

MEETING OF THE HADLOW DOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE

Committee Room, Village Hall, Tuesday, 23rd May 2017, 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Bob Lake, Janet Tourell, John Thompson, Fiona Shafer, Nigel Harrison, Michael Lunn (PC), Nicola Jones

1. APOLOGIES: Richard Boswell, Vicky Richards, Sandra Richards, Rachel Lewis, Mike Barber

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING 16.02.17:

BL reviewed the minutes of the last meeting and these were agreed as a true and accurate record

3. ACCOUNTS (JThom):

Currently the account stands at £16,623.06.

i) During this financial year there have been two major times of expenditure: i) payment to MJB Architecture (£16266) and ii) £1200 to Urban Vision CIC. The total spend equates to the grant received from the Department of Communities and Local Government's Community Buildings Support Grant programme.

ii) The allocation of prize money for the HDCC Lottery draw held on 20th March is still to be dealt with. **ACTION: JThom to attend to this.**

4. UPDATE

i) Application to the Community Rights Programme for: a) grant of £22k b) Technical Support under Exceptional Circumstances (**BL**).

a) grant for £22k – there has been a change of personnel as far as the Development Manager's post (and our contact) is concerned. The newly appointed officer is requesting further evidence in terms of quotations for all the work to be carried out as part of Stages 2 & 3 of the design of the new building. This is in hand and hopefully we should receive some positive news by August.

b) Technical Support – with regard to the development of a Community Right to Build Order, groups facing a range of complex issues e.g. planning, may apply for further technical support from the programme. We have applied for and received approval for us to secure £6k of technical support from AECOM, a global company that can prepare such things as a Habitat Regulations Assessment screening and an Environmental Impact Assessment. The HRA will be a fundamental part of both a planning application or Community Right to Build Order and will be related directly to the Traffic Plan.

ii) Planning situation - ML

Cllr Michael Lunn spoke with his District Counsellor hat on and gave a full briefing and update on Ashdown Forest and the Local Plan. It is very clear from evidence that the nitrogen impacts of the forest (five year studies) that the situation is getting worse. The new Local Plan has yet to go out to formal consultation; however **ML** has raised the issue for support for new village halls and community centres. The portfolio holder Cllr Ann Newton has confirmed the support for community

centres and this is incorporated in the draft Local Plan (yet to be fully published). Also the Head of Planning Kelvin Williams has been supportive and suggested that they may be credits left to enable the new hall to go ahead and development of the old site to help fund-raise funds for the new build. This is something that is being tested by Buxted Parish Council whereby it is challenging the section 106 agreement and pushing for outline planning permission for housing on the old Reading Room site.

This is on basis that there are ‘credits’ available so that low cost housing can be constructed for local people and without the headroom being increased beyond the credits. Headroom of old doctor’s surgery in Buxted allows for some headroom. From the calculations these can be extended out to Hadlow Down because residents here used to use the old surgery in Buxted and, therefore, the new doctor’s surgery, built prior to the Ashdown Forest ruling, carries this headroom capacity. These credits can’t be used; they are restricted to that ward and this is why Hadlow Down and Buxted could be merged together in terms of these credits as they fall within the same District Ward. However, this will change with the new District Boundaries. Equally the Head of Planning says these credits are not there forever – if a ‘brownfield’ site planning application came up in Buxted and someone made this argument re head room for a small scale rental property and some credits were available, then those credits could be used up. Also he added that the Buxted Reading Room and the revoking of section 106 is yet to be tested. **ML’s** advice is to wait until Buxted case is resolved. This is a few months away only; they have already engaged architects and if that process is accepted by planning committee, then there is nothing to stop the Hadlow Down Community Centre Committee in pursuing the same process using the same credits. The Head of Planning is very aware of the progress being made in Hadlow Down and is reserving some credits to allow these community centres to happen – another community centre (Hooe – closely located near the Pevensey Marshes AONB) – trying to ensure these three community centres get built in order to create them where they are needed as well as local housing for local people. The conclusion is that the message from the District Council is that it is fully supportive and that to bring forward applications. Time is of the essence; if you delay, those credits may disappear. Determination period – end of this year – we could put in an application – by the end of the year.

iii) Design – Mike Barber

Unfortunately, Mike was unable to attend the meeting so he produced a detailed note that covered the following:-

Planning Issues

We are faced with the Ashdown Forest issue regardless of the method by which we move forward with the planning process.

