



BOARD OF DIRECTORS And Observers

Minutes of Board Meeting

17th May 2017

PRESENT:

Ken Christy (Director) George Hook (Director)
Fabienne Fraser-Allen (Director) David Scudamore (Director) Richard Hollingum (Director)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Elaine O'Leary (Manager) Linda Hook (Rural Wellbeing Fieldworker)
Sarah Clarke (Centre Co-ordinator) James Davidson (Caretaker)
Dawn Howard (Rural Wellbeing Fieldworker) Frances Harris (Community Facilities Advisor)
Rufia Ashraf (Rural Wellbeing Administrator)

• **APOLOGIES:**

Gareth Lugar-Mawson (Chair)
Bernard Lock (Director)
Catherine Lomax (DDC & NCALC)
Hugh Fenton (CVS)
Rebecca Breakwell (Rural Officer)

- Ken Christy chaired the meeting in GLM's absence. KC explained that they hoped to be able to skype GLM during the meeting. KC also explained that they had sought advice prior to the meeting and the Board meeting is Quorate.

The Staff, Board and Observers introduced themselves in a round robin.

EOL explained that a photographer from The Last Hurdle would be taking photos throughout the meeting from approximately 10.30am. The photos will be used for publicity. EOL stated that anyone that did not wish to be photographed could leave the meeting during this time.

KC stated that there would be an agenda change, items 4 and 5 would be done first.

• **APPOINTMENT OF RICHARD HOLLINGHUM AS NEW TRUSTEE TO NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ACRE BOARD:**

GH proposed that Richard Hollingum be appointed as a Trustee of Northamptonshire ACRE. This was seconded by KC.

APPROVED

• **APPOINTMENT OF DAVID SCUDAMORE AS NEW TRUSTEE TO NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ACRE BOARD:**

GH proposed that David Scudamore be appointed as a Trustee of Northamptonshire ACRE. This was seconded by KC.

APPROVED

• **APPOINTMENT OF FABIENNE FRASER-ALLEN AS NEW TRUSTEE TO NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ACRE BOARD:**

KC explained that an application had been received from Fabienne Fraser-Allen to become a Trustee.

GH proposed that Fabienne Fraser-Allen be appointed as a Trustee of Northamptonshire ACRE. This was seconded by DS.

APPROVED

- **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

GH & EOL declared an interest in the Hunsbury Hill Centre Limited.

GH declared an interest in the Rural Wellbeing Project as he is married to Linda Hook, our Rural Wellbeing Fieldworker.

- **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

- a) **Acceptance of Minutes:**

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 22nd February 2017 were approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed by GH, Seconded by KC.

Approved

- b) **Matters Arising (not included on the agenda):**

- Best Village Competition:**

DS explained that he had met with GLM regarding the future of the Best Village Competition and explained that NACRE had agreed to taken on the administration of the competition going forward.

A discussion took place regarding funds available and recruitment of volunteers, DS stated that the role might be better provided by a NACRE member of staff perhaps supported by a volunteer. He explained that it would be beneficial if a Board member could take on an active role. EOL explained that we do not have the staff capacity to take on anymore work at the moment.

It was agreed that DS should discuss with EOL to look for a way forward and report back to Board.

Action DS

The Best Village Competition should be added to the next agenda.

Action EOL

- **MANAGER'S SIX WEEKLY REPORT**

EOL presented report covering the new Rural Wellbeing Administrator – Rufia Ashraf, Defra reporting 2017-2018, an update on the ACRE business plan and funding bids. A copy of the report is included below, any questions and comments have been added in red;

1. Welcome

I would like to welcome Rufia Ashraf as our new Rural Wellbeing Administrator. Rufia started at the beginning of April 2017 and will be responsible for all administrative work for the Wellbeing Service including producing newsletters, updating the website, recording contacts and referrals to the service and collating data for the Big Lottery reports.

Rufia has a long record of working in the voluntary and statutory sectors across a wide range of organisations, many in the most deprived and vulnerable sections of the community. Until recently she was working for Northamptonshire County Council Adult Social Care where her work included undertaking a range of care pathway tasks that helped to promote independence, social inclusion and safeguarding of older adults. Rufia has many links to statutory and voluntary sector organisations including through her parish council work. I feel Rufia will be able to contribute greatly to the Wellbeing Service and hope she enjoys the work.

