



Board Meeting

8 December 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, no tables were directly opposite each other and hand sanitizer was available at both entrances. Masks were worn if attendees left the room via the inner door into the bottom corridor.

MINUTES

Present: Robert Sword (RS) – Chair, Dave Evans (DE), Karl Gerhardsen (KG), Asher Haynes (AH), Cllr Phil Kershaw (PK), Stephen Parker (SP), Robert Peacock (RP), Cllr Subash Sharma (SS).

In attendance

Sharon Graves (SG) - Administrator and Company Secretary

Paul Thompson (PT) – Community Woodland Manager

1. **Apologies:** Ian Horton (IH)

Action

At the start of the meeting RS informed the Board that he had had a pre-meeting with Julia Clark which will be discussed on the Agenda at point 4(ii) Potential New Board Member.

2. **Declarations of Interest:** None

3. **Minutes**

Minutes of meeting on 13 October 2020

The minutes of the meeting on 13 October 2020 were **AGREED** as a true record.

(i) Matters Arising not on the Agenda

a) *Forge Valley Trees* – SS informed the Board that a snap survey had been undertaken and SBC advised of £40,000 in costs for one month's work. SBC are not willing to do all this work. Alan Tomlinson (SBC) can have sight of the snap survey with a view to a cost review/proposal to be presented to SBC who would then be willing to review the position. PT raised that SBC at least declare their position. SBC had a verbal commitment in 2016/17 but are now under pressure with COVID-19, lease agreement etc.

It was also noted:

- RWCE to ask for quotes of our own – Do a survey and get recommendations, may have to accept paying for a professional contractor – it may be that one third RWCE, one third SBC, one third a contractor. Highways may also have resources. BT Open Reach may be able to offer a cherry picker. The Board **AGREED** to go ahead with getting a quote. Mark Feather/Will Richardson to produce a survey - £305 (approx).
- RP mentioned that it is mainly mature trees which are the major risk.
- PT meeting with Natural England:
 - Slope issues to be dealt with.
 - Main Highways – once a year to maintain properly.
 - Boardwalk middle track/paths Zone 1 – annually.
 - In-house checks every other year.
 - Quotes for carrying out the work will be obtained in Summer 2020/21 for main footpaths.

PT

b) *SBC Local Plan* – KG submitted a response, acknowledgement received – wait for next stage.

c) *Employer's Manual* – RS reported that Alcumus have been appointed. Drafts have been sent to RS and once RS has read the paperwork RS will send a Draft copy to PT and then circulate to the Board.

RS

d) *Insurance* – PT updated:

- Vehicle and Quad Bike insured with Zurich for 6 months.
- Insurance on container to be checked.
- Employers liability/public liability already covered.
- Need to add small tools to insurance for approx amount of £2,500
- At renewal of insurance to look at the following brokers:
 - Lycetts Insurance Brokers
 - Zurich
 - McClarrons – Malton

PT

PT/SG

PT/RS

e) *Climate Change Emergency Centre* – SP nothing to add.

(ii) **Confirmation of Confidential items**

The Board agreed that item 4(ii) Potential New Member remains confidential and item 6(i) three of the bullet points are confidential. The full minutes will be posted on the website.

SG

4. **Governance**

(i) **Vice Chair**

RS proposed that RP would be ideal candidate for Vice Chair and Board Member nominated, this was seconded and all in favour and RP agreed to be Vice Chair.

ALL

The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of RP to be Vice Chair.

(ii) **Potential New Board Member**

RS has a pre-meeting with Julia Clark before the main Board Meeting as Julia has vulnerable family members who are self isolating.

Julia Clark (JC) has expressed an interest in joining the Board. She has been involved in:

- High profile charities.
- Fundraising.
- Interested in community engagement.
- Uses RWCE woods frequently with family.
- Willing to come on board.

RS feels she is an ideal candidate and proposed appointment as a Co-optee and the Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Julia Clark to be a Board Member. SG to contact Julia to confirm and to register as Director at Companies House.

SG

5. **Financial update**

(i) **CapEx and new equipment update**

PT requested purchasing a tractor and trailer; tractor (Zetor) available at £16,000 + VAT (purchase from Hardwick's), found trailer £6,900 + VAT. Kellfri trailers are half the price of Bolex and will carry 6 tonnes of timber. The VAT element would mean over budget by approximately £9,500. Monies from Hire Tiers could potentially be allocated. PT discussed the possibility of becoming VAT registered as this would save substantial amounts of money now and any future spending. RS will contact accountant, Anne Mead to discuss VAT registration.

RS

Question raised – do we need now? PT has operational ideas to include a firewood business; hardwood to go to Flixton Sawmill and 70 tonnes to be collected before March 2021 at £60 per tonne for hardwood.

When Brexit takes place it may result in an additional 15%. The trailer (with crane) would be a European import and ideally should be purchased before Brexit.

Discussion of potentially going back to Power of Change for more funds but RP pointed out that if VAT is reclaimed Power to Change would expect RWCE to repay the VAT element.

Stewardship Scheme is expecting funds in January - £24,000. Option to use funds from this.

Tractor should be worth more once purchased. Tractors are holding their second-hand value.

Trailer could potentially be funded out of income and expenditure and offset against timber sales. Net timber sales last year were £23,000.

It is a risk to RWCE finances but if inadequately used could always sell it.

It was **AGREED** to buy the tractor in principle and RS will check with accountant on VAT situation and RP to check with Power to Change re VAT registration.

RS/RP

(ii) Year end 2019/20

The closing balance for the financial year is £63,227.00 allocated as below:

- *Wild About the Woods* - The closing balance is £569.39 - virtual office costs/room hire costs are being allocated to this fund.
- *Unrestricted funds* - The closing balance is £10,123.91. Income of £737.81 due to HMRC corporation tax refund. Spend of note is Confirmation Statement (£13.00); costs for tree felling and purchase of tree marker cans (£336.20) and Room Hire interview costs (£87.00).
- *Power to Change* – The closing balance is £52,583.70. Spend of note is Alcumus contract and payroll services for PT (£1,461.24); Container and base costs (£4,648.06) and purchase of Honda Quad (£9,307.00).

(iii) Year end 2020/21

The current overall balance is £52,248.72 allocated as below:

- *Wild About the Woods* - The current balance is £509.39 - virtual office costs/room hire costs are being allocated to this fund.
- *Unrestricted funds* - The current balance is £12,801.93. Income from timber sales (£2,978.00). Spend of note is the combined admin costs for AD/SMG during handover phase (£299.98).
- *Power to Change* – The current balance is £38,937.40. Spend of note is office set up costs (£829.42); Vehicle/quad bike insurance (£845.90) and Forestry equipment (£1,457.53).

SP discussed income from timber and the following was noted:

- Timber all stacked (hard and soft together).
- Bingleys transport running it – weight tickets – 1,000 tonnes this year.
- Andrew Spittlehouse – x8 weight tickets received.
- Not fully sold Poplar. Do not want timber all at once and invoice as and when.
- Minimum of £15,000 this year.
- Saw logs £56 per tonne.
- Will be done differently next year – will separate between hard and soft wood.

SS discussed the quantity of felling. SS stated there is a need to explain to people exactly what RWCE are doing. Some will view this as commercial and it is important to say what trees are being felled and what happens to the timber. This item to be raised on this agenda at point 10 – Publicity, Marketing and PR.

PT/SG

RS requested PT and SG to identify separately on the spreadsheets CAPEX and Revenue Expenditure.

6. Funding

(i) Power to Change Update

The following was noted:

- Waiting resilience review and potential release of £8,000 for business development.
- Power of Change received complaint from Jayne Strutt (JS) regarding timber process and safety signage. Comprehensive response put forward and awaiting feedback.
- **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL**
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- PT has ideas and plans, eg. Welcome to Raincliffe Woods Day as a starter. Maybe to involve JS on some of the positive things?

