

Ellingham Community Trust

Minutes: 10th September 2014

Ellingham Village Hall

Present: Gustav MacLeod (in the Chair), Robert Stuart, Heather Cairns, Christopher Watson Stanley Calvert; George Unwin.

Allen Creedy (Ethical Partnerships) attended for first part of meeting.

Update on Green Energy Schemes & School Biomass Boiler: Biomass boiler – draft legal agreement received. SC and M Reed have been able to look at this but SC has not had sufficient time to examine properly. He stated that there is too much reliance on donations (to the school and from the school to the company) and noted that HMRC is not keen on schemes couched in this way – they may see this as tax avoidance. He added that there will be no liability to pay Corporation Tax as the Trust will not receive sufficient revenue to do so.

AC noted that there are time pressures for installation and commissioning of the boiler as the RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive) will reduce from 8.6p to 7.6p at the end of October. There is not enough time to get the boiler installed by then however it could be installed in the Christmas holidays, or there may be an opportunity to install whilst the school is open as long as health & safety measures are in place.

SC proposed that he was given time to look properly at the draft legal agreement after which he would meet with Matthew Wood-Williams to ensure that a simple agreement is drawn up. SC asked for clarification on a number of points in order that he can do this.

AC noted that the School will provide meter readings to Offgem which then makes the RHI payment to the School based on number of Kw hours produced – this is subsequently reimbursed to the Community Trust. Trustees agreed that quarterly rather than monthly payments would be preferable.

Decision/Action: Trustees unanimously agreed that SC would meet with Samuel Philips next week to discuss simple legal agreement, and will ask for this to be drawn up within 7 days.

Update on Projects – AC presented a briefing paper (attached) on schemes which had previously been considered. He noted that incentives are attractive for land owners but not necessarily for working in partnership with the Trustees. GM expressed concern about grant received from RCEF. AC advised that the grant for feasibility study had no strings attached; he will update RCEF on the schemes. AC also noted that network grid operators are establishing Community Energy Schemes which communities can bid into – the Trust may be able to do this. AC will look into this.

Decision: AC to update RCEF on schemes and will look into Community Energy Schemes.

Broadband Update: This item was moved forward on the agenda. The Parish Council will apply to NCC to be considered for inclusion in allocation of the £4,000,000 funding which has been secured for extension of broadband in Northumberland. The Community Trust will endorse this application.

Decision/Action: GM will email draft letter to Allen Creedy and Trustees.

GM noted that Cybermoor advised that BDUK funding may also be able to provide a network system in Ellingham – if this was to go ahead it would provide fibre direct to premises which would be a better option although there may be cost implications.

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising which were not covered by the agenda.

Approval of Draft Minutes: Minutes of 17th July amended as per agreement at August meeting were signed; minutes of August meeting also agreed and signed.

Treasurers Report: Bank balances – Current Account £63,287.71, Deposit Account £23,754.35 – total £87,042.06. There have been no transactions in the last four weeks.

MINUTES

Draft financial report just received from accountant; he has asked 10 supplementary questions to which Treasurer will respond within the next 7 days. GM noted that the report states that Trustees have received no benefits – this to be amended to state that Trustees ‘have received no greater benefit than any other parishioner’. All agreed.

SC to download Charities Commission conditions regarding becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation for which the basis is a Constitution rather than Articles of Association.

Action: CW reply to Accountant's questions; SC download information from Charities Commission website; GM to send amendment regarding Trustee benefits to Accountant.

ECT LED Scheme returns and action: A total of 97 forms have been submitted by Parishioners; 29 have not applied. Due to large number of LEDs being ordered discounts are high therefore Treasurer requested that he is given permission to increase the number of lamps ordered as long as he stays within the £11,000 budget originally agreed.

Action: CW to purchase LED lamps within budget of £11,000

Noted that storage arrangements for the solid fuel scheme have been agreed with Mr P Robson and the scheme will be launched again in November but the quantities will be double what was purchased in 2013.

Chathill Road Safety Initiative: Mr Snowball, Chathill resident, had raised with CW the lack of observance of the 30mph speed limit in Chathill where there is a railway crossing, residents living adjacent to the road, and the cycle route which passes through the village. It was suggested that the Trust could fund, or part-fund, static flashing speed indication signs at either end of the village. HC to look into costs etc in her role as County Councillor.

Decision/Action: All agreed to this proposal. (GU & HC abstained due to conflict of interests as they are members of Parish Council). HC to investigate costs etc.

Dates of next meetings: Wednesday 15th October 2014
AGM Wednesday 26th November 2014

Minutes prepared by: Elspeth Gilliland