



prepared 20.01.2023

Minutes of Board Meeting – Thursday 19th January 2023 – 10.30

Attending: Matthew Abercrombie (MA), Luke Heydon (LH), Guy Mathias (GM), Dennis Murray (DM), Andy Robinson (AR)

In Support: Anna Fielding-O'Farrell (AFO), Anne Nelson (AN)

Apologies: none

1. Approval of Minutes – meeting 20th October 2022

No minutes were sent out from the previous meeting

(post-meeting note: MA located draft minutes from October 20th – circulated with draft of these minutes Board Meeting 19th January 2023)

2. AFO felt that all items were ongoing from the Schedule of Actions circulated from the October meeting. All agreed no need for Schedule of Actions to be continued.

3. Board membership and related roles

3.a) Chair needs to be confirmed. MA advised he was happy to be forwarded as Chair. MA noted that he has experience in chairing but noted he lives the furthest away. AN will take on secretarial role. MA hoped better communication going forward. LH clarified that all communications should go to AFO in first instance.

AR and LH nominated and seconded MA.

3.b) AFO advised that administrative actions need to be taken following the retirement of previous Chair.

i) Barclays bank contacted Wingfield Barns as there is no-one with significant control listed with Companies House.

ACTION: MA to update Companies House.

ii) LH said a record of the pathway to do that needs recording as this had been a little challenging. AFO has login details.

ACTION AFO to record pathway

3.c) AFO tried to change the mandate to have DM added as a signatory, and other names removed.

ACTION: AFO ongoing action

3.d) LH discussed recruitment for more board members.

i) LH has contacted Deborah Bull (Eye) but not had a reply)

ACTION LH will chase to offer to show her around WB.

ii) AFO is in contact Laudi Ridge. LH has two other local ladies (Lindsay, Janet Koralambe, Luke's daughter – based in Scotland) who could be of interest.
ACTION: LH/AFO to follow through with these names.

iii) LH noted that daytime meetings can be a challenge for those working, or for part-time/ad hoc advisory roles. GM said that hybrid meetings are the way forward and some tech investment may be needed. GM can provide MS Teams.

iv) MA queried whether we need to do a post to recruit board members – problematic if the Board does not want to proceed. All agreed to just focus on LH's suggestions.
ACTION: AFO to get Lindsay's contact number.

4. Operations Manager Report

4.a) Events Update - AFO said we felt the Christmas Market arrangements were now in place without too much change.

i) LH mentioned entry price change – AFO said entry can be decided dynamically based on economic climate.

ii) LH noted increased revenue on food and beverage. AN mentioned as we intend increased food production we should consider work to kitchen to obtain good council hygiene rating. AN can do the HACCP documentation.

ACTION: AN to price up works required to improve kitchen

iii) AFO events said November 2022 was our busiest events month, into December we had one event we had to postpone due to low numbers. Made2Measure promenade concert was on an icy day and there was one slip incident but with no follow up.

4.b) Volunteers

- DM mentioned lack of volunteers to support event and AFO said we are recruiting additional volunteers with job descriptions. There was a note in December newsletter, and online through Volunteer Suffolk.
- DM also mentioned Michael wants to stop garden work, DM said he would be happy to help with lawn-mowing, together with AF O's father.

4.c) Funding Applications – see item 6

4.d) Tenant Matters – AFO told the board that Eammon Andrews is planning to give his notice as he is looking to retire. We will ask Ivor Butcher if he would like the space. AFO noted that it is a difficult space to rent out and void space is £200/month. MA asked if building is listed in order to create a separate entrance. AFO advised it is listed by association. LH asked about any historical doors and will investigate this. AFO mentioned we are very short of storage space, and this is one option. AFO would like to talk to Tom Grant about using some of his barn in the car park. All agreed rental income was important revenue for WB CIC.

ACTION – LH to investigate Studio 3 historical entrances.

AFO to use local advertising to promote space when notice is given if necessary. Ivor to be approached for possible tenant.

4.e) Plans for 2023 - AFO advised of a few different types of events – High Tide Theatre Company (20th May) performing a play reading; EAF and Miniprints exhibitions (May & July- August), an external client Jive Festival (September); On bigger events AFO outlined summer fete is being repeated in August with fundraising aspect for the church, but with a craft fair. MA noted that there has been some noise about local events charging & to enlist the parish council to be more engaged; WB to be clear about expectations on fund-raising and profile of event. AFO advised that a meeting has been scheduled 26th January to discuss fete. AFO continued by telling the board of the village Open Gardens in June – based here this year not GBH; visitors will pay for a map here, tearoom will be open, we will have a few trade stalls. Return of Autumn Festival subject to space for expansion. GM asked about a Spring festival. AN noted we have tried to develop a food focussed event without much traction. AFO said this had been talked about a free Suffolk tourism event she had attended.
ACTION: LH to assist in making up a wayfinding map for Open Gardens.

