



# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ACRE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

10am on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019

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## PRESENT:

Gareth Lugar Mawson (Director) <i>via Skype</i>	Ken Christy (Chair)
Richard Hollingum (Director)	Fabienne Fraser-Allen (Director)
Bernard Lock (Director)	Cameron Waldron (Director)

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Elaine O'Leary (Chief Executive)	James Davidson (Site Caretaker)
Sarah Clarke (Centre Co-ordinator)	Suzy Sanders (external minute taker)
Jessica Gooding (Rural Wellbeing Fieldworker)	Rebecca Breakwell (Rural Officer)
Frances Harris (Community Facilities Advisor)	

## 1. APOLOGIES:

Hugh Fenton (CVS Observer)	Catherine Lomax (DDC Observer)
Kay Giles (Rural Wellbeing Fieldworker)	David Scudamore (Director)

## 2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To be raised if relevant during the meeting.

## 3. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

1. Approval of draft minutes of the open Board Meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 were approved as a true and accurate record. **Proposed GLM and seconded KC**
2. Actions from previous meeting to be carried forward:

EOL to circulate the new Best Village Competition application form to the Board.

**Action EOL**

## 4. THE HUNSBURY HILL FARM PROJECT – AN UPDATE

Following the two project workshop meetings conducted RH delivered an update which shared the thought process and developments on this project (which was discussed in more detail at the Board Only meeting later in the day).

Workshop participants include Richard Hollingum, David Scudamore, Elaine O'Leary, Alison Brand-Barker (Nenescape) and Rachel Boyd (Director, Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust).

The meetings have been deemed successful with discussions, feedback, contacts and advice being shared amongst participants proving to be useful. Full details have been provided in RH's report, which was circulated ahead of the meeting.

RH explained that a lot of progress is being made, in particular:

- Green Spaces – Lockhart Garrett to be intrusted to apply to the Forestry Commission for a grant
- The Woodland Trust – boundary hedge replacement
- Introduction to Rick O’Farrell, NBC Director of Regeneration and Planning to start conversations regarding acquiring of adjacent woodland
- Adrian Ringrose, Architect from Stimpson Walton Bond is to visit for informal discussions regarding the buildings
- Sustainable energy solutions are being looked at
- Making tentative approaches to NBC regarding car parking off Ladybridge Drive

The structure of the group and amended terms are to be presented to the Board for approval. A Funding Plan for 2019/2020 has also been drafted. No further questions were raised.

## **5. BEST VILLAGE COMPETITON**

RB delivered an update on this initiative, explaining that the changes have been received well amongst the Parishes. Applications are being received along with good feedback about the improved process. The submission deadline is 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

Nigel Searle has been supporting in the promotion of the competition, but Libby Hart felt that the changes had been ‘imposed’ and that she ‘didn’t feel committed’ to continue. RB explained that she expected some ‘churn’ in the judging panel and that EOL and FFA are to be involved as Judges. No further questions or concerns were raised.

RB requests that all attendees are asked to encourage their respective villages to enter.

**Action ALL**

## **6. AWAY DAY AND AGM 2019**

EOL updated the Board with the details of the proposed Away Day to be held at Delapre Abbey (which has been provisionally booked) on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The location has been chosen as EOL felt it would be helpful to see the impact of the Abbey’s funding and see the work that has been carried out there. The day’s main focus will be the Hunsbury Hill Farm project.

The AGM is proposed to take place on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019 starting at around 6pm. EOL updated the Board on plans to seek two to three appropriate speakers for this meeting which would link to Rural England. RB, EOL & FH will be opening communications with possible speakers and welcome the Board’s input and suggestions of suitable contacts.

## **7. CURRENT BIDS TO FUNDERS**

*Homes England – government funding to encourage affordable housing*

In conjunction with Craig Phelps (ex-director of Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association), a bid was submitted to fund Craig (part time) for one year to work on getting three projects ready to apply for phase two of funding. This bid was rejected by Homes England on the basis that only Local Authorities can apply for staff costs. EOL stated that the wording was very ambiguous and that having spoken to several Local Authority Planning Departments, they confirmed they wouldn’t be applying but would be willing to support any community group who wanted to develop a community led housing project. EOL has continued to seek support to reapply.

### *Community Fridges and Northamptonshire Heritage*

Sue Davies from East Northants Council is working on a bid in conjunction with Mallows (who run the Food & Drink Awards in Northamptonshire). The project has come off the back of a similar initiative led by Jamie Oliver and its purpose is to encourage communities to share and swap local produce and historic recipes via a community fridge and at the same time celebrate local produce. In Somerset this initiative has increased footfall to the local shop or pub where the community fridge is housed.

### *Big Lottery - Continuation of the Rural Wellbeing Service*

EOL has met with Oliver (Savage), Lottery Funding Officer and discussed ideas and gauged his interest and support for a continuation of the project. The meeting was positive but unfortunately, Oliver has now been reassigned to cover the Leicester region. This is the sixth change of contact in four years. EOL is to meet with the new contact and continue conversations.

A proposal has been prepared and shared with the Trustees. EOL explained the application process of this bid and that the 'top loaded' approach which has been applied has been effective in the past and that proposals which are successful at the Application Panel stage have a good chance of receiving funding.

*EOL also delivered an update on four other projects under development which are detailed in the Staff Reports:*

- Difficult Conversations relating to wills
- A van for field workers to facilitate mobile coffee mornings
- South Northamptonshire Council – seven new Good Neighbour Scheme's rolled out by March 2020
- Daventry Citizens Advice - Mental Health advice and support relating to debt

## **8. STAFF REPORTS**

The staff reports circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting were discussed. KC asked the Board to raise any questions based on these reports and thanked the staff and EOL for preparing them.

GLM asked RB to clarify the situation surrounding Libby Hart's departure. RB explained that Libby Hart was not comfortable with the changes that had been proposed for the competition but that RB is now confident the right people and support are in place at the moment.

Promotional activities for the Best Village Competition were discussed including the possibility of contacting local (and national) radio.

EOL gave an update on wedding bookings, which currently stands at 84 confirmed with one additional provisional booking for 2019, 40 confirmed for 2020 with an additional 4 dates provisionally being held. A wedding fair is planned for 19<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and SC confirmed that The Barns was awarded 17<sup>th</sup> place (from 28 venues) in the Chronicle and Echo's Best Wedding Venues in Northamptonshire.

BL raised the issue of the challenges surrounding bus services in rural areas. A discussion was had regarding this national issue in which NACRE have very little power to influence. FH explained that community transport information is being shared.

EOL recognised the hard work from JG and KG on the Rural Wellbeing Service.

JG is to share details of the commitments being made for 2020 with the Board.

**Action JG**

CW made an observation regarding local village cricket teams folding and the impact it's having on the communities. A discussion took place around this as it could be something picked up by the Community Facilities Advisor, FH, for possible membership promotion and it was acknowledged that is a topic to keep in mind and for further conversation.

EOL to ask National ACRE what their view is on sports clubs in general, not specifically cricket clubs and ascertain whether there's a possibility for this to become a separate project/bid.

**Action EOL/FH**

Planned maintained work is progressing, which includes continued work on the windows. No other questions or concerns were raised, and KC thanked all staff for their continued hard work and commitment.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None raised.

## **10. AGREED DATES FOR 2019 MEETINGS**

- Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 – Away Day at Delapre Abbey
- Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019 – Pre AGM Board Meeting
- Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019 – AGM
- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019

*Meeting closed at 11am*