



## **NORTON SUB HAMDON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST LTD.**

### **A Community Benefit Society**

FCA Registration No. 31698R

## **Minutes of The Board of Directors**

held on Tuesday 13th December at 7.30pm in Norton Sub Hamdon Reading Room

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.
Larry Leventhal (LL)	Finance
Sue More (SM)	NsH PC Rep.
Brian Wickins (BW)	Chiselborough village Rep.

### **1. Apologies: None**

#### **Introduction**

CM formally introduced Brian Wickins as the village representative for Chiselborough & the Board was unanimous in him joining.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

CM asked if any needed declaring & were forms being handed back to IM.

SH stated he'd resend his form to IM. NC confirmed IM already had his form. LH also stated she'd already reported her interest.

3. **Minutes of previous meeting** (7th November & SGM 21st Nov.)

CM confirmed that he'd not been given any for the last Board meeting despite asking & not been given an answer. He then requested that the Board, except BW, reflected on that meeting & agree that, it would be minuted today, just in case the minutes didn't materialise. All agreed

SM agreed to make some enquires with the last Secretary.

CM also signed the minutes for the SGM & confirmed they would be sent out to the membership. SH to action.

It was also discussed that Board minutes could be put on the CLT website

4. **Secretary**

(a) IM was formally appointed as the CLT Secretary, SH as the Minutes Secretary & NC as the Membership Secretary. All Board members were in agreement.

The overview of the Action log was briefly discussed with IM now agreeing to deal with it.

(b) Action Log -

The Board then discussed the various current outstanding actions.

CM confirmed that the FCA had received our annual return & that he would follow up the change of Secretary details with them along with the Post Office.

The job description for the role of Treasurer & the terms of reference were actioned to the Finance committee via LH.

Bank access & Go Cardless are still ongoing which LH said she had contacts for.

Other admin tasks were covered including the updating of key holders & access to keys, updating the Plunkett Foundation etc.

The leak in the shop was discussed with NC giving a brief history of the issue & he agreed to speak with the landlord.

Staff reviews were covered as were staff job descriptions. JN said that the descriptions & Reviews were held by her.

It was decided that pursuing the possibility of gift aid, regarding the pledges received, would not be applicable as the CLT was not a charity.

The actions were recorded as appropriate on the running log.

5. **Finance Committee / Treasurer's report**

(a) It was agreed unanimously that LH would be Acting Treasurer.

(b) Also that Bob Taylor & Jonathon Naughton would be co-opted onto the Finance committee & that both CM & LL would also be members.

(c) LH then gave a report -

The current month's trading (Nov) for the shop taking into account just the sales & direct costs showed a profit of about £4000 but the overheads amounted to £6,600 which showed a nett loss of just over £2000.

The average loss in the last 8 months from April was £1,238.

Year to date figures showed a gross profit of £43 - £43,500. The overheads have been £54,000 which shows a net loss of £11,000. £1000 is currently owed to HMRC, delay being hampered by the bank access issues. This being the 'base' position without any pledges being used.

With last year's loss being £9000 LH stated that the costs would have to be mitigated for the next 3 months & that it would be a Financial Committee agenda item for a cost reduction exercise.

LH covered the margins on a day to day basis & it was felt, that if increased, we might not have the customers. She stated though that she'd ask Jonathon Naughton to work with the Shop committee to see if improvements could be made.

NC commented that Sep/Oct & Nov energy bills were notably lower with Sept being the first month of the freezer reductions. This was an encouraging trend that was carrying on & that was credit to the staff who were contributing towards that, e.g turning off lights etc.

LH continued that despite a recent reduction in the energy bills as of the 1st December the KW hr rate has gone up, nearly double !

It was also mentioned of the need to be aware of the shop becoming too cold for all staff & volunteers due to the air conditioning unit heating being cut back on.

At the end of Nov pledges received into the account (yet to be allocated) amounted to £9,250. Some of those who have pledged have agreed to see their money go to support the shop generally, so far to a total of £190. LH planned to write to everyone who has pledged & ask if they would agree to supporting the shop overall as opposed to just the energy bills.

It was discussed about the Post Office & Shop finance differences & whether or not that, if the PO is making any kind of loss then the shop would be as well. LH said she would start plotting trends with the intention of getting a better picture over the next few months.

CM brought up the issue over potential insolvency & what time scale would be involved at the current financial pace. LH stated although that calculation has not been done as yet, it was in her 'sights' & why she intended to contact those who had pledged. It was clarified that Oct 2023 was the time scale for the energy costs to be covered only.

Bank account - forms were handed out to the proposed new signatories, LH, SH, LL & NC & all were agreed by the Board. For the time being, Jennie Harris & Liz Maunder will be kept to allow for the ease of communication if needed with the bank & then once the new members are in place they would be taken off.

LH was applying for a 2nd direct debt card in her name. Once in place the first will be removed, that being in the name of the late Jim Gray.

LH reiterated the need for a general call out for help with both book keeping & Sage. A request will go into the NsH newsletter & BW said he'd also make the request to Chiselborough residents. LH will also contact the previous Treasurer for advice. LH said she'd also speak with Nicola Rusling for potential help.

Pay Roll - all staff will be payed before Christmas.

Expenses claimed by the last Secretary have been payed.

The ABRI invoice was discussed with the need for the lease to be checked first. LH said she'd follow up the contacts provided by SM.

CM mentioned that the CLT had been nominated & given a donation from Solar Streets (a community energy scheme) of around £200. West Chinnock PC also stated that it was possible to approach them for a grant.

Other local potential grant opportunities were mentioned & LH said she'd raise them at the next Financial committee meeting.

IM confirmed that over £100 had been raised in the shop collection box, the box being donated by Peter Callaghan.

6.

