

Ellingham Community Trust

Minutes: 11th December 2012 Ellingham Village Hall

Present Gustav MacLeod, Robert Stuart, George Unwin, Christopher Watson, Ruth Machen

Apologies Heather Cairns

Approval of minutes Minutes of the October meeting (previously circulated) were approved subject to addition of the phrase “or microwave system” (para 3 under ‘Broadband Update Statement & Registration’).

CW requested that there is a standing item on the agenda for financial matters, and that decisions made by trustees are shown in the minutes in bold.

Matters Arising GU reported that no inaccuracies were noted in the Community Trust Questionnaire results.
As yet no information from BT or Openreach regarding broadband.

Email account, website, photos/logo, indemnity insurance, financial Draft application form, guidelines & notes for applicants Set up of website by Bill Grisdale – in view of very low cost CW actioned (hosting and domain name – 2 year contract - £95.00) and site is now live. Home page and header image look good. CW to ask BG if he can design a simple logo. Site now requires development. Trustees to send information to CW for uploading – he will forward all information to web designer for upload. RM suggested 5 tabs along top as follows: Application Form & Guidance Notes; Case Studies of Projects; News; Links; Governance Documents (to include Trustee details and information on how to apply to be a Trustee). Trustees agreed to this proposal.

Decision: request that Bill Grisdale actions the above.

Action: CW

Email address(es) – trustees agreed that at present only 2 addresses required – admin@ for clerk and enquiries@ for RM and GM. Clerk also to have access to this address.

Action: CW

CW confirmed that indemnity insurance now in place.

CW circulated financial report showing income and expenditure since September. Trustees agreed to proposal by CW to transfer £25,000.00 to deposit account.

Decision: CW to make transfer as above.

Action: CW

Parish Newsletter Following a previous informal discussion Neil Mundy (Parish Council Chairman) and Eileen Duncan (Newsletter Editor) were invited to attend meeting to discuss possible joint funding of newsletter. ED was unable to attend but sent short report regarding costs and production/distribution. Currently newsletter is produced by PCC, 10 times a year, and distributed to 56 people who pay an annual subscription of £3.50. NM informed meeting that PC consider the newsletter should perhaps be distributed to all parishioners free of charge as it a useful means to disseminate information from both the PC and the CT around the community. In order to do this there will be some admin costs to be met and the suggestion was that these

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could be shared between PC, CT and PCC. It may be possible to reduce admin costs by distributing the newsletter via email where possible.

Trustees discussed whether this was an application to the Community Fund from a 3rd party or whether the question was to consider if a proportion of the Community Fund should be allocated by Trustees towards this publication, prior to the Fund being open for applications. Considerable deliberation took place prior to decision being made.

Decision: Community Trust to fund costs of producing a quarterly, universal newsletter (£200.00) for one year, situation to be reviewed after one year. Trustees will help with distribution of the quarterly newsletter.

Draft application form, guidelines & notes for applicants

GM suggested that RM's notes previously circulated should be included in the guidance notes for applicants. RM to look at Trustees guidance notes before Christmas and make amendments/additions (eg regarding strategic initiatives and group applications) then circulate to other Trustees for comment/amendment.

Action: RW/All

Guidance notes and governance documents must clearly state that only part of the fund will be available to the public via the application process and that Trustees may make executive decisions, informed by the questionnaire, regarding funding for certain strategic projects (eg green energy initiative).

Decision: If there are any potential strategic projects to be considered outside of the application process these must be fully discussed and agreed by Trustees before the Fund opens for applications.

GM noted that the simplest option to pay awards would be to pay invoices for work/services, set against the applicant's cost plan, rather than transferring funds to individual bank accounts. The grant offer letter would include payment schedule and would also state that if the cost plan varies from original approved application then applicant must refer to Trustees to check on spending.

Decision: all agreed to implementation of this procedure.

RS/RM noted that the information under 'How much can we apply for?' should be changed from "There is no limit to the amount you can apply for but no group will be eligible to access more than £20,000 in any financial year" to read: "any single application to a maximum of £20,000 in any financial year".

Regarding exclusions for religious organisations, GM will check whether the Charity Commission rules state that no religious organisation can apply, or whether it says that applications cannot be made for religious purposes. Likewise for political organisations.

Action: GM

Payment of Grants: change 2nd bullet point from "Payment of the grant may be in parts during which invoices should be submitted" to "Payment of the grant will be made in accordance with the payment schedule as agreed in the grant offer letter".

Action: GM

Regarding community versus individual benefit, CW and GU requested that a

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review of the guidelines is carried out. RM stated that the documents must be carefully formulated and must be agreed by all as these will be the guidelines on which Trustees make decisions about applications.

Decision: Review of guidelines by RM/CW and comment from others.

Action: RM/All

Broadband update GM had attended Community Forum meeting in Bamburgh – this included an agenda item on broadband. NCC made a presentation regarding the delivery of superfast broadband to rural Northumberland – this relies on round 3 of a DEFRA grant in 2013. If the DEFRA funding is not forthcoming there are three options: (1) cables are laid on a 'build and benefit' scheme using farmers/local contractors to build necessary channels at a fraction of BT's projected cost; (2) install microwave system (3) install satellite system – this is possible a more expensive option. GU – there is a microwave system in Seahouses installed by NCC to serve the TIC. It was noted that fibre optic cables are being laid at Preston - presume this is an upgrade of broken or damaged cables.

Scholarships GM reported that Ridgewind had received 8 applications and 2 were selected to receive scholarship – Emma Pringle and Ruth Machen. GM to write to E Pringle on behalf of trustees.

Action: GM

Green Energy Initiative GM suggested this could be a major focus for the Community Trust, incorporating the whole parish. Schemes could range from insulating homes to installation of a bio-mass system for several homes. CW stated that care must be taken to ensure that benefit does not go to individual householders who apply to the scheme – benefit must be to the community as a whole. A consultant to carry out an energy audit (*see below*) is however for the benefit of all parishioners.

Following GM's proposal at last meeting, which was agreed by those present, he had made initial contact with consultants (Natural Regeneration; Ethical Partnerships; North Energy Association) and asked that they attend February meeting to make free of charge presentation to Trustees on proposals for energy audit for the Parish. Following this they would be asked for final presentation by 15.2.13 whereupon Trustees would decide whether or not to commission one of the consultants. There is no commitment to proceed further at this stage and there are no indicative costs at present.

Decision 1: GM to contact the three companies to confirm date.

Decision 2: Trustees to discuss questions for consultants at January meeting.

Dates of Next Meetings
Wednesday 9th January
Wednesday 6th February
Thursday 7th March

Minutes prepared by: Elspeth Gilliland

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