



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 19th March 2024, 7.45pm in the Village Hall Meeting Room.**

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

### **1. Apologies**

Brian Wickins & John Forsyth (JF)

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

LH declared that she was now a Director with Take Art.

### **3. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting (27th February)**

Approved, signed & dated.

### **Matters Arising -**

NC mentioned that now the roof was almost finished it would be useful to now gather ideas for the future of the shop interior. An idea from Lynn Orchard (landlord) the possibility of a suspended ceiling which her husband had previously started.

### **4. Property / Assets & Shop roof**

NC visited the field on Monday 18th & the sheep were in attendance. The fencing repair is ongoing.

LH made mention of a point raised from the recent Finance Committee meeting, whereby Jonathan Naughton made the suggestion that as a CLT we ought to be more aware on what the role of a CLT is really all about. This would include having a 'watching brief' on property & land opportunities in the area whereby they could be potentially of Community Interest (CI).

NC explained the mechanics of how a CI is achieved.

The idea was generally accepted but of course the Parish Council would also be involved where planning was required.

LH spoke about the current shop lease which expires in 2026. The main issue was if we did refurbish the shop (in line with the proposed 3yr business plan) just how far is it taken knowing the lease expiry date.

NC suggested that the landlord is spoken to whereby the lease renewal & refurbishment are as one package & therefore pitched as an overall improvement to secure a new lease term.

Other options were discussed, for example, alternative locations or buying the current building.

NC did make the point that we would need a method for raising funds, not necessarily now but for a potential future project.

## **5. Finance**

LH's pre circulated report was discussed. February had been a good month, being positive at CLT level, shop & PO. There was a strong possibility that we would break even by the end of the month.

The wage increase due (9.8%) adds around £400 per month to the overheads.

NC mentioned that the action taken last year was reducing the shop hours & would it be worth taking the late Thursday & Friday opening hour off & reduce the hour on Saturday with the PO.

RA did ask how useful it was to have the extra hour on the Thursday & Friday.

SH said it needed consideration but that the hours, where cut, are done fairly.

LH stated that JF has been preparing trading data for those hours to be able to make an informed decision.

A letter had been sent to all staff informing them of their wage increase.

Energy consumption has risen slightly, mainly heating in January & NC asked if the Volunteers could be reminded about not leaving lights on at the rear of the shop unnecessarily. RA to email.

NC did wonder if motion sensor lighting could be thought about & that could coincide with the refurb as & when.

Mike Dryhurst has recently carried out a risk assessment for the electrical appliances. His view was that as most are permanently plugged in e.g the fridges & freezers then they are not portable, so would not need to be covered for PAT testing. His view is that it's a low risk & no need to PAT anytime soon. Potentially a self PAT testing kit could be purchased & there isn't a need to be qualified to carry the testing out, just be competent & Mike, as a former PAT trainer, could pass on the required knowledge. Currently PAT testing is done during May & Mike to be contacted again.

Electricity pledge income is up to £16,640 & will, by the end this year, be close to £17k. Responses so far have nearly all been positive for a change of use for pledged monies thus allowing around £13k being available for other use.

The bank account is healthy at £65k & Sage's final figure will show higher as it holds 3 days worth of card purchases.

Finance regs are being prepared for the shop as currently they are geared up for the CLT as a whole. This would mean that certain members/staff could spend/make purchases up to a certain value with a limit.

This could also be referred to within job descriptions.

Trading figures (via JF) show that the increase in sales has been driven by transaction values with footfall currently flat. The marketing publicity is no doubt contributing although profit is also still stubbornly flat. JF has done some research looking at Bookers v Youings (as mentioned at last month's meeting) with the comparison products that can be supplied. This is still ongoing to allow for the current stock to be fully assessed before making an approach to both wholesalers for a better suppliers price.

The Business Plan is still ongoing with a draft hopefully available soon.

NC has now been put forward as the PO lead & AF spoke with Liz Maunder & confirmed that the contract is with the CLT & not an individual. The 'authorised' person would be Nicola, with the Postmaster being the CLT.

EPOS is still ongoing & there has been a positive reaction to a new system in the offering from the volunteers & with the card machine matching the till when used.

A Reserves policy is currently being drafted to ensure there is enough money in the bank. So for example, this would cover, if the need ever arose, the repaying of all the membership & investment shares, although the Board still has the overall say on those repayments.

An accountants meeting has been arranged for the 21st March to discuss this & other areas of the finance.

## **6. Secretary & Action Log**

IM had nothing specific to report & the Action Log was discussed with updates being requested on progress.

## **7. Shop & Post Office**

SH updated the board on the progress that Peter & Steve were making with the work they were doing concerning the bench, the vegetable racking & the outside shop sign lettering. The board approved a circa expenditure of £100 to cover their costs which would require receipts & a breakdown. SH to email Peter.

2 new volunteers for cashing-up have been recruited - Sophie Snow & Francesca Chignell. LH suggested a cashing-up refresher for those currently involved after which the new volunteers would then be trained & mentored etc.

NC stated that he was sorting a new lock for the cigarette cabinet.

## **8. Post Office (Saturday opening hours)**

Further trading figures v opening hours are still required to make an informed decision as discussed during the above finance report.

## **9. Marketing**

IM explained the basis of the Local Produce campaign & provided examples of stickers & notices that would be used. These would be applied to both local produce & those local businesses who supply the shop.

This promotion will run for a few weeks from 8th April, with the idea of customers being able to hopefully make a local choice.

NC did ask if a legend could be made available for when the campaign ends to continue to advertise the supplier/produce origin.

NC also thanked IM for his efforts with the marketing.

## **9. Health & Safety**

SH - Nothing specific to report.

## **10. A O B**

LH stated that the stocktakers are now required for 1st April - SH to arrange.

AF stated that checking with the insurance policy, all keys are removed from the premises & police responding to any alarm call. If there is no police response then the insurance co. need informing.

SH to contact Grapevine, the alarm monitoring company, to check.

AF to contact the Ins. co. & seek their advice & specifics on which keys they are referring to.

21.22 meeting finished

Next meeting dates - Monday 15th April (confirmed) & Monday 20th May both in the Reading Room, 7.30pm.

An AGM date for Monday 21st October was proposed.