2. Defra funding and reporting 2017-2018

Defra will continue to fund the ACRE Network of rural community councils for the current financial year (2017-18). The amount allocated to each RCC is 93% of what was received last

year, which means NACRE will receive £47,340 and this will be issued quarterly. As at the time of writing, we had not yet received the first quarter funding of £11,835 but this should be in shortly.

The agreement between Defra and the network and ACRE is subject to each RCC demonstrating its commitment to continuous improvement, Network performance and a willingness to transform and modernise. Each member has to sign up to that requirement

The aim of Defra funding during 2017/18 is to deliver:

- Local strategic support to rural communities, enabling them to take action
- Sharing learning on sustainable funding models
- Providing access to local intelligence

And as last year, Defra wants to see individual RCCs engaging with strategic stakeholders and local communities across the following 8 work programme priorities (slightly different to last year's):

- Digital infrastructure
- Digital skills and inclusion
- Rural life opportunities: (childcare, education, health, skills)
- Social infrastructure: ensuring that community assets incorporating social and economic infrastructure, pubs, shops and Post Offices continue to be hubs of rural communities.
- Rural transport
- Renewable energy generation: exploring opportunities for renewable energy generation in rural areas to reduce energy costs and provide a potential source of income.
- Housing and planning.

Each year ACRE reports to Defra on a quarterly basis using the reports provided by all RCCs. The final quarter report is usually a full year coverage. ACRE also uses the information to produce their annual report on 'Making a Difference' about the Network.

The final quarter report for 2016-17 has recently been sent to ACRE along with a financial spreadsheet that gives a breakdown of how much of the Defra funding has been spent against each of the priorities. Copies of both are available.

DS asked if anything will change as it had been mentioned that the DEFRA funding was granted for the duration of the current Government.

EOL explained that a lot of time has gone onto the negotiations, they have said that the funding will continue for this year and that it is likely to continue for the duration of the agreement.

3. Network Development Plan

In the previous report I mentioned the Steering Group, of which I am a member, has been working on a **Network Development Plan (NDP)**, which was part of the Network—wide change required by Defra to ensure sustainability. This Plan will set out the objectives and actions the Network i.e. the 38 RCCs, will pursue over the lifetime of the Plan. It will link with the ACRE Business Plan that is also being developed by national ACRE.

3 RCC CEOs were tasked with producing the plan and the final draft has been produced. It will be circulated to all RCCs within the next week. It identifies a number of transformational change pillars for the network.

The ACRE Network Chief Exec event is being held in Solihull from 24 – 25 May and the main workshop session on the second day will focus on reviewing the detail of the NDP and how Network members can work together to progress the plan and the priorities/TC pillars. Trustees are welcome to attend the second day and take part in the discussion.

Network Concordat:

In the last report I mentioned that the Steering Group had developed a Concordat that defines the ACRE Network. This Concordat clarifies what the 38 RCCs and ACRE stand for and could be used in all funding bids, partnerships and publicity. This Concordat was signed by all 38 RCCs and national ACRE at the November 2016 ACRE Network Conference. A copy is attached.

4. ACRE Business Plan:

Alongside the Network developing its own Plan, national ACRE has been developing a Business Plan that will define its role both in relation to the Network / ACRE members and nationally. This work has been carried out by a consultancy company. As part of the process RCCs were asked for their views about core elements of the Business Plan and about ACRE's future priorities. Each RCC participated in a one to one telephone interview during which answers to questions that had been circulated previously were discussed.

Summary feedback from the interviews has been issued to all RCC CEOs. As this is a confidential document, copies have been sent to the trustees only. The Business Plan will be reviewed at the CEO event on 25th May.

5. Well for Life Roadshows

We were approached by First for Wellbeing, the Community Interest Company, set up by Northants County Council, Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) and Northamptonshire University, who wanted us to work with them on some Village Wellbeing days in the Daventry District. The idea behind the CIC is to work together with public, private and voluntary sectors to improve and streamline existing services, and to create new and innovative ways to help people live the best life they possibly can. Their website is accessible at: <https://www.firstforwellbeing.co.uk/> for more information.

In conjunction with First for Wellbeing and Daventry District Council, we are running 4 'Well for Life' Roadshows across the district between April and September. These are free events taking place in village halls for local residents where they can find out how they can improve their health and wellbeing by accessing the many services available to them but which so many rural residents are not aware of. There will be lots of promotional stands and gifts, activities to take part in and refreshments etc. The first event took place in Ravensthorpe on 26th April and the next is being held in Everdon on 15th June.

