



## Board Meeting

8 September 2020

6.00 pm Woodend, Scarborough

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), Asher Haynes (AH), 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, Sharon Graves (SG) – Observer; Mel Bonney- Kane (MBK), CaVCA – item 11 only – taken at the start of the meeting

#### 1. **Apologies:** Julie Stewart (JS)

**Action**

RS welcomed the newly appointed Director, Asher Haynes (AH) to the meeting, along with Sharon Graves (SG) who was attending as an observer (see item 4(i)) and Mel Bonney-Kane (MBK), CaVCA to present the CaVCA Business Plan Review proposal (Item 11)

#### 2. **Declarations of Interest:** None

#### 3. **Minutes**

##### **Minutes of meeting on 28 July 2020**

The minutes of the meeting on 30 June 2020 were **AGREED** as a true record with one amendment. Under Matters Arising not on the Agenda - *Row Brow Archers* – the Row Brow Archers are considering contacting Stepney Hill Farm with a view to siting a cabin, not renting a cabin.

##### **(i) Matters Arising not on the Agenda**

a) *AGM* – the AGM was successfully completed. Dave Evans and Ian Horton were re-elected, and Asher Haynes was newly elected, as Member Directors. JS sent a Mailchimp to all supporters with the outcome of the AGM and this was also noted on the website.

b) *RWCE phone* - RP reported that the Messagebird system using a mobile is free of charge if there are less than 40 messages per month. If more than 40, the cost is £9 per month. Landline costs are still to be confirmed. RP to take forward.

RP

##### **(ii) 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

#### 4. **Governance**

##### **(i) Board Support**

RS informed that Board that AD would be stepping down from her role supporting the Board. AD was about to start a new contract which would impact on the time she was able to spend on RWCE work. A potential replacement, Sharon Graves, was introduced to the meeting. She has worked with RS previously on a short term temp contract at Dawnay Estates. The handover would be a gradual process over the course of the next couple of months.

The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Sharon Graves as a replacement for Angela Doherty. AD and SG to start the handover process.

AD/SG

## 5. Financial update

### (i) Year to date

The current overall balance is £11,116.86 allocated as below:

- *Wild About the Woods* - The current balance is £659.39 - virtual office costs/room hire costs are being allocated to this fund.
- *Unrestricted funds* - The current balance is £10,457.47. Spend in August was on a new strimmer as agreed at the last Board meeting, some clearance work in the woods and an invoice from NYCC for a road closure. The incident happened in March but the invoice has only just been received(c£370).

### (ii) Power to Change COVID-19 Financial Support

RP reported that all COVID-19 Financial Support funding had now been allocated so was no longer available.

## 6. Funding

### (i) Power to Change

#### a) Community Woodland Manager Applications

DE outlined the recruitment and interview process as below:

- The post was advertised via CaVCA, Facebook, LinkedIn and via NYMNP and 9 applications were received by the closing date. The salary range is £28k to £32k – the actual salary will be negotiated with the successful candidate.
- DE/SP/RP shortlisted the candidates scoring each again the criteria as detailed on the job description and person specification. This resulted in 2 candidates being invited for interview. Both are strong candidates with good previous experience in forestry operations and farming.
- The full day interviews will take place on Monday 14 September 2020 at Ox Pasture Hall who have kindly offered the room free of charge. The panel will be DE/SP/RP with MBK attending as an observer for the formal interviews.
- The interviewees have been sent a number of documents including the felling licence, information on hard to reach communities and the Higher Tier Stewardship Scheme.
- In the morning the candidates will go on a walk through the woods with DE/SP/RP. Graham Norman will also join them at this stage. It was felt important to involve him as he would be working directly for the new Manager.
- From 12.30pm to 1.30pm there will be a lunch which will be the opportunity for any of the Board who wish to attend to meet the candidates. [*Post meeting note: due to COVID-19 restrictions, it will no longer be possible for other Board members to attend the lunch*].
- From 1.30pm the formal interviews will take place.
- Once the Panel have agreed who they would like to appoint, they will circulate their recommendation to the Board for formal approval and will seek references.
- The Board are asked to respond as quickly as possible to the recommendation as the Panel are keen to let the successful candidate know, ideally within 24 hours of the interview.
- It was noted that, unless a Board Member was aware of anything negative about the candidate selected, they should trust the recommendation of the Panel, subject to references.

DE/SP/RP  
ALL

The Board **AGREED** the above process.

#### b) Funding

The following was noted in respect of the spend of the funding:

- The funding received from Power to Change is £113k of which £50k is for capital spend.
- RWCE's contribution is 25% match funding to support the new Manager.

- DE is proposing to draw down the first tranche of funding ideally for all of the £50k capital plus £18k revenue (this also includes some funding to cover additional admin support) once the new Manager is in post.
- The capital spend (as noted by the Board at this meeting and previous meetings and as outlined in an email from DE to Power to Change after the Board meeting) is as below. Prices are inclusive of VAT.
  - Quad - £9,190 from G Agar (3 quotes were received and this was the best option)
  - Container - £2,795 plus £295 delivery from Cleveland Containers – for the office space and some storage. Thorn Park Farm have already been levelling the ground in readiness and DE has already bought the crushed stone for the base (£364.80) for which he will be reimbursed.
  - The larger container will be £3,700 plus £480 delivery from Cleveland Containers – for storage of the quad, tractor.
  - 2 padlocks - £100 (Cleveland Containers).
- The total initial capital spend will be £17,770.

