



NORTON SUB HAMDON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST LTD.

A Community Benefit Society

FCA Registration No. 31698R

Minutes of The Special General Meeting

held on Monday 21st November at 7.30pm in Norton Sub Hamdon Village Hall

Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

Attendees: Board members -

Colin McDonald (CM)	Chair
Ian Murray (IM)	Marketing
Jane Naughton (JN)	Chair. Shop Committee
Lindsay Higgins (LH)	Finance
Niall Clifford (NC)	Energy & Solar
Simon Harris (SH)	Minutes Sec.
Sue More (SM)	NsH PC Rep.

8. Apologies: Board

Jacqueline Campbell (Resigned) & Larry Levanthal (unwell)

Attendees: Members - 43 (see appendix A)

Apologies:

Phyllis & Fred Lawrence, Stephen Wassell, Digby Cole.

9. Introduction

CM introduced himself to the meeting & explained, in particular for the benefit of any new members post the last SGM, that this was the second part of the previous SGM & not a new meeting. Having adjourned that meeting concerning the resolution to close the shop, it was now being reconvened with up to date information & questions allowed.

He continued by explaining that nobody wanted to close the shop & that there would be the chance to vote on that within the meeting & that the current Board was not recommending that the Members voted to close the shop.

The Board members were then invited to introduce themselves to the floor.

(Niall Clifford, Jane Naughton, Simon Harris, Sue More, Ian Murray & Lindsay Higgins)

CM then reiterated the message about using or loosing the shop.

10. **Shop Committee**

JN introduced the members (Niall Clifford, Simon Harris, Ian Murray, Larry Levanthal, Claire Luck, Nicola Rusling & Jennie Harris) & gave an overview of the committee.

It was explained that suggestions received had been reviewed, some actioned & some held for the future. Also that those contributors had been thanked.

The new winter opening times were explained as a trial to help towards cost savings. Details of the times were given.

Other information included - Manageress (Claire) reviewing suppliers costs/new suppliers - Fridges/freezers switched off & a benefit showing - Marketing being more visible via social media for both the shop & post office - More volunteers have come forward & are now trained.

A general call for using the shop/PO was again made & a thank you given to those who do currently support & use it.

11. **Finance**

LH (in the absence of an appointed Treasurer) explained she is currently a stand-in.

Two main messages were passed by her -

1. the trading figures were a concern
2. the pledges were positive & that the energy bills received were good news.

For the shop - April 2021/March 2022, average monthly loss was around £555 with average sales of nearly £19000. Based on the first 6mths of trading this year the average monthly loss had increased to around £901. It was explained that sales hadn't gone up but costs had.

It was also explained that costs were being looked at including energy/product lines & behind the scenes.

On the subject of pledges & donations this was a success story - Over £9000 received in one off pledges & from October £360 per mth in regular donations. Assuming the anticipated energy cost rise of £1000 per mth & the request for regular donations for at least 6mths, the energy cost could be covered until October 2023.

Confidence was increased due to the fact that recent energy bills (Sept/Oct) had been received & these were lower than expected.

LH concluded by saying that if anyone was happy with agreeing to their pledge/donation being used 'generally' for the shop costs then to please let her know.

12. **Marketing**

IM explained that there was a need to future proof the shop & that it needed to look different in a few years. He then gave an introduction into the different styles of shopping including online which, had done very well in the light of Covid & therefore maybe in the future the shop too had to go that way.

He continued by asking what 'was' the shop, i.e. a farm shop, or a convenience store...& although obvious, he stated that the shop model needed transforming. He highlighted that it would take time & concluded by asking the members for any ideas to be forwarded.

13. **Solar & Energy**

NC explained that he had estimated that the shop used between 30 - 35000 Kilo watt (Kw) hours a year with the average usage at 3397Kw throughout the summer per mth. However with freezer reductions savings were made in Sept. which were significant equalling £189 but, at a loss for Oct. as this now included the new price rise of 48p per unit as opposed to the previous 20p. The saving in October, was slightly smaller than Septembers, but worth more because the price per unit had gone up. It was emphasised that this was an issue for the shop.