I have attached a poster showing the dates and locations. Please feel free to share with anyone you think may be interested.

6. Funding Bids

Waste less, save more

An application was made to the Sainsbury 'Waste Less, Save More' grant, which is part of their commitment to invest £10million over 5 years to encourage people to waste less food and to save more where possible. I applied for just under £50,000 to roll out the Olio app in East Northants and to link it in to other food saving initiatives around redistributing food from commercial operations to households. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful and the reason given was because the application had this extra aspect to it, whereas the main aim of the fund is to concentrate on supporting projects that specifically reduce household waste.

However I will look at alternative funding sources as I feel it is a valuable project and it certainly had the buy in of not only East Northants Council who wanted to work with us on it but also a number of organisations throughout the district who are involved in local food production and distribution.

I am currently writing several other bids to various funders including Awards for All and Santander. The bids relate to suicide awareness, rural energy advisors and financial affairs. More information can be provided at the board meeting.

7. Marketing

A marketing meeting was held to discuss what materials we need to publicise the work the charity is doing. As a result we have had 3 banners produced: one specifically about the work of NACRE, one on the Village Hall Advisory service and one around Neighbourhood Plans. Related leaflets have also been produced and are due to go to the printers.

The new NACRE website has been developed. There are some changes required and once these are done staff will be trained on how to access and update the new site. Rebecca will be responsible for keeping up to date the pages relating to planning, services, broadband etc, while Frances will update the Community Buildings page and Rufia will have responsibility for the Wellbeing Service pages. I will keep it up to date with items as necessary such as annual accounts, minutes from open board meetings, national ACRE news etc. I hope to have a short presentation at the next board meeting.

Our volunteer, David Wall, has been doing an excellent job of updating our Parish Council and village databases with a huge amount of useful information that staff can view before going to any village. It includes details of which parish is doing a neighbourhood plan, the facilities, amenities and services available in the village and forthcoming events to name a few items. We are really grateful to David for all the work he has put in.

- **STAFF UPDATE**

Please see a copy of the staff repost below, any questions and comments have been added in red.

Frances Harris – Community Facilities Advisor

Many village halls have their AGMs in April, so this has been an especially busy period with a large number of AGM-related enquiries. I continue to provide advice and support for the Bozeat Albemarle Scheme.

KC asked FH about the Bozeat Albemarle Scheme.

FH explained that this is something which is put in place by the Charity Commission in order for a church hall to become a secular community hall. An Albemarle Scheme, once granted by the Charity Commission, permits the church hall trust to grant a lease (usually for 35 years) to a community building trust. In the case of Bozeat, the community building trust is a newly formed Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Many village hall trusts in Northamptonshire are now considering becoming CIOs because incorporation helps in limiting liability for trustees.

In January, I attended CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) training for village halls advisers. It was organised by National ACRE in response to the growing number of village hall trusts seeking to become CIOs. There is a marked increase in enquiries from halls in Northamptonshire in relation to this complex area.

Two training events are to take place. The first, a social media workshop, will be held on Thursday 15th June and will focus on how to use social media such as Facebook and Twitter to promote a village hall or other community facility. The other, PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) training, will take place on 19th September and will be delivered by Quick Test, a professional PAT training company. Both events are aimed primarily at village hall committees and parish councils.

The annual ACRE training event for village halls advisers, which I helped organise with colleagues from East of England RCCs, took place last month. Because of reduced sponsorship, the event was shorter than in previous years and for the first time delegates were charged. Despite this, attendance was good and feedback has been positive.

National ACRE has confirmed that AON is planning to pay all **outstanding amounts owed to ACRE Members** for 2015 and 2016 by the end of May and believes AON is keen to continue its longstanding relationship with the ACRE Network.

Rebecca Breakwell – Rural Officer

Neighbourhood Plan Day – Thursday 25th May 2017

Preparations have been made and publicity given for the NACRE Neighbourhood Plan Day on Thursday 25th May 2017 to be held in the High Barn. The day is a combination of speakers and workshops and will allow Parish Council representatives to see the benefits of making a Neighbourhood Plan, look at what is protecting their community currently and gain the confidence to initiate a plan.

A copy of the agenda is attached.

Richard Hollingum, David Breakwell, Colin Dunigan and I are all speakers at the event. From the publicity around the event a number of Parish Councils have asked for details of the assistance NACRE can give beyond the day long course. I am currently talking to Nether Heyford and Silverstone about the progress of their Neighbourhood Plans, both communities are at the start of the process. A presentation to the residents of Duddington and Fineshade on the benefits and process of making a Neighbourhood Plan has also been given.

