spend which differs from the original plan.
- The proposal is to now buy a Polaris (cabbed quad with roll cage which can also be used on the highway for the narrow rides within the woodland) rather than a pickup, as it was felt that this would be the more practical option. RS expressed concern, noting that they can be expensive to run and suggested it would be better to consider a pick-up. This would be taken into account in the final capital spend proposal.
- A 20ft steel container store/office is also proposed which would be used for storing the vehicle and tools, and as the office for the new Community Woodland Manager. The cost is estimated at £6k which includes it being fitted out with electrical sockets. It is hoped that Thorn Park Farm will be able to provide the location and power source, or the option of a solar panel could be considered.
- Consideration is still being given to charcoal. It fits with the Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme and with biodiversity aims but it can be time consuming to collect. It is also a niche market. The collection, bagging and delivery is something which could perhaps be done by volunteers. It was also noted that it is a market which has been tried before many times and rarely has been successful.
- A more detailed capital spend proposal is being put together for the Board to consider.

DE/RP/SP

### *Business Mentor*

- As part of the process all successful applicants are assigned a business mentor. For RWCE this is Katherine Wyatt (KW) who has already met (virtually) with DE/RP/SP three times. The final meeting is next week.
- The role of the mentor is to take RWCE through a resilience process and to aid the development of a business development support plan.
- A number of topics are covered in the discussions including: social impact, governance, finance, community and customer, diversity and inclusion and capital projects.
- At the end of these sessions KW will produce a report which will act as a guide for the creation of the business development support plan.
- There is up to £8k financial support for business development which can be spent on whatever RWCE thinks is the most beneficial, eg training for the new Community Woodland Manager or paid support to develop a new business plan.
- KW suggested undertaking a baseline census survey to measure the usage of the wood by the public to be able to gauge the level of engagement. DE is happy to undertake this with the help of any Board members who may be available.

DE

### *Job description*

The draft job description was circulated to the Board for comment. It has also been sent to CaVCA for their input. The following comments were noted:

- The job title should be Community Woodland Manager, not Officer.
- At the start of the job description, add in a couple of headline bullet points to explain the main focus of the role – the wording in the second paragraph of 'Description of Role' could be used for this.
- Add in the number of hours per week - it is likely to be c40hrs.
- It was agreed that the post could be advertised with a job share as an option but any applications would only be progressed if they met the needs of RWCE.
- The post is permanent but it is only funded for 2 years after which it is expected to be self-sustaining. This needs to be made clear in the job description.
- The postholder would be expected to make a contribution to writing funding bids but would not be expected to have specialist bid writing skills.

- The postholder will need to be able to develop new income streams in addition to income from felling which is, by its very nature, a finite resource.
- Advertising for the post cannot happen until the Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme funding is secured but RP has already spoken to Simon Marrington and Will Richardson for advice as to the best places for it to be advertised.
- Following this feedback, and any from CaVCA, RP will circulate a second draft to the Board.

RP

## 7. Boardwalk Project [CONFIDENTIAL]

THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL TO THE BOARD.

## 8 National Nature Reserve Agreement (NNRA)

The following was noted:

- RWCE has received SSSI consent for tree maintenance, management of invasive shrubs and management of footway plant growth.
- RS and RP now have a copy of the NNRA Management Agreement which they are reviewing.
- The tree safety clause needs further clarification.
- Under the terms of the lease, RWCE is responsible for all trees apart from those on the roadside verge, but including tress overhanging the road. The NNRA currently states that the landlord (SBC) is responsible for tree safety.
- If there was a dangerous tree RWCE needs to be able to take appropriate action to deal with it.
- RS, in liaison with RP, will continue discussions with NE and will report back to the Board in due course.

RS/RP

## 9. Business Plan Focus Group

### (i) Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme

The following key points were noted:

- Will Richardson, on behalf of Woodland Trust, is working with RWCE on the Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme application which is aiming to secure £25k funding per annum.
- The Power to Change funding is reliant on the successful award of funding for this scheme.
- RWCE land has been registered with RPA. We are seeking 222 hectares to be validated.
- The application was submitted on time and an answer had been expected in June but, to date, there has been no response. RP is chasing for an update on when the outcome will be known.

