

## **Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company**

### **Minutes of the Fifth Annual General Meeting held on Friday 8th March 2013 at RSPB Leighton Moss Visitor Centre, Silverdale.**

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

Present: Ann Kitchen (Chairman), George Steele, Roger and Natalia Walton, Harry and Elfrieda Warner, John Webb, Bob and Val Hamnett, Val and Malcolm Stevens, Martin and Jenny Elsworth, Roger Cartwright, Mike and Jeanette Smith and Ken Kitchen.

Apologies were received from: Robin Horner, Stephen Kirtley, David Emmett, Philip and Gill Pacey, Ann Gegg, Laura Middleton, Elizabeth Richards, David Player, Jill Player, Barbara Hall, Ian and Liza Henderson, Kate Schofield, Peter Standing, Claire Dixon, Jean Watts, Sandy Felton, Lesley Edkins and Margaret Bromley Webb. David Askew (Finance Director) was unable to attend through illness.

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

The Minutes of the last Meeting held on 2 March 2012 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

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

The Chairman introduced her report by emphasising that her report covered the Company's activities since the last AGM and thus did not coincide with the financial year that ended in September 2012. The main points are summarised below.

Solar PV Initiative. The solar panels on the roof of Storth School have produced well in spite of poor weather and brought in an income of £1250 for the first 9 months. In December the Company put solar panels on the roof of the Leeds Children's Holiday Centre with money raised from a generous grant and interest free loan from one of our shareholders, and a grant of £500 from Booths Supermarkets. These have started generating.

The Income produced from the FIT for both systems will be around £2,000 a year index linked for the next 20 plus years. This will be used to pay back the initial shareholder capital of £7,000, repay the loan, pay annual administration expenses and enable the Company to help other community buildings. When the Feed-in Tariff is reduced still further or is withdrawn for new solar PV systems, the BCCIC will consider giving grants when money becomes available.

The Company is to take up an offer of an interest-free loan from another shareholder to put solar panels on the roof of the Arnside Station building (housing the AONB office). The Company also hoped to put a chimney pot turbine on the chimney stack to power the warehouse in the station yard that is used by the AONB volunteers. This project had to be abandoned due to non-delivery of the turbine and instead solar panels will be used for which we have received an additional grant.

Atlas of Flora and Fauna. The original SDF grant for the turbine has now been transferred to a new project - an online atlas of the flora and fauna of the AONB. Initial feedback from the first atlases convinced Directors that it was worth printing in quantity and this has now been enabled by the SDF Grant. The first six titles are now printed and are available. Free copies have been placed in schools. Copies will be sold by mail, at meetings and in local outlets to produce a revenue stream and enable us to print further titles. Not all the titles will be printed. Those of a more specialised nature will be available on a CD in high resolution. It has not yet been decided whether all the titles should be available on the web at low resolution.

Land Sales. Hale Moss came up for sale last May but despite its best efforts the Landscape Trust was not able to buy the land and once again it went to a private bidder. The new owner seems very sympathetic to wildlife conservation and we will be doing all we can to make sure that the land is well managed and remains open to public access.

Nature Improvement Area This initiative should help our last two aims, woodland usage and conservation grazing. The Company is working with Martin Wain to try to set up a sustainable wood usage scheme that will benefit the whole community. The forthcoming atlas of Large Trees should raise awareness of our woodlands.

Harry and Elfrieda Warner have offered their garden in July for a Fundraising afternoon. The Fair Trade group will also be having a stall there.

She closed by saying that financially the Company is now on a sound footing and we have managed to further many of our aims. She thanked the members of the Board especially David for his help and advice and also Barbara at the AONB office.

In answer to a question about whether allowing the booklets to be downloaded free would affect sales and income, she thought that there would still be an interest in buying paper copies, especially from visitors. There was always a need to minimise the use of paper where possible.

In response to another question about whether other schools had shown interest in being helped under the PV scheme, she mentioned that Silverdale School were interested but wanted to go ahead by themselves.

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

The Chairman mentioned that the Statement had been written and copies would be circulated.

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

In the absence of the Finance Director, the Chairman summarised the main points in the Financial Statement for the Year ending 30 September 2012.

The total expenditure for the year was £13,057 with a turnover of £11,282. This led to an operating loss of £1,775 which taking interest received and tax into account was £1,771 net. The accumulated loss (taking into account the previous year's

accumulated loss of £1,571) now totals £3,342. The balance sheet showed tangible assets of £423 and bank deposit of £5,939 (less Corporation Tax of £2.00). A debtor amount of £1,698 owed by Smart Power (under a County Court judgement) for equipment purchased but not supplied makes the total up to £8,058. This is reduced by £2,500 representing interest free loans due after more than one year. The net assets thus total £5,558.

This balances with the Shareholders Funds totalling £8,900 less the accumulated loss of £3,342.

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

The accounts were approved by a show hands.

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

This year Ann Kitchen and Mike Smith retired as Directors and both expressed a willingness to be reappointed. The appointments were confirmed by a show of hands.

George Steele had expressed a wish to become a director. This was proposed by Ann Kitchen and seconded by Mike Smith. His appointment as a Director was approved by a show of hands.

## **8. Any Other Business**

Harry and Elfrieda Warner invited members to come to a Garden Party at their home in aid of Company funds. This was to be held on July 20<sup>th</sup> on New Barns Road, Arnside. Visitors should bring cushions or rugs to sit on. Ann Kitchen would give a guided tour of the garden.

There was a suggestion that Keer to Kent might produce a map of the area showing all the locations of interest.

It was brought to our attention that a large parcel of land had just come up for sale and we would be finding out about its suitability for conservation purposes.

G Steele said that he would strongly support an initiative to tap geothermal energy in the AONB.

After the Business Meeting and a break for tea and coffee, a talk and power point presentation was given by Dr Richard Sewell entitled 'Hives of Hope-Beekeeping in Uganda'. The talk described his work with a charity that had set up two projects at an orphanage and a hospital in Uganda to teach European bee-keeping methods. Dr Sewell was thanked for his talk.

Signed as a true record:

---