

MINUTES

Present: Robert Sword (RS) – Chair, Robert Peacock (RP), Asher Haynes (AH), Julia Clark (JC), Dave Evans (DE), Stephen Parker (SP)

In attendance

Sharon Graves (SG) - Administrator and Company Secretary

Paul Thompson (PT) – Community Woodland Manager

Action

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Subash Sharma (SS), Cllr Phil Kershaw (PK), Ian Horton (IH)

2. **Declarations of Interest:** None

3. **Minutes**

Minutes of meeting on 16 November 2021

The minutes of the meeting on 16 November 2021 were **AGREED** as a true record.

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

None.

(ii) **Confirmation of Confidential items**

The Board agreed that there were no confidential items. The full minutes will now be posted on the website.

4. **Governance**

(i) **CONFIDENTIAL**

(ii) **Management Subgroup (MSG) – Terms of Reference**

The Board **APPROVED** and agreed the Terms of Reference.

(iii) **Board Members – Support Tasks**

Discussion on how Board Members can support PT and the following tasks and responsibilities were suggested:

- Woodland Management: Focus Group (as existing)
- Fundraising: Julia Clark
- Media and Comms (to include the website): Robert Peacock/Asher Haynes
- Regulation/Compliance: The Chair/Administrator
- Events: Sunni Parker
- Volunteering: Dave Evans
- Small jobs/Practical site maintenance: Stephen Parker/Focus Group

SP will contact Sunni Parker and ask if she would agree to lead the Events task.

SP

It was explained that the purpose of “Leading Tasks” is to enable PT to call on additional expertise as and when required.

RS to amend and recirculate.

RS

As part of this process, it was suggested the Board needs expanding to fill some of the gaps in expertise, such as Finance, Forestry, and Marketing and others. RP/PT to advertise on website, newsletter/other.

RP/PT

All to propose possibilities who could fill the gaps.

ALL

5. Financial update

(i) Financial Statements

SG reported as follows:

The current overall balance is £51,993.28 as at 04/01/22:

- *Wild About the Woods* - The closing balance is £Nil.
- *Unrestricted funds* - The closing balance is £20,368.07. Income of £909.20 from timber sales. Spend of note – C M Goddard – RWCE map design - £640.
- *Power to Change* – The closing balance is £12,516.47. Spend of note includes salary expenditure.
- *Power to Change Business Plan and Comms* – £Nil. Spend of note includes £2,240 web construction development. £40 left transferred to Power to Change account.
- *Countryside Stewardship High Tier* – Monies received of £19,108.74.

The Countryside Stewardship funding is unrestricted, and SG will re-allocate to the Unrestricted Funds statement.

SG

Outstanding Invoice – Stephen Tate at Imaginative Productions. Monies still to be received £350. SG sent letter, no response to date.

(ii) CapEx and new equipment update

PT reported as follows:

- Heating for the office - See 7(iii) below.

(iii) PayPal Account

RP reported as follows:

- Lengthy process but getting there. PayPal will take 1% of sales and will be able to process invoices through PayPal.

6. Funding

(i) Fundraising update

- a) Community Renewal Fund Update – Bid not successful.
- b) Social Enterprise Support Fund Update - £65k bid to North York Moors National Park Authority's 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' fund is imminent - to employ an Outreach Officer on a fixed-term 18-month contract to revive woodland heritage crafts and traditional woodland management techniques.
- c) Green Prescribing Bid (£10k) – Successful but final communication in mid-January and starts in April.

The following was also noted:

- Funding bid submitted to the Platinum Jubilee Fund at National Lottery. Community Fund by JC (£50k).
- Funding bid submitted to Hey Smile Foundation by RP (£10k).
- Secured several donations from the Local Councillor Locality budgets to improve visitor facilities, increase security and reduce anti-social behaviour.

7. Community Woodland Manager/Activities

PT report was discussed, and the following was noted:

(i) Woodland Management update

(a) Management

- RWCE has significant land management obligations, which is preventative in generating new income streams and delivering community benefits.
- Tree safety work must take priority as legal duty of care.
- Timber harvesting contract 2021 has now been completed, awaiting haulage
- Middle Track reparation works to follow in late January.
- Community Woodland Manager has no capacity to carry out forecasted small scale hardwood thinning, and is exploring opportunities to use local contractors to support this work.
- PT currently developing contract of the standing timber sales tender for 2022
- Car park renovation work through Powering Up grant to commence in late Jan 2022.