## **Shop & PO Committee**

JN said that overall the first week of closing early hasn't had an impact on the customer numbers so far. Bagnell Farm produce is going very well with a 20% margin for the shop.

Plunkett was raised as far as any previous report available from their last visit. IM agreed to look on their website.

It was mentioned that Claire was finding it difficult to sometimes arrive in time at the shop on a Monday for cashing up, bearing in mind the closing time is now an hour earlier. SH agreed to cover Mondays once it was understood he could manage both Saturday's & Monday's takings as one entry.

JN also mentioned that in the past, usually every quarter, a Board member checked with the PO staff that all the processes were all ok. She said she'd look into it further. NC did raise the possibility of having to be 'authorised' by the PO.

Regarding shop job descriptions, JN said that in the new year she will be having a meeting with Claire & Cheryl to review them & clarify each of their roles.

Bonuses &/or rewards for staff were discussed although it was very difficult to measure. However it was agreed that each staff member would receive a Christmas card & a gift to the value of up to £5.

JN requested, on behalf of Claire, that if a Board member specifically needed to speak to her please could they arrange a time as opposed to just popping in. That would greatly assist her during what is a very busy time at present.

Terms of references would be dealt with by the Shop committee.

7.

## **Solar**

NC stated that there are 2 issues - 1, panels on the shop roof or 2, an array in the field at Minchingtons Close.

He made it clear that any formal contact with South Somerset Community Energy Society (SSCES) had to be from the Board & not himself due to his declaration of interest.

He continued explaining that permissions were in place for panels on the roof & then reminded the Board that SSCES could be responsible for the project/cost & panels & that the CLT in turn would receive electricity at a discounted per unit price. At present that amount has not yet been agreed but hopefully, would be the amount pre 30th September.

The shop uses an average of 30,000 kw per year. The panels would generate on average around 8000 kw per yr. However against an 83.61p per kw used it will work out as a saving with grid input into the shop.

NC estimated between £15,000 - £20,000 to have panels on the roof, although over estimated due to demand & fitting. Taking into account the 83.61p it would probably be around a 7yr pay back.

The 2 options would be either with SSCES for an unknown lower rate per unit or it was done by the CLT.

NC stated that his belief was that the A frames on the shop roof were strong enough to take the rails but that would have to be confirmed by the installer. This had been initially checked by the property contractor (Julian Cole) & who has some history in dealing with the roof.

It is understood that the lease would be renewed without issue.

LL did express his caution with balancing the available pledged money to cover the energy cost against, a large financial investment at this time.

NC felt that the project was worth doing, less so with SSCES. However CM's thoughts were more with his concerns with the roof & the time considerations is arranging funding as opposed to going with an existing organisation in that they have the risk & it's more immediate.

LH said she would take the options to the Finance committee.

NC then explained that previous models used by SSCES was that they had worked with schools & a community hall. So both the user & grid benefited as a business case. For the CLT the point was to get a low as possible kw per hr charge.

BW made the point that if the money was raised, then there's no risk as it's not coming direct from the CLT.

The 2nd issue was NC discussing the array in the field. He reminded the Board that there was planning permission with previous thoughts for an 86.5 kw array, this being about 85,000 kw per yr. The drawback in the past was that the electricity couldn't get directly to the shop.

Options could be for an energy provider to have the energy produced for a return or, become part of a community energy club thus getting more per kw per hr generated as we would then be selling it to individual homes in the village via a common provider through Smart meters. There has to be a provider whichever project is undertaken.

National Grid have been very helpful & are unlikely to have an objection to it.

Octopus have already helped a Bridport community club.

SSCES are interested but do recognise that it's extremely difficult.

Our advantage is that we own the land, have the permissions in place together with the 'will' & have a PO that can deal with the bills from the community club members.

The cost in 2013 was around £50,000 probably now around £75,000 plus. This could potentially be a business for the CLT. NC continued saying that it may be beneficial in exploring the idea with Octopus with their involvement to further the project.

NC suggested that a decision would need time by the Board but to email him with any questions.

## 8. **Marketing**

IM stated that regarding the flyer in the newsletter there had been an increase in transactions & with the SGM, the shop is in people's minds. Facebook was being utilised & perhaps the advertising of the solar panel project would keep it current. He was looking at other options that he will report to the Shop committee with.

IM briefly discussed emails & domains. It was agreed that he researched for the best deal to have one specific for CLT use.

BW agreed to arrange circulars asking for help & informing Chiselborough of the shop needs around Sage/volunteers help & the shop.

LH brought to notice an event on Jan. 27th at 7pm at NsH village hall whereby a talk is taking place but the CLT have been given space to have a stand.

## 9. **Staff Training**

LL expressed his concern regarding the shop's Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) for selling alcohol at the shop. Currently it is Liz Maunder & everyone who works at the till should have signed to say that they have been trained by the DPS in line with our policy.

Therefore his view was that Claire should become our DPS which would involve a course. He also said that he'd written a policy covering who can sell what & what type of ID would be acceptable. LL said he was happy to do the training with the volunteers & cover the various times over a period of weeks. However if Claire is trained she can then cascade the training.

CM felt the Board could approve the expenditure.

LL said he would email to the Board a policy.

Claire would be approached by JN.

11.

### **Membership**

- (a) **Records** - SH stated that the folder had been checked through & re-organised. There were several members who needed checking on e.g. those who had died & details of their share/s status. He also advised that the membership spreadsheet was currently being updated & requested any further paperwork &/or info from the memory stick be passed on.

SH to continue the updating & enquires.

- (b) New Applications - None  
(c) Cessations - None

12.

### **A. O. B - Urgent**

None

One question raised by JH was Manual Handling Training in the workplace & that she'd look into it further.

Next meeting dates were discussed for January 10th & February 14th.

Meeting concluded - 10.05pm