

EAST GRINSTEAD MEMORIAL ESTATE LTD

Registered Charity No. 305211 Company No. 468425

MINUTES**DIRECTORS MEETING 03/2021**

7pm, Thursday 17th June 2021

Held on Zoom web platform

1. Covid-19
 - 1.1. Social distancing is still required, hence this Zoom meeting.
2. Directors
 - 2.1. Dick Sweatman had resigned on 10th June as he felt that he was spreading himself too thinly with his involvement in many committees etc. CN had thanked him for his contribution and wished him well.
 - 2.2. Nigel Davis announced his intention to retire when a suitable alternative was found. All agreed that our finances were in good order thanks to his efforts.
 - 2.2.1. LR knew of a potential external candidate for this role which he would pursue.
 - 2.3. CN had approached [REDACTED] as a potential Board member, but she had regrettably declined because of a conflict of interests with her position at MSDC.
3. Present: Baker, Barlow, Davis, Fisher, Funnell, Graysmark, Nunn, Richards, Russell, Phillips
4. Apologies for Absence: Stagg
5. Minutes of previous Directors Meeting 02/2021, 25th March 2021
 - 5.1. Item 5.1. Total membership was 53, not 56
 - 5.2. Item 7. Add "MB declared and interest in EG Foodbank at this point, and excused himself from this part of the Agenda"
 - 5.3. Item 7.1. Change to reflect that the grants were in fact approved.
 - 5.4. Item 7.3. ND had subsequently approved the "extra" sum of £2k to EG Foodbank.
 - 5.5. The meeting agreed that after these amendments, the draft Minutes were in order. CN to sign, redact as necessary, archive, & MB to post on the website.
6. Chair position
 - 6.1. CR had chaired a sub-committee to try and identify a replacement Chair using both internal and external sources. A single candidate had been identified, that being Lloyd Richards, one of our existing Directors. The sub-committee unanimously supported his candidacy.
 - 6.2. LR was given an opportunity to say what he felt would be important if he was elected to the Chair role, and apart from obviously keeping the pressure on MSDC, he felt it was important that we address our Code of Governance which is not really up to the latest standards. He added that this would affect all current Board members as we gradually needed to move towards 6 year terms for Directors as recommended by the Charity Commission.
 - 6.3. LR then left the meeting, giving the remaining Board members an opportunity to discuss his candidacy. It was enthusiastically and unanimously agreed that if a proposal was put to the Board after the AGM to appoint LR as Chair, such a motion would be fully supported.
 - 6.4. LR then rejoined the meeting. At this point there was some discussion that "Corporate Memory" shouldn't be sacrificed with shorter tenures for Trustees. LR agreed, but suggested there should be ways to prevent this happening.
7. Membership
 - 7.1. Total Membership is static at 56:

7.2. It has been confirmed that [REDACTED] had regrettably died of C-19 so his membership had ceased. CN had sent his wife best wishes.

7.3. [REDACTED] of Mindelheim Avenue had recently joined.

7.4. The next members newsletter is due on August 1st.

8. East Court Steering Meeting

8.1. LR had tabled a report before the meeting which is shown verbatim below:

As you will recall, the date for us to meet with MSDC on site was set for 14 May and Chris and I met with two MSDC representatives – Stuart Brown (Landscapes and Leisure Team Leader) and Mark Hayler (projects). Since that time, there have been various e-mail exchanges that have taken place of which the key ones are appended below.

