

Minutes of a Board Meeting held via Zoom on Thursday February 11th 2021

In Attendance

Business Directors: Edward Baines (Chair), Ron Simpson BEM, James Torbell, Nick Townsend

Community Directors: David Ainslie BEM, Mark Shaw, Janet Thompson

Statutory Sector Directors: Lucy Stephenson, Geoff Thompson

Community Liaison: Christine Edwards

1. Apologies for Absence

Business Directors Trevor Ellis and Kath Gilbert.

2. Chair's Opening Remarks

Edward Baines welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the partnership's ongoing community engagement during the Covid 19 pandemic.

3. Declarations of Interest

Board member interests in various businesses, charities and community groups within the town and the county were noted. Agenda item 11 (Uppingham Homes), was acknowledged as a personal and non - pecuniary interest for David Ainslie BEM, Edward Baines, Christine Edwards, Mark Shaw, Geoff Thompson, Janet Thompson, Nick Townsend.

4. Minutes of a Board Meeting Held on December 17th 2020

Circulated and approved as a true record

5. Matters Arising

None

6. Secretary/Treasurer Report

- a) **Quarterly Finance Update** - In accordance with insurance requirements, transactions for the period January 21st to February 11th were witnessed by all attending directors via Zoom screenshare. Current bank balance was £17, 171.28 (Incorporates the Hopper, Rutland Lottery, Stilton Cheese Run and Defibrillator funds). It was noted that the partnership now had HSBC current and deposit accounts. Also, HSBC debit and credit cards as well as PayPal and Sum Up accounts to facilitate incoming payments. All were administered by the Secretary/Treasurer with electronic payments in excess of £3k being referred to the board for approval. All cheques require two signatures
- b) **2020 Accounts** – The Secretary/Treasurer led members of the board through a thorough examination of the 2020 Income and Expenditure schedules via Zoom. It was noted that the annual VAT return had been submitted on time (January 31st) It was agreed to again seek the help of accountant TA to finalise the annual accounts and submit them to Companies House and HMRC
- c) **Banking Mandates** – i) HSBC – This requires updating due to two director deaths in recent times. Agreed that any two of the following four directors be authorised to sign cheques:- Edward Baines, David Ainslie BEM, James Torbell and Ron Simpson BEM. Electronic banking arrangements detailed in 6a to remain unchanged with all transactions to be reported at the subsequent board meeting and witnessed by at least one non-involved director ii) PayPal Account Mandate Update - Agreed that the Secretary/Treasurer continue to administer this account (used primarily for income)
- d) **Significant Correspondence and Meetings** - Highlights included:- Window of Hope activities, N Plan participation, Local Plan response, Vanguard Board dialogue with developers and landowners, Radio project meetings with representatives of two projects, Liaison and joint working with Uppingham Homes CLT and CPRE Rutland; dialogue and meetings with Locality, NCVO and the CTA.

7. Social and Economic Forums

- a) **Business Forum** – Date of next meeting agreed as Thursday February 25th at 6pm on Zoom. All businesses to be invited

- b) **Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum** - UNF Chair Janet Thompson proved a brief update on the work being undertaken by UppWatch and the Uppingham Community Emergency Plan Coordinator Committee during the pandemic. Next significant social event was to be a live performance on Valentine's evening by The Roamantics
- c) **Vanguard Board** - Date of next meeting agreed as Thursday February 25th 2021 at 10am on Zoom

8. Planning and Economic Development

- a) **Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan** – UF Vice Chair David Ainslie updated the board on recent developments in the NPAG housing sub group including the response to the UTC call for sites and the development of a local site evaluation process. A planning proposal for a second filling station on the A47/A6003 junction is outside the UNP boundary but is attracting community concern. A UTC funded survey of the possible line of a north/south relief road for the town is nearing completion. Concern was expressed at a recent RCC/Barrowden planning decision in which officers recommended, and the council ultimately approved, a major proposal which conflicted with the parish Neighbourhood Plan. This threw doubt on the county council's commitment to Neighbourhood Planning and had significant implications for community engagement and commitment to completing the update of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan.
- b) **Rutland Local Plan** – It was noted that RCC had now forwarded the new local plan to the Planning Inspectorate complete with the numerous public replies to the Reg 19 consultation. Chair Edward Baines noted that the next significant meeting on the matter was on February 22nd 2021 when there would be final consideration of the government's Housing Infrastructure Funding offer
- c) **Town Centre Development Working Group** - The Secretary reported on the Covid – 19 challenges confronting local businesses and the difficulties in conducting a forward looking debate. The current priority for many was survival. All businesses had been written to individually inviting their views on what might help empower the town centre post lockdown and in the period up to 2036. Some targets and proposals in the Town Centre and Business Zones Plan now needed revision. The possibility of a town relief road also required consideration and consultation. It was agreed that all matters should be progressed at the next meeting of the town's Business Forum
- d) **Pop up Shops and Artisan Hubs - Founded** on the success and public feedback received on the partnership's Window of Hope in December 2020 (supported by Uppingham School and local businesses), it was agreed that UF offer a temporary pop-up shop window and artisan hub facility to the owners of empty premises in the town centre awaiting a new let or owner.

