

## BOARD MINUTES



**Board Date**      18<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Board Time:**    5.30pm to 7.20pm

**Present:**            Ian Pope (IP), Keith Siseman(KS), Ross Weddle(RW), Alan Bowlas (AB), Tracey Gillies(TG)

**In Attendance:**    Julien Lake (JL) Ian Guthrie (IG)

### **Apologies for absence**

Monica Burns, Bernard Shaw and Ivor Dixon

IP started the meeting by formally recording his personal sadness at the sudden death of Chris Shaw who was Vice Chair of the Trust. Chris had been a great supporter of the Trust for many years and was well respected by the Board and staff. He will be sorely missed by all concerned.

It was unanimously agreed that Alan Bowlas be elected as Vice Chair and IP reminded Board members that he had a regular meeting with the Vice Chair and JL on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of every month and any Board member was welcome to attend.

### **1 Minutes of meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

The minutes for the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015 were approved and were signed as a true record. The following matters were raised

- AB raised the question of why grants from the CoRe Legacy Fund were able to be awarded to organisations from outwith Berwick and the immediate surrounding area. IP confirmed that this was part of the deal when CoRe ceased trading and was clearly stated in the documentation around grant applications from the fund
- RW raised the question of the continued late receipt of papers for Board meetings and it was agreed that these would be issued earlier in future. AB suggested that minutes of the meetings should be in the public demesne but only after they were approved and excluding any confidentiality issues.

### **2 Finance Update**

IG issued a report in a slightly different format to the usual Board report. The report gave details of the indicative balances on each of the Funds held by the Trust at the year end split between Restricted, Designated and Unrestricted Funds. He stressed that these were near final figures as a number of Debtors/Creditors were still to be accrued but overall they gave an indication of the possible year end balances. The only significant change to the figures was anticipated to be in the general unrestricted fund once the accrual for the turbine income for the last three months of the year was established. On this topic IG advised that at long last the revised financial model for the project had just been received but he had been unable to look at the detail of the model in advance of the meeting. A review of this model was a priority task to enable informed recommendations to be made to the next meeting on four specific points raised in IG's report ie the general level of balances, whether a separate balance based on average turbine income should be created, whether a repairs and renewals fund for the building should be created and the extent, if any, of the writing down of the £39k investment held in the Trust Accounts for the turbine project.

IG advised that he would be giving figures to Community Accounting for the year end in early February and expects these to be back by the end of the month to be circulated to the next Board meeting when the decisions mentioned above can be taken. The report was noted.

### **3 Children's Centre Nursery \*\* NOTE Confidential Item \*\***

JL issued a confidential report to advise members of discussions he has held with senior staff at Northumberland County Council asking whether the Trust would be interested in taking on the management of the nursery within the Berwick Children's Centre. If it were to be taken on staff at the Centre would transfer under TUPE regulations to the Trust and the Trust would have the use of certain rooms in the Centre but ownership/upkeep/maintenance of the building would remain the responsibility of the County Council. JL gave indicative financial figures based on current salaries and income based on various scenarios around occupancy levels. There was a substantial potential surplus in these figures but there would also be considerable additional expenditure items around supporting the venture.

JL advised that there was a large amount of work to be done to identify and quantify the various income/expenditure figures to decide whether the project would be

financially viable. He felt however that the indicative figures gave encouragement to explore the project and asked for members view.

There was general agreement that the proposal was worthy of more detailed discussion and RW wondered whether an independent viewpoint would be worthwhile. JL advised that through Locality he had been able to see a similar model in operation and felt that at this stage a second opinion was not necessary. It was agreed that JL should continue the discussions and report back to the next Board meeting.

#### **4 CEO Update**

JL issued a report highlighting the issues below

- Following Chris Shaw's death JL wondered if a commemoration of some sort recognising Chris's contribution to the Community would be a good idea. Following a discussion it was felt that it was perhaps premature and should be reviewed in six months time
- It was agreed that the mileage rate for staff be increase to 45p per mile
- The turbine money was received in November and, as reported earlier, IG has now received the updated financial model
- The Supporting Families contract is currently working well and the revised scheme from April onwards is awaited
- The Here For You project continues to look for funding opportunities and Jenny Inkster has resigned from her post thereby reducing expenditure in the short term
- JL is part of the Barracks Action Group and advised that consultants are to be appointed and to report back on their feasibility report by the end of March
- JL has been asked to lead on the Housing Sub Group of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group
- Four awards have been made through the CoRe Legacy Fund including one to the Trust. All applications have been processed through the agreed procedure
- Pension contributions for all staff will become mandatory under the auto-enrolment provisions in February 2017 but, depending on the outcome of discussions under the previous item, the Trust may wish to consider earlier implementation
- A discussion has been held with a representative of the Council's Asset Management Team regarding NCC properties in general but the Wallace Green

offices in particular. They will shortly be marketed for sale but NCC are prepared to consider a Community Asset transfer. JL discussed the scope for affordable housing and is to visit the site.

## **5 Strategy, Board Recruitment & Planning**

JL updated the Board on the strategy day which was held in December. Unfortunately there were only two Trustees in attendance and whilst the day had been very successful it is important to get more input from Trustees into the process. JL expanded on the outcomes of the day and then detailed his perception of the current position. He also gave the outline of a possible emerging strategy for the Trust. Members agreed that it was important that there was additional input from the Board into the process and it was agreed that a further day be held on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February from 10-00am to 2-00pm involving as many of the Board members as possible with some staff input.

On the question of Board recruitment it was agreed that this should be looked at immediately after the strategy day with a press item being released on aspects of the Trust's work incorporating a section on the requirement for additional Trustees. KS also found the process he has been through of being an attendee at meetings very helpful and thought that there was merit in adopting this. He had one or two people in mind who could be approached.

## **6 Any Other Business**

IG advised that one new signatory was required for the bank account held by the Trust. It was agreed that Ross Weddle would be the new signatory and the revised signatories would be as follows:- (with any two signatories required)

Bank Account; I Pope, T Gillies, A Bowlas, J Lake, R Weddle  
e-payments authorisation; I Pope, T Gillies, A Bowlas, R Weddle

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19-20.

