

Ellingham Community Trust

Minutes: 7th January 2014

Ellingham Village Hall

Present: Gustav MacLeod, Heather Cairns, George Unwin, Christopher Watson, Stanley Calvert

Apologies: Robert Stuart

Approval of Minutes: Amended AGM minutes approved and signed; minutes of 4th December approved and signed although SC stated that the minutes were inaccurate – see 'matters arising' below.

Matters Arising: Payment to A Newbiggin not yet cashed – letter and box of chocolates received from the family.

Action/Decision: *CW to contact to ascertain whether or not cheque will be cashed; chocolates to be donated to staff at Ellingham School.*

Funding application for trees, stakes etc paid. Although it had been agreed at December meeting that research into costs should be made prior to final funding approval and that two estimates should be provided in order to show value for money, applicant had explained there was some urgency to purchasing and planting trees as they were out of the ground and could sustain damage if not re-planted quickly. CW and GM had spoken with applicant and agreed that it was reasonable under these circumstances to accept one quotation in view of the above information and because research into costs had already been carried out. SC stated that this was not the agreement which was reached at the December meeting and that none of Trustees are entitled to make such decisions outside of a meeting without the agreement of the others – the Articles state clearly that decisions will be made by a vote of all the directors (present at a meeting). He also stated that a formal vote had not been taken at the meeting.

Decision: *All agreed that in future a formal show of hands must be made when taking decisions.*

Solid Fuel Scheme Review: 113 forms were submitted, 1020 packs of logs were delivered, 11 people had requested cash payments – cheques ready for counter-signature and can then be distributed. There were no outstanding requests and a note is to be added to the website stating that the scheme is now closed. Cost to Community Trust: £3292.00. Some logs left – discussion as to whether to sell them or keep for next year. Scheme had been successful – no negative feedback and it was felt to be a very good community scheme. CW will carry out short survey via email in mid-January to get some written feedback.

Decision: *Trustees voted 4-1 to find secure and dry storage for logs to keep until next winter.*

Action: *i)CW carry out survey ii) locate storage space for remainder of logs.*

LED Scheme: Following the success of the solid fuel scheme CW/GU proposed, subject to agreement of Trustees, that a community-wide scheme supplying LED lamps to parishioners could be rolled out in the summer months. CW/GU would research cost of bulk buying LEDs, looking at a budget of £3-4k. Parishioners would then be given a form to complete choosing which type of lamp they require – there would be a limit to the amount supplied to each household.

Decision: *HC proposed that this scheme should go ahead; SC seconded. Trustees voted unanimously in favour.*

Action: *CW/GU will carry out research and report back to Trustees.*

Monitors: HC asked whether energy-consumption monitors which were to be loaned by Bell View had been received. GM suggested that if they were not forthcoming in the next few weeks the Trust could look at purchasing some.

Decision: *Request to borrow once more, if monitors not received then look at cost of buying. Action: GM*

Treasurers Report: Payments made/received as per Treasurer's Monthly Report attached. Bank accounts balances total £66,571.31. GM noted that indemnity insurance cover to be looked into.

Action: *CW/GU/SC to look into this and report back at February meeting.*

MINUTES

Update with Ethical Partnership Engagement: GM had forwarded SC's comments regarding letter of engagement to AC who had responded. CW noted that he had believed that the letter from SC was internal, not to be copied direct to EP. Whilst he did not disagree with the matters raised he felt it was a mistake to use such intemperate language when addressing Ethical Partnerships; it was a shame to damage what had so far been a good working relationship.

SC stated that the terms set out by EP gave EPC no rights whatsoever and that Sintons had highlighted the same issues.

A lengthy discussion ensued in which it was explained that EP are not employed to do anything further until their letter of engagement is amended/agreed and signed.

CW noted that the Trust and EP had worked together to agree the first contract without any acrimony; if EP can again be flexible then it will be possible to reach agreement.

HC pointed out that EP are not to act as Clerk of Works but rather to project manage – with regard to the school boiler they have obtained planning permission and sourced boiler, and will engage contractor subject to approval by Trustees once letter of engagement agreed. She also noted that the work carried out so far by EP has been relatively low-cost, and they have delivered what they were asked to do. It was stressed that there is some urgency needed to get letter of engagement agreed in order to move projects forward.

Decision: All agreed that GM should contact AC by 'phone in the next two days to discuss in first instance and advise that Sintons solicitors had highlighted the same points as SC, then pass on to HC/CW – aim to negotiate a firm and fair contract for both parties.

Update on Green Energy Schemes: Planning consent for pellet store at School has been granted. Boiler to be installed in existing boiler area. Boiler supplier/installer has been agreed but store has to be built first – all agreed that HC should speak to Head Teacher, check that she has plans and copy of consent, and advise that she should arrange for this work to be carried out as soon as possible.

Action: HC discuss with Head Teacher as soon as possible.

Considerable discussion then took place about next schemes, first of which would be solar panels at school and/or Andy Frater's land. Agreements from various parties involved in these scheme required prior to going ahead, and costs need to be finalised. Decision also required as to whether to pay for work from Trust capital or whether to seek funding, and information about feed-in tariffs, renewable heat incentives etc required. Decisions cannot be made until all information available. SC suggested it was dangerous to borrow money when there is no contract between ECT and Windfarm owner/operator. CW noted however that no bank or other financial organisation would loan money if there was no guaranteed income.

Regarding green energy scheme proposal to take a share in commercial wind turbine, SC pointed out that the Articles state that the Trust cannot enter into any commercial taxable transaction – which is what this scheme would be. SC also listed several points which needed to be changed, and one possible amendment. As this was not an agenda item it was agreed that SC would circulate this information to other Trustees and it would be discussed at the next meeting.

Action: SC circulate points for amendment to all Trustees prior to February meeting.

Decision: Agenda item for February meeting "Amendments to Articles of Association".

Broadband: Meeting scheduled for 29.01.14 at 10am in Village Hall, with British Telecom, to look at cost and plan for parish. Notices advertising meeting have been displayed on parish noticeboards; Trustees should also tell as many people as possible so that all interested parties have the opportunity to attend.

Applications for Funding: No new applications for funding received.

Review of Pensioners Provision: Discussions had been held with some older members of the community. Problem is that there is not much cohesion of this age group and any requests should come from them – eg by forming a group or groups (as the Ladybirds had been). All agreed to wait and see if any proposals are put forward. Also bear in mind that the Trust may need to support the 460 bus service in the future, in order to maintain this service which is mainly used by older people, or by providing a service that makes one trip a month to another destination (ie not Alnwick).

Next Meeting: Wednesday 5th February, 7pm in Ellingham Village Hall.

Minutes prepared by: Elspeth Gilliland

MINUTES