A significant action for us is establishing improved access from Stirling Way on to the track. Following very helpful guidance from Melvyn and in discussion with Chris, I made contact with the managing agents of Bluebell Gate last week who were quite happy to discuss proposals with their residents. That contact has now been formalised with a drawing showing the areas of required access improvements, and I have asked the Managing Agents to consult and return to us by the end of the month. The drawing is also appended below. I'm pleased to report that they have today come back to me confirming they have no objections to the proposed enabling works. (Privately, there was a plan B if Bluebell Gate became tetchy over this in that we could always seek to reverse the sale of that part of the track they purchased from us some years ago, but clearly we would rather preserve our capital than potentially be held to ransom over price)

In terms of moving forward, we are keeping the pressure on MSDC to produce plans with timetabled deliverables, and will continue to do so, but as ever, that vehicle is underpowered and seems to have only one relatively low gear! To be fair, the people we are working with are very sensible with their feet firmly on the ground

E-mail extracts

1. Lloyd Richards to Stuart Brown 15.5.21

Firstly, many thanks to you and Mark for the time you shared with us yesterday afternoon - we clearly have a lot of shared thinking between us

If we go into the simplistic four stages of managing a project - we are at stage 1 Define, to be closely followed by Decide, then Develop and Deliver.

DEFINE

Project timescales

- We know we are operating to a timeline that says enabling tree work will be completed by March 2022 and infrastructure activity will be completed by say July 2022*
- Outline Project plan to be formulated incorporating key Stage points, major milestones and target delivery dates - I would suggest we allow days not weeks to stick this on the wall and as a rough indicator, I would suggest we aim to complete Definition phase within 6 weeks and Decide phase within two weeks of that ie production of business case and sign off*

Critical path issues (deliberately not yet in sequential order and obviously not exhaustive)

- Quantity of coppicing/maintenance load to be undertaken/transported annually*
- Minimum size of vehicle/vehicular access required to deliver annual workload (SB to discuss with prospective contractors)*

- Access options evaluation: principally A264 vs Sterling (CN to establish legal limitations around Sterling entrance)
- TPO implications along the track given likely civil works necessary (SB to address with Tree Officer)
- Minimum requirement for access surface given vehicle needs
- Drainage implications taking into account both recent soil survey work, plus the immediate need to commission a levels survey (MH to commission levels survey)
- Next 5/10 year plan to be informed by the above and vice versa - timetable for production of plan needs to be established and run in parallel to this project (SB to lead). Consensus exists to adopt a more modest plan of annual actions than incorporated within the current 10 year plan

It would seem to make sense to touch base on immediate progress issues on a weekly basis (phone/mail/zoom - whatever is most time efficient for you). So for example, by the 21 May we should have made progress against each of the four bold marked items above. As we move towards implementation, the review timescales should naturally stretch. Does that work for you or is it too hands on from us?

2. Response from Stuart Brown 21.5.21

As discussed on site we are involved in running multiple projects currently so I wouldn't be able to commit to weekly updates but would be happy to offer 2 weekly meeting/updates if this would be ok, as the project moves forward and we come to tasks that will take longer then we can move to monthly meeting/updates. I would be happy to send invites over Teams if that is easier to save everyone travelling currently. If you can let me know any specific days/times to avoid and I will see if we can find agreeable times. Anything time critical or urgent related we would pick up in between. I hope this would be agreeable to both of you.

Just to give you an update on the key highlighted points below:

- *Minimum size of vehicle/vehicular access required to deliver annual workload (SB to discuss with prospective contractors). This has now been received from our contractors. They feel a 3.5 ton Transit size vehicle with 1.5 ton trailer would be suitable for the level of work required. They currently also have small forestry tractors and trailers that they can use in the Woodland as well to support this work.*
- *TPO implications along the track given likely civil works necessary (SB to address with Tree Officer). We are waiting to hear back from the Planning Tree Officer on any implications.*
- *Drainage implications taking into account both recent soil survey work, plus the immediate need to commission a levels survey (MH to commission levels survey). Mark has made contact with 3 surveyors to provide us quotes for these.*

3. Lloyd Richards to Stuart Brown 17.5.21

One aspect of coppicing we touched upon last Friday was the use of horse power - one of our trustees has come up with this link which may be helpful. Certainly from a historic/cultural perspective, this solution has a lot to commend it and it would no doubt require less civil engineering to achieve!