(ii) Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship Scheme

The following was noted:

- Agency Site – PT and SG to register on site.
- Signed agreement was accepted in June and awaiting confirmation.

(iii) Sirius Foundation and Others

The following was noted:

- Sirius have no funds available this time. Costs for boardwalk too costly but a smaller amount may be available. PT mentioned when new Chief Executive is in place, will invite to visit.
- Priority list of people and project types to be identified and members of Board to assist in proposals. Julia Clark input could be invaluable.
- Kick Start Scheme – PT updated the Board on this fully funded scheme which is designed to encourage the unemployed back to work and would like to engage one or two members of staff 3 days a week (minimum wage). The Board **AGREED** this was a positive move.
- Action Towards Inclusion Scheme – PT updated the Board on this fully funded scheme which offers woodland skills and life skills. 7.4 million already running this scheme and is a good opportunity. Proposal of 12 weeks (2 or 3 days a week) and would help in the woods. £50/£70 per person a day over 12 weeks. £15,000 a quarter. This would take up time and need to work out logistics of how PT would manage this. Maybe 2 days a week. PT to come up with a package (£10,000 per quarter, three times a year). RS suggested trialling it for 3 months and then evaluate after that. If successful maybe fund a role. PT needs to formulate a proposal and circulate to the Board for January meeting.

PT/SG

PT

PT

ALL

PT

7. Community Woodland Manager/Business Plan Focus Group

(i) Woodland Management update

The following was noted:

- Middle track – hoping to be restored by contractor (forms part of the contract).
- Volunteer task days arranged – tree planting (over 2 days) and a day coppicing. This has been promoted via social media, website and newsletter.

(ii) Community Engagement Update

This has been covered.

(iii) Infrastructure/Resources Update

This has been covered.

8. Boardwalk Project

The following was noted in respect of the Boardwalk Project

- Northern section closed – Northern Section is a public footpath – National Park maintain it.
- Footpath created as a diversion.
- Cleared Boardwalk on Southern section.
- Future of Boardwalk – Once Debbie Trafford's replacement is in place will arrange a meeting with stakeholders. Maybe JC/Sirius suitable?

9. Business Plan Review update

Still waiting news on funding.

10. Publicity, marketing and events

The following was noted:

- Facebook - more active. Statistics available and would be useful to see at each meeting. AH would be available to co-ordinate but due to work commitments at present, realistically after February. **AH**
- Media – Use of Instagram.
- Scarborough News have plugged into the website.
- Photo competition – PT to advertise on social media with a view to collating a calendar for next year. **PT**
- Obtain JC input when onboard.

11. Health and Safety

The following was noted:

- PT discussed H&S Policy he has created to be used in conjunction with H&S briefings and risk assessments for potential staff members (Kick Start), volunteers etc. PT to keep paperwork. **PT**
- PT discussed Lone Working Policy and importance of having a process in place.
- PT has created a spreadsheet to log any incidents, fallen trees, right of way etc. and everyone to let PT know of any incidents to be logged on spreadsheet to be used as a reference tool. **ALL**
- H&S discussion to be moved at beginning agenda for future meetings. **SG**

12. Any other business

(i) NYMNP Woodland Partnership Meeting (7 December)

The following was noted:

- Process Management Plan – woodland guidance – differences between Forestry England and National Park.
- Conifers – mixed species planting and point to get across – massive impact
- Land Manager – more fundng.
- Existing Woodland Managers – does not affect RWCE.
- PT – South Eastern access from Scarborough to National Park through Raincliffe Wood – maybe a gateway and more signage?
- RS – important to raise RWCE profile with Forest England.

(ii) Primary Land Users Group (PLUG – 25 November)

The following was noted by RS:

- Raised RWCE as a gateway to National Park and Briony Fox, Director of Conservation is working on this and RWCE should have input on management plan review.
- Raise RWCE whenever there is an opportunity.

13. Dates of next 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.