The Board **APPROVED** the spend as outlined above.

Other capital spend with costs still to be finalised are for a good quality second-hand tractor (c£13k), a log trailer (c£5K), and 2 chainsaws (c £600 each).

Once the Manager is in post initial purchases will include furniture for the office, computer, internet connection, mobile phone and contract – still to be costed.

A list of items to be bought currently comes to the Board for approval but it is proposed that the new Community Woodland Manager needs to have delegated authority to make purchases without having to come to the Board for approval for every item being bought. A new process need to be put in place to facilitate this.

#### c) *HR/Payroll*

- HR advice including the drafting of an employment contract will be needed together with payroll services. AD to contact Alcumus and Peninsula for a quote on the services they can each offer. DE will contact MBK at CaVCA to see if they are able to provide HR services and, if so, to ask for a quote.
- Quotes for payroll providers had been circulated to the Board in February but had not been considered at the time. Given the time that has elapsed it was agreed that new quotes were needed. AD to contact Lloyd Dowson, Ashby Berry Coulsons, Fortus (previously Winn & Co), Edward Milnes Accountancy for quotes.

AD

DE

AD

#### (ii) **Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme (HTCSS) update**

The onsite review by the Forestry Commission took place as planned on Friday 18 August 2020 with James Shawcross (JS) although his manager was not able to attend. The following was noted:

- JS is happy with the proposed work on the tracks, the veteran trees which have been identified and the way the woods were being managed but he asked that the amount of coppicing be reduced.
- The track from Throxenby Mere to Dog Bark Ben would not be feasible so will be removed from the scheme.
- The deer pens need to be upgraded and a further two added.
- RWCE must include annual squirrel control work in its HTCSS.
- The aim is still for 222 hectares @ £100 per hectare as the annual income.
- The scheme would start on 1 January 2021 and that is when the money would normally be released for the year. However, due to the impact of COVID-19, there could be some slippage. The money may not reach RWCE's account until February, March or even April.

(iii) **Other.** None.

## 7. **National Nature Reserve Agreement.**

RS had received the draft today but has not yet had time to look at it. He will forward to RP for his comments. All being well this will be the final draft. RS will feedback to the Board at the next meeting.

RS

## 8. **Signage**

The following was noted:

- RP is trying to get the car parks registered so that they should appear on mapping systems.
- RP had circulated the proposed design for new signage in the woods prior to the meeting.
- The signs are designed by Don French Signs and are 550mm x800mm. Text would be added and possibly QR codes.
- Don French Signs can provide posts on which to attach the signs, or RWCE can provide its own.
- It was agreed that the location should be bigger than the RWCE logo.
- The cost is £65 plus VAT per sign including an anti-graffiti laminate coating and turnaround time is 7 to 10 days

The Board **APPROVED** the new signage. RP to liaise with Don French re the signs and to obtain quotes to the construction and erection of the signs.

RP

## 9. **Business Plan Focus Group**

### (i) **Woodland Management Team update**

The following was noted:

- It is hoped that Andrew Spittlehouse can start work at the end of September.
- The felling licence has been resubmitted for one block to allow for more felling. The application was done via the Forestry Commission website and there was a slight problem as they have SBC as being responsible for the licence. A copy of the lease has been sent which hopefully should resolve the problem.
- The bulk of the wood will go via Flixton as before but for some specific trees sales would be via individual buyers (eg there is an increased demand for larch).
- It was noted that any sales to individual buyers must have confirmation in writing from the buyer before the sale of the intention to purchase.

SP

### (ii) **Partnership Working**

The following was noted:

- Work continues with NYMNP volunteers in Forge Valley on fallen trees/repairs to footpaths.
- The National Park Management Plan is about to be reviewed. Briony Fox from the National Park has indicated to RS that they may wish to revisit an issue raised with them a year ago about the south east end of the Park being somewhat neglected. There is no entrance to the woods from Lady Edith's Drive/Throxenby Mere. SBC agree that the concept of a potential cycling and walking area is a good one. Sustrans are also happy to facilitate a meeting with all partners, including cycling organisations, so that plans are ready to go should funding become available.
- RWCE has now signed up to the NYMNPA Associate Group Scheme.

## 10. **Boardwalk Project**

The following was noted in respect of the Boardwalk Project:

- RS spoke to Gareth Edmunds (GE) at Sirius Minerals who was going to speak to the Trustees of the Sirius Minerals Foundation but RS has not had any further contact. It was proposed that GE be invited to walk around the woods to see what work is being done. RS will contact him again.
- AH works for Sirius Minerals and offered to try to speak to GE directly as well.

