



NORTON SUB HAMDON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST LTD.
A Community Benefit Society
FCA Registration No. 31698R

Minutes of The Board of Directors

held on Tuesday 23rd May 2023 at 7.30pm in Norton Sub Hamdon Reading Room

Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

Attendees: -	Colin McDonald (CM)	Chair
	Jane Naughton (JN)	Chair. Shop Committee
	Niall Clifford (NC)	Solar/Energy
	Simon Harris (SH)	Minutes Sec.
	Ian Murray (IM)	Secretary & Marketing
	John Forsyth (JF)	
	Jennie Harris (JH)	NsH PC rep

1. **Apologies received:** Brian Wickins & Lindsay Higgins (LH)

2. **New declarations of interest** - CM - concerning his occupation, with the now new Somerset Council, who are also the planning authority for this area, although he is not in the planning department.

3. **Minutes of Board meeting (25th April)**

agreed with then signed by CM.

Matters Arising

CM asked what dissuasions there had been with the landlord concerning the shop/PO roof. NC explained that LH was in fact dealing with it & is still awaiting a meeting with Lynn Orchard, so currently ongoing.

4. Finance

LH had previously circulated her report to the Board for the month of April. JF commented that there were three positives highlighted; the card machine charges, cash till differences & that the gas & electricity were dropping. However that has been offset by the increase in the staff wages. Retail sales were up by 7% although the cost of goods went up by 16% & we should really be expecting the sales to be significantly higher than the cost or at least matching it. There had been a meeting today with Claire & the OPs. Committee (which went well) & profitability, the ranges stocked & reducing the stock holding were discussed.

CM stated that there has been improvement but that it hasn't quite kept pace with the increase in the overheads. With regards to the energy used he felt that the expectations had been well managed over the past 7 or 8 mths & therefore were not as bad as it was first seen.

NC commented that the main reason was the dramatic fall in energy usage & that has to be about the effort that the staff & volunteers had delivered in terms of reducing consumption. That needed underling & congratulations sent to all round as it's a major achievement. NC did share his concern of using the air conditioning but JN did point out that all staff would need looking after should there be a heat wave & so it should not be ruled out. IM did say that the donations could be used for this purpose.

JF explained that he has been looking at the number of weekly transactions so far to the middle of May. The number is up by 8% suggesting more people are coming into the shop & the weekly sales are up by 16% which is very positive. The average transaction value is at £8.33 against £7.46 for the average convenience store which again, is positive.

IM commented that for the non regulars, the perception is that the shop is over priced & expensive compared with others. JF explained that we wouldn't be able to compete with the likes of Asda as they are able to buy in stock much cheaper.

NC did ask that concerning the field solar array could the Finance Committee (FC) consider how we go about raising circa £75k & how that would be done to achieve the aim of the array being built.

5. Secretary / Action Log

IM said he had updated those actions he had received replies back for. A job description for Treasurer was needed.

No new applications for membership have been received.

6. Shop & P/O committee

JN stated that as agreed at the last Board meeting an Ops committee had been formed (SH, JF & JN (Chair)) which has met 3 times, the most recent today, with Claire. Looking forward, profitability & stock were discussed & making sure that initially, over the next few weeks, that all the data in the system is correct with margins at the right level & this has been ongoing with Claire. Also discussed was the range of products & any lines that may

need discontinuing within those products & Claire will be focusing to begin with on the beers, wines & spirits. The plan will be to have a structure in place so that the various ranges & price marked items can be more controlled in the way they sell & are stocked. JN continued by explaining that once the smaller freezer is back in the shop it will be restocked with the favourite & best selling items. The old large freezer is due to be moved out this weekend.

JN then stated that the following was currently highly confidential in that Cheryl had informed her that she was going to be leaving. Therefore she won't be taking on the Designated Supervisors role & that she had emailed JN stating that she will be looking for employment elsewhere. JN said that she will be seeing her on Thursday to clarify whether or not she was actually giving 'notice' or not, or just advanced warning.

JN said she would look at organising a job description. She continued by explaining also that potentially on a Thursday & Friday closing would be at 5 instead of 6 as from the financial statistics it was costing more to have a member of staff at the shop than was actually being taken in sales. There is no intention of reducing Claire's hours. This will include Saturday to close at midday in line with the post office.

CM raised the point about the Premises licence. SH suggested that it became part of the job description for the deputy. JN was a little concerned that it might put off someone from applying although NC did comment that some aspects of a job will be harder to do than others. JF asked if a shop volunteer could be asked & JN said that she could send out an email. Claire has stated that she'd not take on the extra hours.

SH asked if Larry could be spoken to with a view to remaining as the Premises holder for a little longer allowing the board to get up to speed with potentially appointing a new member of staff.

The Ops committee would take the responsibility for interviewing. The new trading hours would not take place until they were in the job description.

On the cost saving with the change of hours JF explained that around £1800 in salary would be saved per yr.

CM then requested it was minuted that the board agreed to the amended terms of reference for the Shop Committee to not include the Ops Committee & then agree, to the terms of reference for the OP.s Committee (as earlier circulated by JN). All agreed.

7. Solar

NC reported that there had been a slow down with SSCES as they have been working towards their AGM (held yesterday). Their Chair had emailed NC with further questions to which he'd replied to. They are now on their 3rd or 4th quotation & the 'ball park' figure is around £150k for the whole project. The planning permission is allowing for 80 plus kwh for installation, however due to the increased efficiency of the panels one of the contractors has suggested that either we could have possibly 120kwh using the whole field or just half the field for the 80. NC thought that if an amendment could be made to the planning then it would be worth increasing. Also the District Network Organisation, which is now National Grid, have been quoted as saying that they would tolerate up to a 135kwh installation.

IM checked on the time scale for connection & its proximity to the proposed array. NC explained that there is a point of access by the side of the field if all is agreed to, so it sounds positive giving the view of the N/Grid. NC said he would also keep the option open of dealing with Dorset Energy should all fail with SSCES.

NC emphasised the need to start thinking about how the funds are to be raised.

8. Marketing

IM stated that Louise Matraves has been working hard with promotions via Facebook etc & making the shop a community voice with other things. He noted that we now have around 1200 views as opposed to 78 when it first started. Fund raising & encouraging people through the door is key. A Community Cafe has been thought of, running in the village hall on a Saturday & JH is meeting with Louise to discuss this.

JN mentioned about news going into the newsletter monthly & this was concurred by NC & for the need to let the community know what the CLT are doing. IM stated that he will be emailing our sponsors & donors & making regular monthly newsletter entries. Also in October, the Village Hall will host a performance by The Exmouth Shanty Men & we will share part of the ticket sales and proceeds from running the bar.

The voluntary collection box in the shop aimed at the electricity costs has made circa £1000 & the need is still there.

9. Away Day

CM said that he will create a date grid to try & arrange a suitable date as it has been difficult in getting everyone together. So far he had received a reply from 1 external facilitator who stated it would be around £500. The CLT Network stated they would do a 'deep dive' but so far have not replied.

It was agreed that the former was too expensive & IM put forward a volunteer as an option who has agreed to help. CM will get in touch with Martin Morris.

JN put forward the question what a Community Shop is - is it for the community or a convenience shop & where do we see it going? The consensus was that it should be a community shop & trading again without the need for donations, either at a profit or, breaking even each month.

10. A O Business

None

11. Board meeting dates

Please note: an early September meeting date will be required pending the response time from Chalmers.

Due to the advanced apologies for the next meeting, June 20th will be asked for with the RR - to be advised.

July 18th (apologies from JN)

Meeting concluded at 9.14pm