RP

### (ii) Woodland Management Team update

The following was noted:

- There has been no extraction work in the woods since March 2020.
- DE is aiming to keep in touch with the team and one member has been asked to do some general clearing/tidying work.
- Consideration is being given to felling some standing larch in an area which needs clearing and then replanting, and possible other sites within the felling licence.
- It is possible that an additional person from Action Towards Inclusion (ATI) who has chainsaw skills may be available to do some work. ATI would cover the cost of his insurance.
- Potentially some work could begin again end August/beginning September.
- DE will bring a proposal on possible future work to the Board for consideration.

DE

### **(iii) Partnership Working**

RP provided the following update on partnerships:

#### *Universities*

- Sheffield Hallam University presentations due in March were cancelled
- The York University visit to Forge Valley on 13 March was cancelled.

#### *Schools*

- RP met with Springhead School who are keen to create an outdoor classroom area (possibly near Green Gate). How this might work in practice is still being discussed by the senior leaders at the school.
- Logs were given to Newby School for their 'Natural' area.

#### *Other*

- RP gave a presentation about the work of RWCE to Scarborough Beekeepers which has led to building links with Osbourne Lodge.
- NYMNPA volunteers have been doing some maintenance work to restore footpaths in Forge Valley and boardwalks on public rights of way.

## **10. Business Plan Review update**

The following was noted:

- RS has spoken to Will Watts who promised to pick up this work again but has still not produced any notes from the previous workshop.
- The Board agreed that this work could not be delayed any further so an alternative route now needed to be followed.
- WW still has the flip chart notes from the workshop meeting which now need to be returned to RWCE. DE will contact WW to get these back.
- An initial enquiry has been made to CaVCA who indicated that they may, in principle, be able to provide support for the creation of a business plan. The cost would be £300 plus VAT per day. Some of the £8k Power to Change development funding could be used to cover this, or there may be other ways of funding it. RS will contact CaVCA to discuss further.

DE

RS

## **11. Row Brow Field Archers**

### **(i) Annual Report**

The Annual Report from Row Brow Field Archers was noted.

### **(ii) Cabin [CONFIDENTIAL]**

Row Brow Archers asked KG about erecting a timber cabin in Row Brow Wood to store equipment and to be a meeting point for members. The Board considered the request and the following concerns were raised:

- A timber cabin would not be sufficiently secure to protect against theft, in which case, archery equipment could not be stored in it.
- Such a structure could detract from the wood in that location. The lower car park would be a better location.
- It would require planning permission and consent from the landlord, SBC.

Taking into account the above, the Board would support the construction of a cabin on the following conditions.

- It should not be located in the woodland but suggested it was sited at the Stepney Hill Farm lower carpark.
- It was advised that it is made of a robust material with adequate safety and security measures in place to ensure anything stored within it could be protected from theft.
- The Row Brow Archers are responsible for applying for appropriate planning permission from SBC (if required).

KG will feed back to the Archers.

KG

## 12. Publicity, marketing and events

Nothing to report

## 13. Health and Safety

Incidents reported since lockdown were detailed in RP's report. The following key points were noted:

- Raves have been taking place in the woods but the Police say they are unable to stop them. SBC could be asked to put an Exclusion Zone order in place but, to do so, it has to be a consistent problem and, so far, only 2 are known to have taken place.
- There have been more complaints about mountain bikers carving out tracks. RWCE does remove jumps when they see them and it is hoped that this will help discourage them being built.
- It was agreed that there needed to be clear signs as to what tracks the bikers can use, as there is currently some confusion about this. These signs should include an 'etiquette code' on expected behaviour.
- RP/IH will identify the areas in the woods where signage would be best placed and will draft some wording. DE will also contact the cinder track organisation to see if they can help with some suggested wording.

RP/IH  
DE

## 14. Any other business

a) *Litter* – RWCE was pleased to note that SBC have been clearing litter and cutting the grass around the car park during lockdown.

## 15. Date of next meetings

- 28 July 2020 – this is an additional meeting.
- 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.*