

## **Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company**

### **Minutes of the Sixth Annual General Meeting held on Monday 10th March 2014 at RSPB Leighton Moss Visitor Centre, Silverdale.**

Before the main business, an illustrated talk on Recent Developments at the Leighton Moss Reserve was given by Annabel Rushton ably assisted by Alasdair Grubb.

#### **1. Present and Apologies**

Present: Shareholders: Ann Kitchen (Chairman), George Steele, Roger and Natalia Walton, Angela Walton, Fiona Allan, Alan Rhodes, Heather Rhodes, Harry and Elfrieda Warner, John Webb, Bob Hamnett, David Farrant, Val and Malcolm Steven, Martin and Jenny Elsworth, Steve Birtwistle, Claire Dixon, D Allen, Peter Standing, Leslie Edkins, Claire Harris, Mike Smith, Jeanette Smith and Ken Kitchen.

Others: Annabel Rushton and Alasdair Grubb (RSPB); Ray Anslow (Landscape Trust), Liz Anslow and Mike Warren (Landscape Trust).

Apologies were received from: Robin Horner, Prof Alwyn Smith, Brian Hancock, Kate Schofield, Susan Briscoe, David & Jill Player, Robin Horner, Margaret Bromley-Webb, Jean Watts, Ian Henderson, Lisa Henderson and Frances Astor.

#### **2. Minutes of the last AGM**

The Minutes of the last Meeting held on 8 March 2013 were agreed as a true record (Prop: Seconder: Roger Walton). There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

#### **3. Chairman's Report on Company Activities**

The report on Company activities was divided in to two parts.

The financial year to the end of September 2013 had been a very busy year for the Company. Stalls were held at the AONB Apple Day, the Landscape Trust's Warton Weekend and Silverdale Coffee Morning.

Efforts to trial a new form of wind power on the Arnside Station building had to be abandoned as the turbine was never delivered. Although we lost the purchase money, it was possible to reallocate the SDF grant to the production of the Guides and Atlases rather than hand it back. Over £2,000 worth of Atlases were sold to the end of the financial year, including through the RSPB.

The Company helped the Leeds Children's Holiday centre in Silverdale to install solar panels in December 2012 and these are working well. They have reduced their electricity bill and produced an income for us. In June 2013 Storth School decided to purchase the remaining 85% of their tariff from us thus providing us with the capital to help another school.

The Company has welcomed 7 new shareholders.

Since the end of the last financial year the Company has been working with Silverdale School to provide solar PV panels and these have recently been installed. A grant has been offered to the AONB so that they can also install solar PV Panels on the roof of the station building. This is now awaiting a final decision from Lancaster City Council.

Displays have been provided at further events around the area.

The Company has been commissioned to produce a directory of woodland advisors, contractors, wood fuel and wood products. Funded by the Morecambe Bay NIA, it is hoped the booklet will be out by the end of March.

The Company has started another initiative to encourage a move from open wood fires to more efficient wood burning stoves which also works in conjunction with the Silverdale and District Wood Bank. Thanks to a few shareholders who offered their winter fuel allowance for this purpose, small grants or interest-free loans were offered to persons in the AONB wishing to make the change. It is intended to roll this scheme out to more families in the summer and so the Company would like to hear from anyone who could pledge their 2014 winter fuel allowance to a good cause.

The eleventh Atlas/guide that is on butterflies is now available and three more are being finalised; two on mammals and one on the rocks and soils of the AONB. Sales have reached £2,900 and are still going well.

The chairman finally thanked the Board, Shareholders and the Staff of the AONB Unit for all their help and encouragement over the past year.

In answer to a question, the Chairman said that the most popular of the current guides were on orchids and day-flying moths.

#### **4. Community Interest Statement Report**

The Chairman mentioned that the Statement would shortly be written and put on the website.

#### **5. Report of the Finance Director and Presentation of Accounts**

In presenting the accounts (copies of which were circulated at the meeting), the Finance Director, David Askew said that due to the repayment from Storth School there had been a considerable increase in turnover compared with the previous financial year.

The accounts (p2) show a total expenditure £13,325 with a turnover of £21,162. This led to an operating profit of £7,056 after deduction of Corporation tax including interest on bank balances. Taking into account the accumulated loss of £3,342 from previous years, this came to a profit to be brought forward of £3,714. The balance sheet (p3) shows that the tangible assets stood at £529 and cash at the bank (including deposit) of £20,164. The amount falling due to creditors within 1 year was

£4,229, thus the net current assets stood at £15,395. From this must be deducted an amount of £1,800 (the balance of an interest free-loan from a shareholder) thus net assets stand at £14,664. A debt of £1,698 owed by Smart Power from the previous year is shown as written off (p8).

This balances with the Shareholders Funds of £10,950 plus the amount of £3,714 from the profit and loss account.

The Finance Director also mentioned that under a recent EU Directive on micro-businesses, the accounts will be simplified in future years.

## **6. Approval of Reports and Accounts**

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

## **7. Re-appointment of Directors**

This year David Askew, David Farrant and Robin Horner retired as Directors and both expressed a willingness to be reappointed for a further three years. The three re-appointments were confirmed by a show of hands.

## **8. Other Business**

Claire Harris explained about the Wood Bank scheme (the use of waste small sized wood from felling) and mentioned that if people were interested in participating, then they should contact her.

Signed as a true record:

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