5. Matters Arising from Marketing and Wedding Reports

none

6. Mid Suffolk District Council Matters

6.a) AR wanted an overview discussion on current situation. In summary AR felt that we have a challenging landlord.

i) Alternatives ownership options are to: a. Take over freehold, we are waiting for funding application result as this is the only way forward for this option; b. Agitate on our current relationship/situation – District Council elections in May which might lead to change of control and might be a good time to start agitating, once the risks are considered. Eg., get press involved, purpose being to lobby for moving where Wingfield Barr sits in the council and move it to arts community rather than under assets. AR said council have to make decision. There was a brief discussion on how much difference it would make if we get the asset moved and get some support – AR said it is fundamental and not about preference and part of argument to DC that we need some support.

ii) MA would be interested to see if there is more local support, which may lead to other things, eg buying a share in future. AFO added that if we get the funding applied for (£150,000 with match funding of £150,000) our situation would change. AR pointed out that operating cost of utility would be a substantial % of grant especially with maintenance. AR also highlighted risk of cover for shareholder repayment. DC would sell with condition that building has to be sold for same use, which does not help us.

6.b) AFO advised that from April council will be handing over utility costs. AFO says council forecast £36,000/annum but AFO feels we could negotiate for better rate/supplier. AR noted this is unsustainable, so we need to look at budget. GM added the energy advisor looking at site has not been in contact but we do need an energy assessment – worth having it done while MSDC still owns the site and AFO to ask. Solar panels are an option to reduce utility costs.

6.c) AFO muted idea of a guarantor for community shares and AR said this was possible but unlikely.

6.d) MA suggested a letter to one or more individuals to brief them on our situation. AR suggested find a sympathetic ear and potential incoming administration to advise we want this to continue but it cannot without change. MA to approach Andrew Stringer (Green Party Councillor) and find out who else we can talk to.
ACTION: MA to approach Andrew Stringer; AFO to speak to Zoey Banthorpe; GM to approach Lavinia Haddingham.

6.e) Section 106 amendment for change of use of Granary and Studio 3— AR advised that there was no update. MSDC solicitor contacted AR and said chief planner chased and AR pointed out we have paid CC £500 to do the S106 and we still did not have it.

ACTION: AFO to press MSDC on energy assessment

7. Budget

7.a) Marketing budget 2023 has reduced due to less wedding print marketing.

7.b) Weddings & conferences are best revenue earners. Event takings were up quite considerably although that then led to higher costs. LH noted potential to drop off events to increase weddings. MA highlighted risk if performers are cancelled it can be difficult to get them back and our primary aim is to have these. AFO said we can sometimes move an event to take a wedding. We do not wish to sacrifice our art endeavours in favour of events and weddings. AFO said that we would like more daytime events with good margins, balanced with community arts activity as we demonstrate our CIC perspective. No event makes a loss. LH said we need to sell our rural location as a positive.

7.c) Car park

Application funding needs to be drawn down by March 31st, Church did not get their grant funding. We have £13,000 from community fund for 68% of project, £1000 in locality awards and the parish council have agreed to give us £1500 so further funds are needed. Planning has still not come through. AR said we will potentially lose the grant if we do not use it in 2 months (by end March). LH felt the appointed contractor can start and WB can add to car park when further funds come through. AR advocated that we continue without waiting for planning as it should have been determined in November and Planning have not replied to our chase. LH agreed and reminded the board that the contractor's quote was £16k plus VAT.
ACTION: LH to appoint contractor and ascertain invoice arrangements before 31st March.

7.d) 2023 Budget – AFO and AR to do a budget

i) Utilities - we need to consider cost of this is significant. WB needs to start exploring suppliers, but we need kWh usage & tariff information from Council. MA can add his signature to request for authority if necessary.

ii) Need a follow up meeting with all of us involved in the budget given the situation. Some forecasting from Arts Council template. Next round of applications for National Portfolio Organisation will be in 2025 so plan to start working on it in 2024.
ACTION: AFO to ask Jack Glover MSDC for electricity supply information
AR and AFO to draft 2023 budget and circulate draft to board

Post meeting note – Budget Setting Meeting scheduled for Friday 17th February 10:30 am

8. AOB

8.a) External decoration – AFO updated the Board that this had started Monday 16th but contractor was doing prepping work as temperature was below 5 degrees. Studio 4 will be completed first and then office or Great Barn. Jack Glover from MSDC implied spend was closer to £100k including timber repairs, gutters, higher than council estimate.

- b) MA noted that Diana Kearsley is still in possession of quite a lot of paperwork, hard copy and electronic – eg., mandate for bank account. MA and AFO to go through all things like DPS – AFO to take on role of DPS on Premises license.
ACTION: MA & AFO to draw up list and action transfer
- c) Marketing - AFO had a zoom meeting with a marketing consultant Jason Smith based in Woodbridge – he can do a comprehensive range of marketing. He is going to put forward a proposal on a marketing strategy and assisting on social media.
- d) LH suggested the Barns artistic direction can be C/f to next meeting.
ACTION: AN/AFO to add to next meeting agenda
- e) LH asked to discuss salaries, succession planning and retention – unminuted/ confidential

9. Next meeting: Friday 24th February 10:30am

Chair: 
Matthew Abercrombie

Date: 17/02/23