I spoke in general terms with a senior officer at Wealden DC last week to get the latest view on how things stand in the context of our project. Wealden planners remain resolute that any development must balance or reduce its nitrogen deposition caused by traffic movement, i.e. there must be equal or fewer traffic movements created by the development than the current use. We can use the existing site as our existing use in this case and the planner made it very clear that they would fully support the replacement of existing village halls or community facilities, but any proposal must be backed up with a robust traffic analysis (traffic plan).

All things we already know, but the council is realising that they have to be supportive wherever they can as otherwise they will be shown to be frustrating all types of development, particularly community facilities and employment, not just housing, and that this will become hugely difficult for them with central government.

I do know that there is a head of steam behind a legal challenge to Wealden's approach to the whole issue of the Habitats regulations but this will take 1-2 years at least to reach a point of determination. Whilst this should not affect the new hall itself, we might need to stage/defer the proposal to use the old site for housing unless there is a possibility of showing that we have made some traffic movement savings in the use of the new site – we did speak of this at the last meeting with Dave Chetwyn (Urban Vision CIC)

Consultants

The two initial processes have been carried out i.e. the tree and wildlife surveys and the topographical surveys. I have not received any documentation yet but I should receive the topo this week. Our arboricultural specialist is trying to assemble a compelling case for the tree removal we need to achieve in order to get the building layout we want.

He has also discovered bats in the old hall. Not a deal breaker, just a process to follow.

Traffic Consultant

I am not sure whether the first consultant Dave Chetwyn used has produced a quote for the work needed? We have received a quote from Monson Engineering of Crowborough if we need to have an alternative. I do think we need to get this going now.

Design

Just as soon as I receive the CAD file of the topo survey I can complete the scheme design process. I have completed some work on this already to piece together the elements of the design brief and see how the primary functions and spaces will interact but can only go so far without the detailed site layout and levels.

I have set my workload around the anticipation of receiving this on or about 24th May and have set time aside from that point to be in a position to issue the first drafts of the design before the end of May.

With regard to planning matters, **ML** advised that we should request a meeting with Kelvin Williams, Head of Planning, to gain an understanding of Wealden's attitude towards the proposed CRBtO's. It might be best to consider a combined CRBtO for both sites; **BL** pointed out that Wealden was most insistent that we had to submit 2 neighbourhood areas. **ML** felt that we should consider submitting a traditional planning application for the new community centre and quite possibly a CRBtO for the current village hall site development. Ideally the meeting with Wealden should take place once the Traffic Plan and Habitat Regulations Assessment have been completed. However, the first of this cannot be done until the second tranche of funding has been received. As **ML** has stated earlier, there are credits available and with regard to the Village Hall site and we should clarify what would be acceptable for this site to meet those credits e.g. affordable homes, social housing rental – or two

bedroom double units; what would meet the test for these credits? Also it would help to advise the Parish Council and with the planning design. **JT** reminded all that, with regard to the future of the Village Hall site, a meeting will need to take place between the PC and VH committee followed by a consultation with parishioners.

