

## CPRE SOMERSET

### **ACTION MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT PITNEY FARM CAFÉ ON 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2018**

**Present:** Chris Lewis (Chairman), Stuart Eyles, David Lloyd, Cathy Nicholls, Don Parkinson, John Roberts, Fletcher Robinson, Tim Whittingham, Becky Collier (Branch Manager), Liz Payne (Planner)

Steve Wilcox - potential trustee was also in attendance

CL welcomed SW as a potential trustee. SW is semi-retired and has recently moved to the Quantocks after a career in project management. SE has now been co-opted as a Trustee and we still have a vacancy for one more so BC is keeping the adverts live on various volunteer websites.

1. **Minutes:** 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017: Approved
2. **Matters Arising:** Trustees agreed to adopt the Conflict of Interest Statement.

*ACTION: all Trustees to fill out their Conflict of Interest declaration forms and return them to JR asap*

### **3. Reports**

Treasurer's Report - see report. The higher interest rate on the new deposit account should bring in around £250 extra per year. JR said that the Branch Share from membership has now come in so the NatWest balance is now more like £9000. BC explained how the share of membership we receive depends on how the member signed up and how it is important for people to indicate that they joined via the Branch. The extract from the NO Branch Handbook below explains it in more detail:

For members recruited directly by the Branch, 100% of the first three year's subscription is payable to the Branch. This also applies to online subscriptions if the new member indicates that they have heard of CPRE from the local Branch or if they use a tracked link from a Branch website. If a member indicates a general recruitment source or the source is unclear then the membership subscriptions are shared from the start, with 50% going to the Branch. If a member indicates a National Office recruitment source then National Office retains 100% of the subscription for the first three years. After the first three years Branches receive 50% of each subscription and 50% of any tax refunds on Gift Aid.

JR's budget forecast shows that we will need to draw on around £6000 of our reserves this year. The draft Accounts for 2017 show a deficit of around £7000 which was expected. CL proposed that the accounts be accepted and CN seconded. CL thanked JR for all his efforts. JR will now get the accounts checked by a third party.

Chairman's Report - see report. CL welcomed SE as a new Trustee; JR will now be registering his details with the Charity Commission. CL reiterated that we should elect a Vice Chair by the next AGM. CL proposed that the branch keeps LP on for another year after her initial contract expires in April and TW seconded this. LP thanked everyone for their support and said she was keen to pass on some skills to volunteers - for example she has spent some time with SE looking at planning issues in Mendip. CL suggested that in a year's time, he should get a small group together to plan ahead.

There was a discussion about the issue of population prompted by CL asking Trustees to consider whether the branch should write again to NO, as suggested by Henry Best and Roger Martin at the 2017 AGM. Some Trustees were keen to find out the effect of population forecasts on housing figures here in Somerset, others felt this was not an issue we should be involved in at a county level. SE felt it was fair to talk about the

consequences of population increase but we should be wary of being associated with a general population debate. CL and LP had looked at the 300 page report on housing figures in Somerset and were confident that figures were realistic and evidence-based. DL agreed with LP that the pressures on Somerset were from lots of things like people living longer, internal migration from other parts of the UK, young people wanting their own homes and families splitting up - as well commuting. He felt that population increase may play a part but it is not a huge issue in Somerset so it is not appropriate for our branch to spend a great deal of time on it. It was resolved that CL should write a simple letter to the Chief Executive, Crispin Truman, asking whether CPRE is prepared to acknowledge the issue of population.

*ACTION: CL to bring draft letter to next EC meeting.*

CL explained some of the projects agreed at the recent CPRE SW meeting including:

- CPRE Wiltshire using a consultant to develop planning and policy guidance for dealing with large battery storage applications in the countryside, associated with solar farms. The policy guidance will be available to all SW branches and will help if similar applications arise in Somerset.
- CPRE Gloucestershire carrying out a study into the effectiveness of adopted Neighbourhood Plans (NPs). Somerset is also involved in this as a case study and there are 5 parishes/towns with adopted NPs who will be approached.
- Money is to be allocated to allow branches in the SW to have their own short videos for use on their own websites and on social media - more info in Branch Development report.