It was then explained that, with the landlord's agreement, solar panels were being explored together with the required permissions. These then would provide an anticipated 8000Kw hours per year.

The CLT land behind Minchingtons Close was raised confirming it has planning for a solar array. So far, that had not been possible due to not having a customer & the expense was too high for a direct shop connection.

However there was the potential, based on a similar scheme in Dorset, to have a Community Energy Club whereby through smart meters people could sign up to gain cheaper electricity. This could be combined with 'feeding in' to the main grid in the village to supply the shop. Also this would go along way to assisting those households within the community who are on the more expensive pre-paid meters.

He concluded saying that together with savings already being made in the shop there was real hope that the energy situation could be improved on.

14. CM then thanked everyone for the pledges & donations which had bought 'time'. He also stated that there were no certainties, although there was enthusiasm to do things but no certainties those things would work & that really it was down to everyone in the village to support the shop in the future.

15. **Questions from the Members -**

- Q What was the time scale for setting up the solar array ?
- NC It would be quicker to complete the field before the shop mainly due to dealing with the District Council, plus financially better to get the field done first. He anticipated the project getting going by the summer or earlier if possible.
- Q What is the cost of setting up the field ?
- NC Explained that it was the intention to set the cost onto someone else's business. If South Somerset Community Energy Society (SSCES) get involved that could equate to paying nearer 26p per Kw unit, with SSCES also making money. So they take the risk of setting up & we get the benefit.
- Q It was explained that the Somerset Leveller magazine had published an article about the shop & the plight of the economy generally & that there were discretionary grants available. Has anyone pursued that ?
- CM Stated that we did have a grant which was during Covid for small businesses.
- LH Reconfirmed the magazine title for further thought.
- Q What was the procedure for changing a pledge to a donation?
- LH Explained that there were forms available tonight with an explanation.
- Q A general comment was made asking for confirmation that, along with the business model/plan, the products & distribution would change but still leave a Community shop?
- IM Confirmed that would be the case.
- Q Comment was made that the Post Office remuneration had not been included for October which then affected the stock figures. Also were the year end accounts going to be circulated before the next AGM ?
- LH Stated that when the calculations were done only the first 6mths stock figures were used.
- CM confirmed that the accounts would be sent out.
- Q How will those who pledged, who were not members, be informed should they wish to donate?
- LH Explained that their contact details were provided for use.
- Q Would it be worth putting a note within the newsletter for new people in the village to support the shop?
- LH Agreed that was a good idea to be done.

CM concluded explaining that the CLT needed a Treasurer & a Secretary & asked for people to come forward to help with the day to day management of the Board & in turn helping with the day to day management of the shop.

16. **Resolution vote to cease trading** (ref agenda item 5 from first SGM)

CM then put the Resolution (to cease trading by the end of October) to all Members.

In favour of the Resolution - No votes

Against - 48

Abstentions - 2

He then confirmed that the shop will not close, efforts would be continued & concluded with a request for more continued use of the shop & a request for a Treasurer & a Secretary.

Meeting concluded at 8.13pm

Appendix A

Attended Members

Daphne Bishop	Kevin Boyd	Peter Callaghan	Ruth Cannon
Bill Caswell	Diane Clifford	Christabel Cumberlege	
Mike Cumberlege	Marion Eastment	Jacqueline Feierabend	Anne Forrest
Rosemary Gray	David Hancox	Jennie Harris	Debra Harris
Janet Hutton	Sue Lowder	Claire Luck	Barry Matraves
Louise Matraves	Stuart Maunder	Liz Maunder	Katie McDaid
Jonathan Naughton	Lyn Orchard	Adrian Pipe	Mike Rastall
Pam Rastall	Rachel Reid	Jeremy Reid	Malcolm Reid
Ian Rumbelow	Nicola Rusling	Charles Snow	Joanne Tanner
Adrian Tanner	Bob Taylor	Anna Terrell	Trish Walton
Roy Warry	Adele Wassell	Sue Westwood	Chris Westwood