

Upper Eskdale Development Group

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Sunday 17th January, 3pm. – held online.

Present: Victoria Long, (Chair), Paul Barber (Operational Development Manager), Chris Hutchinson, Director and Finance Officer, Bernard Provost, Director, Lindsay Reid, Director, Ian Ludlum, Frank Ritchie, Ernie Buck, Nick Jennings.

Introduction and Welcome – Victoria Long:

The attenders were welcomed and everyone introduced themselves.

Victoria reminded those attending that since this charity /business is for the benefit of people who live in Eskdalemuir, only those who live in the parish and are members are able to vote.

"I shall briefly run over the activities of the UEDG since the last AGM which was on 27th October 2019.

After the AGM, Lindsay resigned as Chair and went to New Zealand for a few months. I then took on the Chair.

In December 2019, the Consultation process by Community Enterprise began. This had been recommended by the Lottery Community Fund and they gave us £10K to pay for it. Some of you may have been involved in the interviews. The process involved the consultation of the community and of the UEDG (the board, the work it was doing, etc). Then there was also the writing up of the Review and guidance and help from them. This went on until the end of June or even later. The report was received at the end of April and we are still following through on the recommendations: better signage, new website & leaflet, activities and events for the community in line with what they want etc. The report is available to see by email and should soon be on the website.

A new website was very kindly set up by Mark Gamblin and Laura Bennett and work on this is still ongoing. An updated leaflet was put together by Community Enterprise, which with some changes we printed out and used during 2020. New branding is still being worked on and much more is in the 'pipe-line'.

During 2019, we had applied for funding for an Operational Development Manager and funds were promised for this post. (ANCBC, Robertson, Muirhall) Some also came from the Community Council Windfarm funds. In March his post was advertised and then again in May and Paul had his first day in the job on August 3rd.

Of course much of last year we were either closed or open a shorter time than in the previous year during the summer. We started off by opening just the Shop in July, a day a week and then went from there. Much of the work during the 'lock down' involved trying to get utilities to cut down on their bills, working out if we could furlough our staff and doing repairs, plus all the admin and financial calculations that goes with that. It was interesting to clarify that the running costs of the Hub, even when it is closed, is between £1-2K per month.

To cover the loss of revenue while we were closed, we applied and received 10k from the Government Business Support Relief Fund. This supplemented the salaries paid by the

government through the Furlough Scheme. Our last payment from the Big Lottery (our main benefactor) came in June of 2020 and is specifically for salaries and training. However, because of Covid, they agreed to allow us to use it as 'general funds'. i.e. Pay any of our bills. I will leave Paul to carry on with more current activities, from here.

Previous Mins: These were read through. Lindsay proposed and Victoria seconded that they were correct.

Matters arising: none

Report by Paul Barber: Operation Development Manager.

Paul introduced himself. He has already spent nearly six months at the Hub. The key work being undertaken has been fulfilling the points stipulated in the Community Enterprise Strategic Action Plan. The timeframe for this has been adjusted to reflect Covid-19 restrictions but most points are being worked on / considered around the main headings of sustainability, marketing, and finance.

Due to Covid, £16,200 has been awarded by the Community Recovery Fund with the end of May 2021 to complete the project / spend the funds. This will cover all overheads, repairs, marketing, events and sessions that can take place once we are able to re-open.

A further £8,000 payment is expected at the end of Jan 2021 for 'forced closure' to cover lost revenue. There will be an additional £2000 automatically paid at the end of Feb too if restrictions still stand.

All staff are presently furloughed including a percentage of my hours. I am currently hub based for approximately one day, home based two days. Most volunteers that would normally be supporting our work are shielding.

The Centre user numbers over the Autumn, when we were able to open to the public again, were quite healthy considering the circumstances and we hope to build on that with a good offer of 'events and sessions' post-lockdown, certainly with the funds we now have in place to support it.

Consideration of Accounts – The Annual Accounts are on our new website: www.eskdalemuir.com. There were no questions related to these. Christopher Hutchinson then went over our current finances and grants.

Resignation and Re-election of Trustees/Directors:

Bernard Provost and Lindsay Reid resigned.

They made themselves available for re-elected and this was duly done:

- Bernard Provost: proposed by Chris Hutchinson, seconded by Ernie Buck.
- Lindsay Reid: proposed by Victoria Long and seconded by Chris Hutchinson.

These were unanimously agreed.

Membership: vote on the annual subscription: this was fixed at £1.

Appointment of Independent Examiner: It was agreed that we should continue with Theresa Parker, CMgrMCMI., MAAT. of AIMS - Accountants for Business, 2 Gillesbierigg Cottage, Boreland, Lockerbie, Dumfries and Galloway, DG11 2LE

Benefits of being a Member. It was agreed that Paul would take the lead on this and set up a sub-group to discuss this with the community and the best way to take this forward including: 'What it means to be a Member of UEDG'. A number of people at the meeting indicated they would be willing to be involved: Bernard, Nick, Ernie and Frank, Lindsay and Victoria. This would involve a discussion on the cost of membership.

It was pointed out that membership of UEDG should instil a sense of ownership. We should find out what this means to people. What would people like it to be. It was suggested that we look back at previous documents (Lottery).

The Discount Card was discussed and the reason we scrapped it.

The Voucher for 25% of costs of goods at the Hub (one-off), funded by the Community Council.

There was a query regarding the Vouchers that had been issued before Xmas with a card: could the dates on these be extended, due to the lockdown? It was agreed that the Community Council would not object to this. The extended date would be confirmed.

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Down Light Faults:

It was suggested that we should investigate if we can get insurance for the faulty 'down lights', or any other repairs that need done.

Repair Fund

It was also suggested that we set up a Repair Fund. Chris pointed out that a budget had been set by him last December for each month covering not only Repair and Maintenance but also Property Maintenance, as had also been set for all Income and Expenditure throughout the operating year 2020. He would look into a repair fund for this next year.