

HAYDON BRIDGE AND HAYDON PARISH DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2023

Present

Mark l'Anson (Chair), Will Rutherford (Vice Chair), Ian Foster, Siobhan Stephenson, Christina Taylor, Phil Hartley, Kate Minto, Henry Swaddle, Michael Sadgrove

23.15 Apologies

Peter Fletcher, Esmond Faulks

23.16 Declarations of interest - None

23.17 Minutes of the meeting held in 17 January 2023 - The minutes were approved

23.18 Matters arising not already on the agenda

22.41 MS reported in the meeting with the PCC that he and PF had attended. Four issues were discussed:

- John Martin panel at Haydon Old Church: the PCC are relaxed about the panels being moved into the church yard to a position where it can be seen from the gate. The PCC would need to apply for permission for this (called a faculty) and funding would be sought from DT
- Path from churchyard to riverside: this is welcomed but, to achieve it, the exact route would have to be agreed; funding would need to be found and a faculty would be required.
- Use of church yard for village events: this was discussed because some local people have been vocal in their opposition to it however, the PCC are happy to continue to do this
- Relocation of the John Martin display from the Community Centre: the PCC would like to do this but it will require a lot of work involving re-envisioning the interior of the church and installing a kitchen and toilets. There is agreement in principle for this but it has been decided to wait until the new incumbent is in place which will probably be early 2024.

23.01 EF had reported that the PC are going ahead with naming the road out of the village to the east Charlton Way which has the approval of the family. The PC also liked the DT's idea of a plaque on the library wall. Members were in support of a plaque although they did not recall suggesting it.

23.09 The Bridge: Arch visit. IF thought this had happened but KM reported that there was not written confirmation of this although EC had been prepared for the visit.

Agreed: Not to contact Arch for clarification

23.13 Review with new Directors: MI reported that this process had begin but was not yet completed.

23.19 Neighbourhood Plan and Community Actions update

SS updated the meeting on this:

1a. District Heating system energy survey

Confirmation of funding is still awaited.

3a Village enhancement projects

CT had reported that the Greening Bridges scheme is still a work in progress. She also said that the NP group working on this were applying for Bee Friendly Town status for Haydon Bridge. To help with this application, she asked whether DT would consider funding enough seed bombs to create 100 sqm of bee friendly plants to be given out at a forthcoming village event. These could be planted in gardens or containers and the overall cost would be around £250

Action: This was agreed in principle but CT was asked to produce a brief paper formally requesting funding

KM reported that the Gardening Group have received a grant of £1970 from Northern Rail to enhance the westbound platform. £400 is for Marcus Byron to work with children from Shaftoe Academy to produce pictures for the platform and the remainder is for large wooden planters and their contents. One planter is already in place and it was noted that more topsoil than had been funded was needed to fill it. WR's offer of soil was accepted. It was noted that the planting will be pollinator-friendly perennials.

3b Habitat creation

Over 200 trees had been planted in and around the cemetery and in other places around the village. Tyne Rivers Trust are also looking for land for tree planting.

The Nurture Project is developing a forest garden and has begun soil preparation by laying straw to combat weeds.

3c Smallholding

On hold for the time being.

4b Community led housing

PF had reported that he is still awaiting a response from NCC. He had had a call with Tom from CAN and Sarah from NCC and they are looking at other funding options, in particular the use of Section 106 funds held by the county council in case the community housing fund has run out of money.

EF had reported that, at their last meeting, the Shaftoe Trust had looked favourably on the suggestion that they should join forces with DT in the purchase of houses to let. MI welcomed this decision and said that it would enable DT to cross the threshold of viability. The whole project with Gentoo Homes is still very much in the hands of the planners

Vibrant and thriving communities

5a Secure access to the High School facilities outside school hours (e.g. tennis courts; sports hall and secure funding for equipment to develop a community gym in the hall)

MI reported that this NP action is to be dropped

5c Explore ideas to develop services for young people

The Nurture Project has done a number of activities with young people but ongoing funding from Shaftoe Trust is under threat. Discussions are ongoing to resolve this.

NCC is still asking the Nurture Project for amendments to the planning application for change of use of their field from agricultural to educational/community use. Alan Sharp is fully on board with this project.

5e WeFibre

HS reported that people who have been connected up to date are very happy with their internet service but there are difficulties with VOIP phones. He is in discussion with WeFibre on this.

7a Haydon Bridge to Hexham cycle route

PH said that there has been little progress on this but that a very costly track from Corbridge to Hexham is being funded from Levelling Up monies. Parish councils along the Haydon Bridge to Hexham route are meeting to discuss possible funding sources.

7c Cycle racks

NCC is supplying racks for installation at the south end of the new bridge but they have yet to arrive. The PC are paying for the racks to be installed outside The Railway but there is no decision yet on funding for those to be installed on Ratcliffe Road. The estimated cost of the former is £1000.

Action: MI to contact the PC re a possible contribution to costs

7d Footpaths initiative

PH reported that the footpath at Harsondale Bridge is still closed but that the National Trust are trying to push completion date forward to June.

23.20 Tourism

Haydon Bridge Website: there was discussion on this that included:

- Some parts of the website are already not working and others are in danger of failing soon
- Contribute, which allows easy amendment of the site text, has not been working since 2016
- There was a tender exercise for the current website which was won by Graham Sutton. He set up the framework of the site and various DT Directors added the content
- The PC have a statutory duty to be open and transparent and the website is one vehicle for this

Action:

All to look at other village websites and identify good and bad points

PF & HS to see if they have a copy of the original tender specification

All to identify any local company that could be invited to tender

Once this is done, a short paper is to be drawn up for consideration by the Board

Village leaflet: no progress to date

IF to consider what a re purposed village leaflet would look like and discuss this with interested parties

EV charging: EF had reported that NCC wanted to provide the village with 2 new charging points. PF's suggestion that there should be one on the North Bank was rejected as was EF's suggestion for points on the road bridge, the latter because of an insufficient supply of electricity?! Finally, NCC installed a point on John Martin street outside the public lavatories. A location for the second promised charging point is needed. After discussion it was agreed that, whilst DT is delighted the installation of EV points is going ahead it is the role of the PC to choose locations for this.