9. Community Transport

UF Vice Chair David Ainslie BEM updated members of the board on the Uppingham Hopper team achievements in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic and again pointed out the financial implications and issues arising from the consequential reduction in bus income. This shortfall was reflected in the 2020 income and expenditure summaries considered earlier in the meeting. Following debate on the way forward and possible second bus linking to local villages at some point in the future, it was unanimously agreed that the Hopper should continue to offer its scheduled service, in addition to delivering food and medicines, but that further support be sought from the National Lottery.

Following consideration of three options it was unanimously agreed to pay RCC a further £5k immediately toward settling the interest free loan on the Hopper bus. The remaining balance would then be £7500.

10. Health and Wellbeing

- a) **Community Emergency Committee** – The Secretary reported that this is now meeting weekly and taking action as appropriate. The committee is liaising with RCC through their regular online meetings with voluntary sector. Food, medicine, and emergency help continues to be provided through UppWatch and the Hopper team
- b) **Home Learning Support** - The Secretary reported on the partnership's collaboration with local IT company ClockedIn (MD is UF director Mark Shaw) to help local families without the necessary technology be equipped to benefit from the home learning opportunities currently on offer from schools. Thirteen tablets had so far been delivered to local children with a very positive and warm response from the recipient households. Mark confirmed that a small number of tablets were still available if further need was identified.

11. Housing

- a) **Uppingham Homes CLT** – The Secretary reported that this FCA registered community benefit society has now submitted its application to the Housing Regulator to become a Registered Housing Provider. Success will represent a huge step forward for the town. The Society's first project is to build 6 first homes for local young people. The Society also hopes to offer local investment opportunities through Community Shares at some point in the future. The Society is currently seeking an accountant to join their board.
- b) **Badley Orchard Project** – This Uppingham Homes project will offer two 2 bedrooled properties for sale (shared equity) and four 1 bedrooled apartments to rent at below market rates. The initiative awaits planning approval
- c) **UHCLT Donation** – It was approved by directors eligible to vote (See declarations of interest) that a donation of £1650 be made to support the important work of this local community benefit society

12. Events

- a) **Live and Local** - It was agreed that the partnership subscribe to this initiative with a view to mounting a local event

- b) **Valentine's Evening** - It was agreed the partnership underwrite and facilitate this event in support of the Covid-19 work being undertaken by the Neighbourhood Forum and its Community Emergency Plan Coordinators
- c) **Stilton Cheese Run 2021** – It was agreed that a final decision on the mounting of this event in 2021 be taken in March in order that the prevailing government Covid-19 regulations may be taken into account
- d) **Social Sundays 2021** – It was agreed that a sub group be formed to plan and deliver a series of self-funding Social Sunday events in 2021 commencing in May or such start date that government regulations permitted. All relevant hospitality businesses to be invited to participate and local traders to be given preferential trading opportunities. Sub group members to be Lucy Stephenson, James Torbell, Mark Shaw and David Ainslie.

13. UF Governance

Following detailed consideration of the company's modus operandi, flexibility of operation and record of success, it was agreed that limited updating change was required to move the partnership forward and comply with best practice standards in governance. Acknowledging the written opinion of director Nick Townsend and the structural options before it, as well as the work done by constituent and social/economic partners, it was agreed that: -

- a) The company's articles simply be updated with regard to membership, an updated Code of Conduct, delegated powers and duties of directors, notification of interests and simple financial regulations. All to be submitted to the 2021 AGM for member approval
- b) The updated governance documentation be published on the website once approved
- c) Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum Executive be invited to consider the merits of charitable status

14. Any Other Business

None.

15. Date of Next Meeting

To be agreed subject to invited guests' diaries. In the light of her work in support of the community it was agreed that Alicia Kearns MP be the invited principal guest at the partnership's 2021 AGM.

Notes distributed: 15.2.2021

Copies to: social and economic partners; local and national government; media



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