KC asked how many people had booked to attend the event.
RB explained that there were 27 so far and promotion will continue as they can book up to the day before. Payment can be made via bank transfer.

EOL explained that a package of services had been put together and should be available in the next few weeks.

Rural Crime Action Group

I attend the Rural Crime Action Group and a lot of work is being done by Task and Finish Group, a sub group of which I am a member, on the establishment of a Rural Crime Co-ordinator. Warwickshire has an established Rural Crime Co-ordinator, a role that was originally voluntary and then became a civilian post in the Warwickshire Police force and Northamptonshire want to replicate this very successful scheme.

Although Warwickshire Police has agreed to make available the publicity it uses it will all need to be badged up appropriately for Northamptonshire and to reflect the organisations supporting the scheme. The group, made up mainly of Police personnel, see NACRE's role as a conduit between the Police and Parish Councils and it is hoped that, through NACRE, support and possibly funding from Parish Councils for a paid Rural Crime Co-ordinator role may be sought.

Good Neighbour Schemes

I amended the Good Neighbour Toolkit for the village Good Neighbour schemes and subsequently Elaine and I together with Emma Parry from Daventry District Council delivered training on it to volunteer Scheme Co-ordinators from Braunston, East Haddon, Long Buckby, Crick, Barby and Moulton.

Daventry District Council have now set up their grant scheme to facilitate these schemes which allows grants of up to £1000 for villages within the Daventry district from the Second Homes fund and applicants have to agree to adhere to the NACRE Good Neighbour Toolkit to receive their monies.

I will continue to promote these schemes and assist the volunteers in the practicalities of setting up a scheme such as the development of policies and purchasing of insurance. I attended Long Buckby Annual Parish Meeting in a bid to recruit volunteers for the scheme.

Elaine and I are working on ways to obtain funding from other sources in order to roll out Good Neighbour schemes elsewhere across the county.

Events to publicise NACRE

I have attended the Falls Prevention event and the Parkinsons event at Moulton Village Hall and the Radio Northampton's Helen's Big Health Check. Frances and I attended the Funding Advice for Community Groups event run by East Northamptonshire Council and I attended for NACRE the Well for Life Roadshow recently at Ravensthorpe. At the time of the Board meeting I am delivering a session on what NACRE can offer at the Who Care's Week at Oundle Library.

Linda Hook, Dawn Howard & Rufia Ashraf – Rural Wellbeing Service

RiC Diary

- **March to May diary** -Continuing to visit villages with the RIC – moving into South Northants area. Good response from most areas, especially Daventry which achieved a high attendance of 35+ at the RIC. **-110 in total to date.**
- **June to August diary** - Finalising diary at present. Returning to villages including Barton Seagrave, Pytchley, Bugbrooke & Rothersthorpe.
- Will also return to East Northants (Kingscliffe & Nassington) as it was felt that there was more the RWS could achieve in this area.
- We will be looking into attending village events (Fetes/Festivals) over the summer including attendance with the RIC at 2 country parks. RWS will also attend the 'Well for life' roadshow dates as organised by Elaine and Emma at Daventry District Council.

Presentations

- As more people/organisations are aware of RWS, we have been contacted by South Northants & Cherwell Council to present at their Health & Wellbeing forum on the 20th June and have just been invited to speak at the S/N Parish Clerks Forum on the 26th May, promoting RWS and Good Neighbour Scheme.
- **Pattishall** and **Kislingbury** both have Over 50 clubs taking place in their respective village halls – both have high attendance. When attending KOFS (membership is over 100) to discuss our project attendance was over 45, and also with Pattishall Good Neighbours club, attendance was over 35 people. Good way to promote the service and both talks has resulted in referrals.

GH asked why we are working with Cherwell Council as we only work within Northamptonshire.

LH explained that South Northants and Cherwell are a joint Council.

Feedback

- A short survey has been devised and sent to previous users of the RWS. I was aiming for a return figure of 25% (10 surveys returned) which was achieved in the first two weeks – 11 returned so far. The majority of replies have indicated that the service is worthwhile and would recommend to family and friends. The information received will be collated and used to aid reporting.
- Also still making links with organisations and villages throughout Northamptonshire through Social Media.

DH explained that 12 positive, surveys have been returned so far.