5. REVISED CIO MODEL CONSTITUTION (BL)

Locality's requirement for HDCC to adopt a Charity Commission CIO Association model constitution rather than a Foundation one was agreed at the last meeting. During the discussion several issues emerged:-

- i) Membership – it was agreed that this should be restricted to parishioners and those who are members of organisations using the facilities (block booking rather than casual). **ML** asked how one could establish if a person is a parishioner or not as not all are on the electoral roll. **BL** felt that we could address this matter of detail in the future as the priority is to change some of the wording within the Charity Commission model agreement and adopt the Association model.
 - ii) Charging a membership fee – it was decided not to introduce this.
 - iii) The proposed changes are:
 - a) P11 section 12 – minimum number of 5 trustees up to maximum of 9 – should we fall below the minimal requirement of 5 trustees, the remaining trustees will meet to appoint a new one.
 - b) At the first AGM – all trustees will retire from office – all will be eligible to stand again providing that they have not served 5 years consecutively. The CC model constitution offers a maximum of 2 or 3 years but **BL** felt that 5 years would provide greater stability and continuity. Those trustees required to stand down can be re-considered for re-election once a year of absence has been completed. It will be possible for the trustees to appoint ex-officio member to the committee – e.g. 'fundraiser' but this person would not have voting rights.
 - c) a quorum will be set at one third of the number of trustees. If two were required to stand down at the AGM and providing that they had not reached the maximum of 5 years, the 3 remaining trustees would vote on their re-appointment.
- FS** – 5 years to be a big 'lock in', in the case of other charities, it is normal to rotate every 2 years; might a length of 4-5 years mean that some trustees become stale and potentially might this undermine their commitment to the charity? What is preventing us staying on for too long? **BL**'s response was that many of us as either trustees or committee members had served HDCC for much longer than 5 years and also, we are only too aware of how difficult it is to recruit new volunteers. **FS** questioned the use by the CC of the word 'natural person' – what does this mean?**

BL HDCC, as a CIO, must have the written consent of the trustees before making a regulated amendment. We don't require prior permission from the CC to decide to adopt a different model constitution or any changes that we may wish to make to that constitution; however we have to agree the wording of a resolution (with specific reference to i), ii) and iii) above. This will need to be signed by the chair and forwarded to the CC.

BL: *Proposal is that as trustees we adopt the association constitution model rather than the foundation model. This was put to the vote and trustees presented were in full support of the resolution.*

** Research after the meeting revealed that the words signify that a trustee cannot be a company or a liability limited partnership.

6. MARKETING, PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION (ALL)

i) newsletter:

BL to speak to Graham Terry and provide the information to be included within the newsletter which Graham would put together. Need to promote the public meeting on 21 July – needs to be prepared in order to be included as an insert sheet in the July edition (21st June deadline for Parish Magazine content).

ii) display boards

BL – we require a set of display boards with metal feet (so that they can be used outside). HDCC can buy them and offer them for use by other parish/village organisations. **FS, J Thom, BL** have looked into this and feel that £300 would be enough to purchase one set of display boards. Ideally they should be available for use at the Village Fayre. All were in agreement that we should go ahead and buy a set with 4 panels.

ACTION: **FS** to research free standing display boards and investigate if we could obtain them through company giving or eBay.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING – FRIDAY 21ST JULY (ALL)

FS/BL to put together. It was suggested that after a presentation by Mike Barber, we would have table discussions to gauge reactions to the design proposals. The last public meeting that we held had tables of ten supported by facilitators and scribes – this obtained some very good and constructive feedback.

JT advised that the date of 21 July clashed with the joint Engage/St Marks' CE School quiz night and that we would need to change the date. **NH** offered to look at the VH booking diary and identify some other dates.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

FS advised members of the Charity Commission annual income threshold of £25k and the need to have accounts independently verified/ audited by a suitable person. Given our grants of £17k and likely £22k from the DCLG's Community Buildings Support Grant Programme, also HDCC will have exceeded this and we should look into appointing an appropriately qualified person to carry this out.

The options are to approach:-

- i) Mike Garner (HDVH Treasurer)as the Playing Field trustees did – we should consider paying him a fee;
- ii) Peter Haining (The Kings Mill Practice **ACTION:JThom to follow up**)
- iii) Alan Sallows (Sallows Associates) **ACTION: BL to follow up.**

JT suggested that in future it would be good to formalise that all these accounts are verified - all in agreement.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Tues 27th June (7.00 pm at Village Hall) **ACTION: JT to check hall availability.**