Branch Development - see report. BC has been developing ideas for a photographic competition and was considering approaching the Somerset Camera Club - a Facebook group set up by the County Gazette which has almost 1500 members. The alternative approach would be to use an existing photographic competition and simply sponsor a landscape prize - as we have done with Bruton Arts Society for the Landscape Painting award.

FR wondered if letter writing to the local press was a way of raising our profile and BC was in favour of this as long as the letters were "on message". JR was interested in the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and BC agreed to pass on any info she receives from NO on this.

Planners Report - see report. LP also mentioned a planning application for 32 ecotourism units near Ham Wall nature reserve, near Glastonbury. RSPB & Natural England logos were on the architect's drawings; LP has made these bodies aware of this misrepresentation and has since put in an objection. LP thanked FR for his recent planning letters and his hard work. A copy of The Times was passed round featuring a letter from Matt Thomson, CPRE, responding to a feature by Sajid Javid on housing policy. BC has since circulated this. LP referred to the planning database maintained by her and BC and said she felt it showed that we were objecting to the right cases.

**4. Road Proposals:** JR had been to a recent exhibition about the A358 proposals and feels that we should take the official CPRE position opposing all new road building but also take the view that of the three options, pink is the least worst. He is concerned that the plans take no account of the potential effect on the Blackdown Hills - in fact Highways England (HE) predict that traffic in the Blackdowns will fall. JR had questioned this, fearing that traffic will use the A30 across the Blackdowns if the M5 is busy but he did not get a proper answer. He also fears that the next roundabout to the east of the proposals (on the A303) will become the next pinch point as it will remain at just one lane width. There are no figures for the impact "downstream" of speeding up the traffic via the proposed Stonehenge tunnel. JR feels the figures are coarse and they don't take account of future changes so he foresees that there will soon be pressure for

more road improvements. LP said she would strongly object to the blue and orange routes on landscape grounds.

JR said that Glastonbury TC will soon be consulting on 2 options for a bypass. James Heappey MP is backing the idea but has said it will need to have economic benefits ie development associated with it. JR felt the questionnaire was quite badly worded and he suspected the road would not happen due to lack of funding and the fact that it is not featured in any forward plans, including the draft NP.

*ACTION: JR and LP to write CPRE's comment on A358 proposals together.*

**5. Fundraising - next steps:** - see paper. BC explained that she had sent out the SOS Appeal and also featured legacies in the latest newsletter as agreed at the Sept EC meeting. The SOS appeal, which was only to CPRE members, had been a great success and has, so far, raised £2546.25 - including Gift Aid. She was now looking for guidance on which other fundraising options set out in her paper she should prioritise. There was a general discussion and FR suggested an SOS villages appeal to the wider public in light of threats like the recently proposed Garden Town at Sparkford. BC is keen to do more positive, profile raising projects.

*ACTION: JR and CL to consider BC's paper and offer feedback*

*: BC to investigate more about free wills month*

**6. Any Other Business:** SE had just attended the Induction Day at NO and he highly recommended it. He had learnt about the "one CPRE" approach and how NO is trying hard to operate less as "us and them" and will be introducing an intranet for branches and NO.

DP expressed concern about factory farming, particularly industrial scale dairy farming. He had recently found dead calves and slurry pollution in fields near his home and had tried to report it but no one seemed interested. Farms get fined for these problems but it is not enough to affect large business style farms. BC mentioned that NO has access to a film on small scale farming called "In Our Hands" which we could show at a future CPRE event.

TW was interested in recent applications for using caravan sites as accommodation for Hinkley C workers. He had mentioned this at the Hinkley C Community Forum and was told it was not an issue but EDF accepted that they cannot decree where their workers will live. Much of the planned accommodation is not finished yet so there is a shortage of housing. LP said that Sedgemoor DC has clear guidance on sites for accommodation for Hinkley C workers.

BC mentioned the Queens Garden Party and JR said he would like to be entered into the draw this year.

CN had had a request for help from her Parish Council re an appeal for a retrospective planning application for a concrete track. LP has since put in an objection.

**7. Date of next meeting:** 10.00am, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 - Edington School Room

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Chair, CPRE Somerset

Date: .....