4. Lloyd Richards to Stuart Brown 17.5.21

Chris has done some clever tracing of the English Woodlands report on a map of the estate which gives us a heads up on how much/how often we need to coppice/thin and in which areas. It should help to quantify the volume of material we would need to shift along the

Holtje Track. Obviously a two-d map doesn't take into account the topographical degree of difficulty but it's clearly a starter for ten

5. Lloyd Richards to Hobdens Property Management 2/6/21

Thanks for your time on the phone on Friday last and as promised, herewith (see below) a plan view of the proposed enhancements to the access from Stirling Way on to the Holtje track. I'm no expert in these matters but fortunately there are people at Mid Sussex D.C. who will be better able to detail the specific requirements, but this covers the gist of what we believe is being sought

As I mentioned, these works would be undertaken without cost to the residents of the Bluebell Gate development. The enhancements to the track and this access point are designed to ensure the on-going preservation of the woods in a sound ecological state for us all to enjoy.

You kindly offered to raise this proposal with your residents to ensure they were content with what is being suggested and we would welcome any feedback to be taken on board as detailed plans are worked up. At the risk of being a nuisance, it would be very helpful to us if you could gauge reaction, if any, within say a month from now

6. Hobdens Property Management to Lloyd Richards 4/6/21

I am pleased to report that I have discussed this with BBG Directors (Blue Bell Gate) and they have no objection to your proposal and support your efforts. They are happy to grant permission.

8.2. The Board were pleased to hear that some engagement and progress was now being made, but some queried why the A264 entrance was not being pursued more vigorously as it had been used without difficulty in the past. In addition, as yet, there didn't seem to be any fundamental agreement on how much coppicing would be targeted.

8.3. LR would be taking these matters up with MSDC the following day.

8.4. MB is in contact with a forestry company who are prepared to give some free advice on operations.

9. Grants & Donations

9.1. All grants agreed at the last meeting have now been paid, and "thank you" letters have been received from all. MB to be on the lookout for PR stories.

10. Finances

10.1. ND had previously tabled his report showing that we had £7k in our Current account - sufficient to pay our anticipated bills this year.

10.2. The Grants account currently stood at £6k, but was only likely to grow to ca. £18k this year as dividends are still being affected by the C-19 financial markets. As we go into 2022 we will have to discuss either lowering our total grants, or using some of our savings.

10.3. The value of our investments has risen to £1.093m compared with £1.017 at end of 2019.

11. Property

11.1. Nothing to report

12. Neighbours

12.1. [REDACTED] in Mindelheim Avenue had been querying the ownership (and state of) the land near him, but it doesn't appear to be our land in question.

13. Insurance

13.1. All up to date

14. Website & Publicity

14.1. MB had been very busy with Foodbank and had not made much progress on the initiatives previously agreed.

14.2. MB agreed to fast track the use of generic email addresses for identifiable Board positions, particularly because of imminent Board changes.

15. Annual General Meeting

15.1. The draft 2020 Report and Accounts had been previously circulated. LR proposed their adoption and MB seconded this, with unanimous approval from those present.

15.2. It was agreed to run the AGM on the Zoom platform this year because of continuing Covid restrictions.. Whilst not ideal, it would at least give members a chance to engage in dialogue. Date agreed is Tuesday 13th July, with the 21 day notice period commencing on Tuesday 22nd June.

15.3. The AGM would be followed immediately by a Directors Meeting when LR would be put forward for election as Chair.

16. Any Other Business

16.1. SB had tabled some ideas at a previous meeting:

16.1.1. Additional signage to show who owns the Estate

16.1.2. Additional signs to show names of tracks

16.1.3. Bench to remember Alfred Wagg

16.1.4. Fold out leaflet

16.1.5. 25% of our funds are ring-fenced for maintenance and improvement of Ashplats Wood.

16.2. An attempt to discuss these issues was made but SB's poor Zoom connection made it almost impossible. It was agreed that they would be deferred until we were all in the same room.

17. Dates of Subsequent Meetings

17.1. See 15.3 above

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of connected, wavy lines that form a stylized name or set of initials.