

Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company

Minutes of the Seventh Annual General Meeting held on Friday 6th March 2015 at RSPB Leighton Moss Visitor Centre, Silverdale.

1. Present and Apologies

Present: Shareholders: Ann Kitchen (Chairman), David Askew, Peter Standing, George Steele, Alan Rhodes, Heather Rhodes, Val Stevens, Martin Elsworth, Sue Weldon, Robin Horner, Lesley Edkins, Roger Cartwright, Mike Smith, Jeanette Smith and Ken Kitchen.

Others: Simon Williams, Mourholme Historical Society, Nancy Cartwright and Jenny Elsworth.

Apologies were received from: Prof Alwyn Smith, Bob Hamnett, David Farrant, David Emmett, John Platts, John Webb, Claire Dixon, Roger Walton, Philip Pacey, Susan Briscoe, David & Jill Player, Malcolm Stevens, Barbara Hall, Margaret Bromley-Webb, Jean Watts, Ian and Lisa Henderson and Ray and Liz Anslow (Landscape Trust).

2. Minutes of the last AGM

The Minutes of the last Meeting held on 10 March 2014 were agreed as a true record (Prop: Val Stevens; Seconder: Jeanette Smith). There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

3. Chairman's Report on Company Activities

Ann Kitchen presented her report on the last financial year (to Sept 2014) with an update of more recent progress.

The Company worked with Silverdale School to put Solar PV panels on the school roof. Now installed, they are of a new design that sits on the flat roofs of the prefab classrooms and thus are virtually invisible from the outside.

Unfortunately over the summer it was discovered that Silverdale School had been put on the wrong tariff by Ofgem. This meant that the Feed-in Tariff (FIT) would only produce half of what was expected. After strenuous efforts to get this reversed, some compensation had been offered but not nearly enough to match the lost FIT. It is estimated that this will lead to a loss of £500 over the life of the project. Although this will not affect the whole project, we will not be able to help another school in the near future.

Friends of the Earth that are currently running a project called 'Run on Solar' to encourage schools to get Solar PV systems, recently spent a couple of days with our schools.

The Company awaits a final decision from Lancaster City Council to confirm the project to install solar panels on the roof of the AONB Office can go ahead.

The Company were commissioned to produce a directory of woodland advisors, contractors, wood fuel and wood products funded by the Morecambe Bay Nature Improvement Area Partnership. This was finished in March 2014 and has been very

popular. There are only a few left of the print run but the directory can be accessed on the web site at <http://www.arnsidesilverdaleaonb.org.uk/images/pdfs/wooddirectory.pdf>.

The Company also started a trial project to encourage people to move from open fires to wood burning or multi-fuel stoves. Thanks to a few shareholders who offered their winter fuel allowance for this purpose, it was able to offer a few small grants and/or interest-free loans to those in the AONB who want to make the change but haven't yet saved up enough to do it. Our first grant/loan was given in January 2014 to a family in Silverdale. Two more grants were given at the end of 2014, and a further one for a start in April 2015.

The Wildlife Atlases are still selling well and we now have 14 in all. The new titles deal with Mini-mammals, Rocks and Soils and Fungi. Sales have now reached £4,784 (£4,397 to the end of the last financial year) and should help provide money for our running costs. Thanks go to the RSPB who have been selling them on the basis of receiving a share of the returns.

The Company have had displays at various AONB, Arnside Natural History Society and Landscape Trust events. The Company's website pages have been updated with a new look. Our thanks must go to Barbara Henneberry of the AONB Office for her help in this.

David Askew now retired from his job with the AONB continues to act as our Financial Director and our registered office remains at the Old Station Building, Arnside.

The Chairman thanked the Board and the staff of the AONB unit for all their help and encouragement over the past year and in conclusion thanked shareholders for their support and looked forward to another successful year.

4. Community Interest Statement Report

David Askew explained the purpose of the Community Interest Statement which had to be forwarded to the regulators with the accounts. Once available it would also be put on the website.

5. Report of the Finance Director and Presentation of Accounts

In presenting the accounts for 2013/4 (copies of which were circulated at the meeting), the Finance Director, David Askew pointed out differences between this and the previous financial year i.e. a much lower turnover and a loss rather than a profit.

The accounts (p3) show a turnover of £4,388 compared with £21,162 in the previous financial year. This included the cost of sales (£10,384) and administrative expenses of £734. The latter included accountant costs of £100 (lower than the previous year). This led to an operating loss of £6,714 including interest on bank balances (£21) and deduction of Corporation tax (£5). Taking into account the accumulated profit/loss from previous years, this came to a loss to be brought forward of £2,475. The balance sheet (p4) shows that the tangible assets stood at £304 and cash at the bank (including deposit) of £10,276. The amount falling due to creditors within 1 year was £705, thus the total assets stood at £9,875. From this must be deducted an amount of £1,200 (the balance of an interest free-loan from a shareholder) thus net assets stand at £8,675.

This balances with the Shareholders Funds of £11,150 minus the amount of £2,475 from the profit and loss account.

The Finance Director's report to the Board (p2) made clear that the Company is exempt from the statutory audit requirement and that a full audit or a review of the financial statements is not required. For this reason, the accuracy and completeness of the accounting records and other information has not been externally verified.

The accounts had shown that the Company was investing in solar panels for Silverdale Schools and the Leeds Children's Holiday Home and was receiving its share of the Feed in tariff (FIT). A questioner asked whether either of these bodies was intending to fund raise in order to buy out the FIT? AK indicated that the Leeds Home would be able do this after this year and the Silverdale School after 2016.

6. Approval of Reports and Accounts

Peter Standing proposed that the accounts be approved. This was seconded by Val Stevens. The accounts were then approved by a show of hands.

7. Re-appointment of Directors

This year Roger Walton and Bob Hamnett retired as Directors and both expressed a willingness to be reappointed for a further three year term. Proposed by Ann Kitchen and seconded by George Steele, the re-appointments were confirmed by a show of hands.

8. Other Business

Ann Kitchen informed shareholders that the Company had been invited to send a representative to the AONB Executive Committee. Ann Kitchen agreed to attend the next meeting on 11th March.

Val Stevens asked whether the Company had a leaflet explaining what it did. AK then circulated copies of the current leaflet. DA mentioned that the Company operated under a condition that prevented it from advertising its shares. Peter Standing suggested that the date of the AGM could be advertised as an insert in the Trust's magazine, Keer to Kent. DA considered that it would also be acceptable to invite LT members to become shareholders.

Signed as a true record:
