

Ellingham Community Trust

Minutes: 17th July 2014

Ellingham Village Hall

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

Matters Arising (*not dealt with below*): SC circulated his comments on the minutes of June meeting, as follows:

1) SC had not agreed to the payment of deposit to the School and that no formal vote was taken. He further noted that correct procedure is that any decision or action point arising from discussions should be formally voted on.

2) SC felt that the charges from Sintons for advice on Trading and regarding the Ethical Partnerships agreement were unnecessary and should not have been incurred. SC had given advice on both matters to the Trust and there was no need to seek further advice from Sintons. After considerable discussion it was agreed that SC is a member of the board and not the Legal Adviser to the Trust, and therefore on occasions it may be prudent to seek clarification from the appointed legal team, ie Sintons Solicitors. In this instance SC had raised serious concerns regarding trading which the Trustees felt necessitated seeking further clarification from the appointed legal advisers and formally record that this advice had been sought. All agreed that in fact Sintons advice had been ambiguous.

Decision: Trustees agreed that advice from Sintons would not be sought on every occasion but there may well still be circumstances where it is necessary to refer to them.

Blue Energy – GM expressed concern that he had not received any communication from Blue Energy. Clerk to forward the contact details she has to GM.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of 4th June (previously circulated) were proposed as a true and accurate record of the meeting by HC. Proposal seconded by RS; GM, GU and CW voted to approval; SC abstained from voting. Minutes were duly signed.

Treasurers Report: Bank balances total £48,652.30. Spend since June meeting - £125.37 (electricity usage monitors); £1,044.00 Sintons; £375.00 Companies House – fine for late submission of accounts; £17.00 Woodhorn Enterprise; £11,730.00 Ellingham School.

Accountant Services – Michael Reed of 'Focus Community & Business Services', chartered accountant based in Seahouses, has agreed to undertake all accountancy matters including submission of returns to Charities Commission, Companies House and HMRC, annual audit, end of year accounts for AGM, etc for the sum of £1,125.00 per annum. CW's recommendation to the Trust is to engage his services for the current year and review the position at the end of the year. HC asked whether more than one quotation should be obtained. CW advised that a delay in engaging accountancy services may result in problems as HMRC requires urgent information regarding the Trust's charitable status, as currently it is treated it as a Limited Company. Ideally at least 2 quotes should be sought but due to these time pressures it would be better to employ this accountant for one year in the first instance. HC proposed that CW should proceed with this engagement, RS seconded proposal and Trustees voted unanimously in favour.

HMRC forms – The necessary forms to ensure that Trust is registered as a charity and therefore not liable for tax were completed with two Trustees listed (guidelines implied that this was acceptable) but have been returned as the details of four Trustees are required. CW noted that Sintons had not informed HMRC that the Trust was a charity rather than a limited company although the Trust had understood that Sintons was going to do so. HMRC has allowed 2 years for this to be sorted out so return not to be submitted until May 2015. Accountant will take full responsibility for submission of all documents to Charities Commission, Companies House and HMRC.

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GM noted that, with regard to changing to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Amanda Maskery (Sintons) had advised deferring this until at least September this year.

Decision: *CW to engage Michael Reed as accountant to Trust for the next 12 months.*

LED Scheme Progress: CW distributed forms amongst Trustees – these to be delivered to each household as soon as possible. Closing date for the scheme is 31st July, then an order will be submitted to LED supplier.

Action: *GM will deliver to Henhill, Newham, Preston and Priestdean; GU will deliver to Chathill; RS will deliver to Brownieside, Brockdam and Tynley; HC will deliver to Ellingham Village and Wandylaw.*

Update on Green Energy Schemes: Although the School Governors had wanted installation to go ahead as soon as possible, the Church has stated that it requires the legal agreement to be in place prior to installation. Once the agreement has been signed and the Church Commissioners have had sight of this then installation should be able to go ahead. The legal agreement is between the Trust and the School/Governors and it is the responsibility of the Governors to report to the Church Commissioners. GM explained that Samuel Phillips (solicitor drawing up the agreement) must have sight of a resolution that two of the Trustees can sign the agreement. The agreement is being progressed as quickly as possible and will be circulated by GM to all Trustees when it arrives, and will be checked by SC. Trustees voted unanimously that GM and SC should be empowered to sign the legal agreement.

Decision: *It was resolved that two Trustees, namely Gustav MacLeod and Stanley Calvert, are empowered to sign the legal agreement in respect of the biomass boiler to be installed at Ellingham Village School.*

Broadband Report Update: GM has had discussions with John Cooper (Arch Digital) and Kevin Woods and Simon Robeson (North East Director, BT). They are looking at gap funding situations such as putting a cabinet in Ellingham village with the Trust installing fibre optics to houses. As yet BT has not decided what level of service/installation can be provided by BT in this area so the Trust cannot assess what it can do until BT comes forward with a scheme. GM noted that he will continue to pursue this matter via 'phone calls and emails but if any of the other Trustees would like to assist or take on this project they should come forward. SC stated that not all parishioners would wish to pay the extra cost of superfast broadband. CW noted that all cost implications would need to be considered.

Position of Trustees: GM noted that when the Trust was set up it conducted a Parish-wide survey from which a list of parishioners' priorities was produced. Broadband was the highest priority, public transport was second and seventh was the village school.

Any other Business: GU advised Trustees that the Stephen Carey Trust and NE Ambulance Service had made a presentation to the Parish Council regarding the purchase/installation of a defibrillator in Ellingham Village. The cost is £2,000 (plus a possible replacement door and lock to the Hall); Stephen Carey Trust will fund £1,000 of this. The Parish Council had voted unanimously to make an application to the Community Trust for the balance of the installation costs. RS proposed that the Trust should fund the additional £1,000 plus the cost of new door/locks. SC seconded the proposal and Trustees voted unanimously in favour.

Decision/Action: *Parish Council to be asked to submit formal application to Trust.*

HC noted that Mrs Machen had begun to complete an application for funding towards the 460 bus service but as the costs are currently covered she has decided not to submit the application at present – however an application may be received at a future date.

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Dates of next meetings: Thursday 14th August, 7pm, Ellingham Village Hall

Minutes prepared by: Elspeth Gilliland