RS

AH



## 11. Business Plan Review update – this item was dealt with first.

Mel Bonney-Kane (MBK), CEO of CaVCA attended for this item. The formal proposal for a review of the Business Plan by CaVCA had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. The following points were noted:

- CaVCA is a charity and not for profit organisation which provides support for community led action. It receives some funding but 80% is self-funded with income generated from its premises in Scarborough and Whitby. They are now doing more consultancy work including working with Power to Change as part of their Business in the Community work.
- The consultancy work covers a range of businesses across the country and they have staff with a wide range of skills and experience in a number of areas. MBK also already has a strong relationship with Jo Ireland at SBC.
- The RWCE Business Plan Review would be led by MBK and David Stone (DS) who has a lot of experience in social enterprise work.
- Their standard charge is £360 (inc VAT) per day with a day being 8 hours. The proposal is for 13 days' work – a total of £4,680.
- The proposed schedule of work is outlined on page 4 of the proposal. The key aims are to create a more precise document which would become the 'shop front' for the business. It needs to use appropriate business terminology and clearly set out the plans for the business, including more focus on financial sustainability and stronger consideration of risks and their mitigation. If approved they would provide a detailed agreement with timescales.
- Their approach is very much cooperative and collaborative, working to the Boards' own agenda to assist them in producing a viable Business Plan for the future and involving the Board at every stage. Their preference would be to work directly with a couple of nominated representatives of the Board.
- It was noted that the new Community Woodland Manager should also be involved in the process.
- The resilience work being done with Power to Change will release up to £8k of funding, some of which could be used for a new Business Plan.

RS thanked MBK for her presentation. She left the meeting at this point.

A Board discussion then followed with the key points to note being:

- RP now has the flip chart notes done by WW from the initial workshop meetings.
- JS had emailed RS with her major concerns about the cost of the work. RS will email her to reassure her that the cost would be covered by Power to Change funding. *[Post meeting note: AD spoke to JS after the meeting. JS is still of the view that the cost is very high even if it is going to be funded].*
- As noted at the last meeting a new Business Plan will form part of the Power to Change resilience report and would be eligible to be funded via the Resilience pot of money (up to £8k).
- As soon as the Resilience Report has been received and approved by the Board, the resilience funding will follow.

The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of CaVCA to undertake the Business Plan Review on the basis of 13 days' work at a cost of £360 (inc VAT) per day, subject to funding being secured from Power to Change.

RS will contact MBK to inform her of the outcome.

RS

## 12. Publicity, marketing and events

Nothing to report.

### 13. Health and Safety

#### a) Forge Valley trees

The following was noted:

- RP has received an email from Hackness and Harwood Dale Group Parish Council regarding the dead and dying tress in Forge Valley near the roadside.
- The trees affected are mature, healthy trees with a good leaf canopy but they have been brought down by wind and rain.
- As noted at the last Board meeting BT Open Reach were going to provide a cherry picker and have offered to pay for the closure of the road as one of their telephone lines has become entangled in the trees.
- However, Alan Tomlinson at SBC has now said that SBC are going to cut down the trees but he was just waiting for permission to do so.
- It was noted that this issue should have been dealt with by SBC prior to the handing over of the lease to RWCE.
- It was agreed that a meeting with NY Highways, SBC, NE and RWCE would be useful to get clarity on how to deal with these issues moving forward.
- SS will speak to Alan Tomlinson, SBC to try to find out what the plans are.

SS

### 14. Any other business

#### a) SBC Unitary Authority Changes

The following was noted

- RWCE is concerned about potential unitary authority changes. It has a good relationship with SBC and agreements in place with them. The Board were concerned how these might be impacted by any restructure.
- SS reported that the process has not yet started. A letter from the Cabinet Office to trigger the start of the process had not yet been received.
- A number of options have been suggested: York and North Yorkshire to be one authority although it is felt that would be too big; NYCC to be one with York as a separate one but with one Mayor overseeing both; the District Council propose Selby, York, Ryedale and Scarborough as one, with a second grouping around Harrogate.
- KPMG are looking at options – any restructure would have a cost attached but that would be offset by longer term savings. To date no figures have been published to evidence this.
- It was noted that the Minister in charge of the potential changes had resigned today.
- Things remain very unclear. SS and PK will update the Board when they know more.

SS/PK

#### b) SBC Local Plan Issues and Options Letter

- RWCE is in receipt of a letter inviting them to contribute to the consultation on the Local Plan. The consultation runs from 6 August 2020 to 6 November 2020.
- The Board agreed that it was important for RWCE to have their say to ensure that its plans are not impacted by any of the proposals in the Local Plan (eg reduced walking/cycling access, increased traffic).
- KG will review and respond on behalf of RWCE.

KG

#### c) Volunteers

PK had been contacted by a local resident asking if they could bring volunteers into the wood to litter pick. The Board are more than happy for this to happen. PK will tell his constituent to contact DE to make the necessary arrangements.

PK

**15. Dates of next meetings 2020**

- 13 October 2020
- 17 November 2020

**Dates of meetings 2021**

- 12 January 2021
- 16 February 2021
- 23 March 2021
- 27 April 2021- Annual General Meeting (reverted back to usual timing)
- 25 May 2021
- 29 June 2021
- *August meeting to be determined if needed.*
- 7 September 2021
- 12 October 2021
- 16 November 2021

*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.*