(b) Volunteering

- Fortnightly volunteering continues.
- Developed a proposal to establish a closer working relationship with Scarborough Conservation Volunteers with a view to increasing capacity.
- PT empowering local volunteers including Scarborough Field Naturalists to carry out ecological surveying in Raincliffe Woods for nationally important species eg. Water voles.

(c) Engagement

- Car park signage project – design work now complete, looking to arrange installation.
- PT met with Members of Rowbrow Archers and explored the 10 ha site which has good potential. Discussion took place of potential rent increase. RS informed Board a fixed term licence in place which comes to an end in September 2024. Changes in the terms and rent may have to await and of licence.
- PT has initiated the set-up of an Eventbrite account for selling online tickets for woodland experiences and workshops.
- PT attended Christmas Fair event which resulted in lots of positive engagement with local community, however future events should be run by volunteers where possible.

(d) Anti-social Behaviour

- Theft of timber at Seavegate Gill, suspect identified – reported to police.
- Fly tipping, potential suspect identified – reported to police.
- Trial bikes, suspect identified – reported to police.

(e) Media & Comms

- Newsletter sent out at the beginning of December to capture activity taking place throughout autumn.
- Autumn photo competition winner announced, and prizes awarded.
- Delegating responsibility for media and comms work to Trainee.

(f) Income Generation

- Art prints are now available for purchase.
- Firewood sales – Now able to deliver bulk loads using plastic trugs which negates the need for heavy lifting equipment and tipper trailers.
- Christmas Fair raised £65 from the raffle.

(ii) Anti-social Behaviour – Discussed at (d) above

- Achieved 1240 volunteer hours in 12 months, of which only 297 volunteer hours (i.e., 24%) were spent delivering contractual obligations (CS Higher Tier). Which means 76% of this time is spent carrying out basic site maintenance with no financial return for RWCE, but good community spirit.

(iii) Quotes for connecting electricity to the office

- Quote of £1,000 obtained for connecting electricity to the main office. This is more reliable and cheaper than installing a wood burner.

The Board **APPROVED** and agreed for PT to go ahead with the quote.

PT

8. Property

(i) Throxenby Mere Boundary Update

Map of boundary is incorrect and RP to sort out. Once sorted, letter ready to send to Pete Rogers. RS to liaise with SBC.

RS/RP

9. Business Plan Review update

Business Plan was agreed in principle at the last Board Meeting. PT made amendments and final version and budget and formally agreed by the Board. AH to tidy up the Business Plan layout.

AH

The Board **AGREED** that the Business Plan be adopted for the next five years.

10. Publicity, marketing, and PR

(i) Social Media Update

Communications channel	November	January	February	March	April	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Press release	2		1			1	4		1			
Facebook (followers)	493	585	642	688	719	792	817		841	864	895	918
Instagram (followers)	69	82	112	141	160	181	186		196	206	218	224

PT requested assistance with social media updated and AH agreed to assist.

AH

(ii) Newsletter

To be sent out at end of February. Need more content and contributions.

(iii) RWCE Website refresh

RP informed Board work has been paid for and update of website refresh still pending.

RP

(iv) Data Protection

RP informed the Board the need for Data Protection Policy and RP will draft a policy. JC also informed that website needs to have the necessary wording.

RP

11. Health and Safety

(i) **Forge Valley Property Damage**
Waiting to follow up. Reported several accidents at Forge Valley and meeting held with Crime Prevention.

(ii) **Health & Safety Update**

a) **Forge Valley Bridge Project** – Dealt with.

b) **Managing ash dieback** – Dealt with.

c) **Storm Arwen**

Storm Arwen – large number of trees (~ 100) affected and reasonable amount of conifer windblow because of the storm. Many trees still hung up above public rights of way and require urgent attention.

d) **Tree Safety Work along PRow**

Tree safety inspection actions – significant workload generated from the surveys to make safe dangerous trees identified along Zone 1 public rights of way network, including proactive ash tree management. Seek help where possible. There is a need to contact Natural England and SBC with a view to a repositioning agreement in conjunction with new Business Plan. RWCE will struggle without other assistance from NE and SBC.

RS/JC propose to send Business Plan to Joanne Ireland and Mike Green, Chief Executive with a view to arranging a meeting and discuss the way forward. **RS/JC**

(iii) **Dangerous Tree Log**

Ongoing.

12. **Any Other Business**

Nothing to report.

13. **Dates of next meetings**

Dates for 2022 meetings as follows:

8 March 2022	23 August 2022
3 May 2022 (AGM)	18 October 2022
28 June 2022	13 December 2022

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