



A Community Benefit Society
The Shop & Post Office Great Street Norton Sub Hamdon Somerset TA14 6SG

Minutes of The Board of Directors of Norton sub Hamdon Community Land Trust Ltd

Held on Tuesday 23rd January 2024, 7.30pm in Norton Village Hall.

Attendees: Niall Clifford (NC)
Lindsay Higgins (LH)
Anne Fairweather (AF)
Simon Harris (SH)
Ian Murray (IM)
Rowena Asley (RA)
John Forsyth (JF)
Jennie Harris (JH)

1. Apologies

Brian Wickins (unwell) Jonny Dart (resigned due to work commitments)
NC welcomed JH back after a period of time off.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting (28th November 2023)

Approved, signed & dated.

4. Property & Assets

A written log will now be kept for visiting the field in Minchingtons Close & this will be recorded via the Action Log with IM.

There was then a discussion as to the future of the field & whether, currently, it is still a priority at this time. Generally the focus is still geared towards the shop & post office, however NC will continue to pursue the work looking into the covenants.

5. Finance

LH then discussed her previously circulated report to the board members.

Overall the picture showed a very good story on progress. Albeit the previous October & November were not the best of months, there was a bounce back in December resulting in the figures being £2,000 in the black without donations etc.

The energy loss is fairly flat for the time being however that was just before the weather turned cold recently.

SH commented how well all the staff had, again, been very resilient towards the understanding of not having any heating on - an email of thanks would be sent.

Following up from contacting all the Pledgers (out of a total of £16,000 available) the responses back so far have released £10,500. There are a few still outstanding who haven't yet replied & various board members agreed to help making additional contact on LH's behalf.

Claire has attended 2 finance meetings & has been invited to further ones on an 'open invite' basis. NC made the point that Claire is an employee & that she gives her time for free for the meetings. JF commented that Claire has said that she's glad to be involved. LH stated that she has been involving Claire regarding a new EPOS system. however there are other systems in the running.

Trading figures & margins were discussed & how better data can be obtained before taking on a new EPOS system. Currently it is a very time consuming process & options including paying someone to extract the information, were suggested.

LH suggested drafting 2 specs for the work that needed doing, one before EPOS is changed & one as it's changed & that will give strength to the best decision to take.

NC stated that there were things that could be done in the meantime - wait for the new EPOS, design the questions, how they would be asked & who would do it. Then once it was known what the most important thing was to do, it could then be looked into possibly being done by a volunteer &/or pay someone to complete it. The over aim being better margins. There was agreement to spend money for this purpose if required.

JH asked if a record was kept of the consumable produce that was marked down, currently this was being done with vegetables & fruit & chilled only. SH to request this to be done including any wastage via Claire & Cheryl.

Claire is still looking at overall stock reductions.

NC to check the shop's insurance with regards to the security of the the shop keys. Key holder record held with SH.

Over night cash to be reduced by more regular banking at the PO as there are now less cash payments made to suppliers.

Health & Safety to be introduced onto the meeting's agenda.

With Jonny Dart stepping down from the CLT, we have lost our nominate post office lead. Board agreed to approach Nicola Rusling, our Post Office Manager to ask if she would join the CLT and be our representative on Post Office matters. If that request is turned down, NC offered to be the back up nominee.

A discussion was also had about the possibility of having both Claire & Nicki on the Board. There wasn't any objection to the principle & the potential then could be that Nicki could become the Board's liaison member. LH said, for time being, she'd ask Nicki.

Business plan is in hand & LH expressed her thanks for the help by JF & IM

Standing Orders - there is a requirement to have more Board members than non-Board members on committees. This is both within Standing Orders generally & the Terms of Reference for committees.

Proposal to alter both & remove the need was made by LH & seconded by AF, there were no objections.

6. Secretary & Action Log

The log was discussed & updated accordingly.

7. Shop & Post Office

SH explained that a small group of volunteers have agreed to cover shop ordering (bread, milk, fruit & veg etc) should the need arise when both Claire & Cheryl are not available. Input will be given & a guide sheet made available. This will provide good resilience & flexibility.

The 'covid' screen has now been reinstalled at the shop counter & will be reviewed nearer to the summer.

The coverings above all the fridges have been replaced following an anon donation of the perspex & then a design by IM. IM was then asked if he could do the same with the freezers to which he agreed. IM was also thanked for the hessian covering currently hanging behind the fruit & veg display.

SH had a productive shop staff meeting resulting in slight alterations to both Job Descriptions upon agreement. This will take place from Feb 1st with the aim of streamlining the work done & negating unnecessary handovers.

An update was given regarding a recent staff member issue.

The office chair has been replaced.

SH had success with Hunts Food Services in removing the minimum ordering spend (£100) from all accounts held with them & arranging a 5 days a week delivery. Hunts now also offer fruit & vegetables so this has now allowed the opportunity to approach a farmer at Bower Hinton to supply vegetables whilst topping up from Hunts, again without a minimum order. Currently A David require a minimum spend of £30.

RA mentioned about a Volunteer's get together & will email 'all' asking for their ideas of what would be liked & in what format, for example.

8. Marketing

IM stated that the Facebook reach was up 17%. His aim was now to focus on putting a proposal together to local suppliers to sell in the shop meeting occasional specific dates e.g. Valentines, but not to increase the stock.

IM together with Louise will continue to look at the customer profile & where in particular they can be targeted from a marketing point of view.

9. Shop Roof

There was concern expressed of the 'need' to get the work completed particularly as the shop had already suffered water leaks. Also, internal improvements cannot go ahead until the roof has been repaired.

It was agreed that RA & NC would arrange to speak with Lynn Orchard (landlady).

10. Membership

A member had generously gifted 995 shares out of their holding of 1000, retaining 5 to continue their membership. This was warmly received & approved. SH to provide a new certificate & send a letter of thanks.

11. A O B

LH explained that there was a VAT bill of £1,629 owed to HMRC due to be payed. Higher than before but also due to a higher turnover.

SH put a request in for a new CCTV system once the donation cash has been released.

21.15 meeting finished

Next meeting date agreed - Tuesday 19th March.