Clubs

- Linda is persevering at the Irthlingborough 'Fettledene afternoon Club', which she has helped establish and I'm sure she won't mind me saying that while attendance is lower than anticipated, the same ladies are keen to attend every event and have stated that if it wasn't for this club they wouldn't leave the house at all. Motivation to keep going and promote the club even more.
- Linda is also involved in a new club which will shortly be rolled out in Easton on the Hill – set up by one of our Good Neighbours – Hilary.

Sarah Clarke – HHC update

- 62 weddings booked for 2017 at the moment, we have completed 10 successfully so far. We also have 2 provisional wedding bookings.
- We have created a Friday package for 2017 to try and pick up some last minute weddings.
- We currently have 59 corporate bookings and 8 social bookings confirmed for this financial year.
- We have 50 confirmed weddings for 2018 at the moment, the most we have ever had by the end of April for the following year is 33.
- We had a wedding fayre on Sunday 7th May it was extremely successful. We had over 240 people attend the event and all suppliers present felt it was one of the best they had attended.
- We are currently working with The Last Hurdle, a social media marketing specialist. Last Hurdle will be helping with Corporate, Social and Wedding marketing and will manage our social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest and so on. Our analysis of contacts to the Barns for viewings and bookings confirms that the majority of people now come through some form of social media outlet. Last Hurdle will produce more advertising materials for corporate events and enable us to increase the amount of corporate bookings we have throughout the year. We have signed a 3 month agreement with Last Hurdle and after this period it will be a rolling contract, which can be cancelled with 1 months' notice.

GH asked what the agreement was with the Last Hurdle.

EOL explained that they work for 12 hours per month across social media platforms; we have signed an initial 3 month contract which will then become a 1 month rolling contract.

GH asked if we could have contracted them by result.

EOL stated that this can be discussed but it is not an easy thing to prove as social media cannot necessarily be linked to any single booking and we do some of our own publicity in addition to theirs. They will report to EOL on a regular basis. At the moment, they are in the process of setting up accounts and compiling blogs and posts that have been approved by us for use on social media.

It was agreed that EOL would provide a brief report on this. RH offered to assist with the technical understanding.

Action EOL and RH

- The Lobby area in the high barn has been redecorated and the toilets are due to be finished shortly.
- The High Barn floor has been stripped, repaired and re-varnished. This is scheduled to take place every year due to the increased use of the barn.

James Davidson – Maintenance

- The back door of the farmhouse in the courtyard has been painted in black and 4 windows on lower level of the farmhouse as they were in a poor state.
- I have been carrying out regular maintenance inspections as set out in the Maintenance Plan. This highlighted that the chimneys and roof on the end of the farmhouse and Mrs B's cottage needed work as the mortar was in a poor condition. This work has now been done.
- I have been planting out and preparing plants for baskets, pots and borders. There is a large poly tunnel in the quad area that I used to store plants from last and I have also put the new seedlings for this year that have just been delivered ready to go in pots and baskets.
- A number of repairs and maintenance have been made to the men's and women's toilet areas including the flow valve into the tank, cleaning under sink and repair to wall.
- Grass cutting is now in full swing with weddings.
- All hedges have been pruned
- There is ongoing weeding – never ending.
- I want to get a Gold award in the Northampton in Bloom this year!
- I had to prepare the site for the wedding fair including jet washing all paths, cleaning windows in the Barns and farmhouse, removing dead plants etc.
- All the furniture in the board room, kitchen and staff room were moved out in preparation for new flooring, which has now been done.
- I assisted a tree surgeon with cutting down and removal of dead trees in the woods and stacking in tin barns, ready to be dried and sold. I have a licence to use a chain saw on low level items.
- Bark has been laid on the path around the front garden.
- Cleaned out and refilled pond at top of garden
- And there is general day to day work such as litter picking, fire alarm checks, setting up of Low and High Barns for events etc.

DS stated that he is impressed with the overall look and feel of HHC, including grounds and buildings, since his last involvement with the Board a few years ago.

GH asked for the cost of the chimney and roof repairs.

EOL explained that the Farmhouse and Cottage were approximately £8500 and the High Barn was approximately £5500.00.

JD explained that the roofers had completed a lot more work than we paid for, to a high standard.

KC thanked the staff and stated that the reports are a joy to read.

- **FUTURE MEETINGS:**

Wednesday 9th August 2017 (10am)

Wednesday 15th November 2017 **(AGM) – Timings to be confirmed**