23.21 The Bridge

Heating: The thermostat at The Bridge has been replaced at a cost of £150. It can now be controlled remotely and early indications are that there will be savings on electricity costs.

Checklist for hiring The Bridge: KM said that the documents presented to members were much simpler than those that had come to the meeting in October 2022. There were however two issues for discussion in the Terms & Conditions of Hire:

- Charges for hire - MI said that previous charges has been £30-£50/session and that it was important to set our charge at a level that does not undercut other local businesses

Action: KM to find out what the community centre charge

- Public liability insurance - KM said that all guidance she'd found on room hire and small charities suggested that Hirer's should all be asked for evidence of having PLI to the vale us £5million. It was agreed that many organisations wanting to hire The Bridge would not have this insurance. Before a decision could be made it was necessary to know what DT's insurance policy would cover regarding room hire and PLI but KM said she had been unable to find a copy of the original insurance document at The Bridge

Action: PF to see if he has the original insurance policy document

Update on The Bridge: KM reported that considerable progress has been made:

- Team Leaders now meet monthly to discuss and make decisions on changes and developments at The Bridge. She also said that communication within and between teams remains an issue but is gradually improving.
- Clearing out, tidying and reorganising at The Bridge is done now until grant funding is available to make changes to the layout of the room and purchase new equipment
- MI has tackled the way money has been traditionally handled at The Bridge. He said that although there had been many different pots of money for various different reasons this was no longer the case; all money now goes through the till; money is paid into the bank at least monthly and proper records are kept. MS, who had recently spent time shadowing a team at The Bridge, asked about security and he had felt money was handled in a laissez faire manner. MI explained the routine and said that, although not the best way to handle finance, what happens now is progress. In view of the range of different technical and financial abilities within the 5 teams, it was necessary to take small steps to make change
- The decision for the next meeting is whether to sell coffee. Since opening in 2010, DT only ever planned to sell hot drinks and wrapped cakes and biscuits. Guidance is that, although not a legal requirement, best practice would be for at least one person to have a basic food hygiene qualification and then to set the food hygiene culture for The Bridge. She was not expecting anyone to step forward for this training. PH said that training was not necessary as it needed only to be 'proportionate to the service delivered.
- Knit and Natter session happens each Tuesday and is very successful; a Lego Session will start on 1st April; story time for pre schoolers is planned for Monday afternoons, all designed to increase footfall at The Bridge

Request to hire The Bridge from Bridge2care: KM explained that DT had been approached by John Taylor regarding possible hire of The Bridge by Bridge2care which provides support to parents of children with additional needs. The group gets new members by word of mouth and through social prescribing and are highly thought of by staff at the health centre and by Alan Sharp. They are not a charity and do not charge membership fees. They want to hire The Bridge on a Tuesday or Thursday morning once a fortnight during terms time.

Agreed: Bridge2care can have use of The Bridge as requested without charge

There was subsequent discussion on key holders and the demand such a regular hire places on these people. In answer to a question from MI, KM said that there was, as yet, no definitive list of keyholders but that she knows of at least 13. She has a partial list but will try to finalise details. MS said that he would be willing to be a keyholder and it was suggested that PF might also consider this. After discussion it was:

Agreed: not to give keys to hirers and not to have a key safe outside the building as these

were both felt to be security risks

Action: KM to establish a definitive list of keyholders

23.21 Communications. Including website

HS had circulate details of website activity and, in answer to a query from MI, said that the data he presents can be tailored to provide any detail that DT might require on either a temporary or permanent basis.

23.22 Governance matters

New directors: dealt with under matters arising

Risk Management Policy: this had been referred back for more work at the October meeting. KM said that she had received considerable help and support from MS in updating the draft policy. She referred members to Appendix A - Operational Risks and Appendix B - Strategic Risks where the risk assessments had been reviewed on a standardised system. Both tables had been colour coded for ease of identifying risks requiring action. MS pointed out that Directors have a statutory duty to manage risk and suggested that he and KM would carry out an annual review and present the board with any suggestions for amendment to the policy and its appendices. MI said that all Directors should commit to making themselves aware of both the operational and strategic risk assessments.

Action:

All Directors to check the policy for errors and omissions, with particular reference to Appendix A and Appendix B of the policy

KM and MS to review the policy annually and make recommendations for policy change/amendment to the Board

Financial controls: KM said that these should be reviewed annually at the same time the Board discussed the annual accounts. MI said that changes are needed to reflect the new arrangements for handling money at The Bridge

Action: MI to amend the Financial Controls re The Bridge

23.23 Finance and grants

MI said there had been no progress on the grant application for The Bridge

He then talked through the Statement of Financial Activities and commented particularly on the lunch club surplus which is planned to be spent on outings during the summer. He said that the financial year would probably end with a deficit of around £2000 which includes depreciation which he felt was a good position to be in especially since The Bridge had only had a partial trading year.

In response to a question about the Haydon Hundred he said that numbers are currently close to break even and that the event usually generates a surplus or around £2000.

23.24 Any other business

IF had received an email regarding DT's duty of care in relation to waste disposal which he would respond to.

23.25 Date and time of next meeting - Tuesday 6th June 2023 at 7pm