

Minutes for the Annual General Meeting of Hook Norton Low Carbon Limited

held on Thursday 28th September, 2017 at 7:30pm

Number of members in attendance : 25

Number of additional attendees : 7

Number of apologies : 6

Minutes

1 Introductions

Tim Lunel (TL) opened the meeting and welcomed Sarah Morris who went on to give a report on the progress of Incredible Edible Hooky, who share the aim of HNLC to reduce the carbon footprint of Hook Norton and the surrounding areas.

2 Report of the Committee

Householder and Community loans

TL asked those present to spread the word that Loans for Carbon Reduction projects are still available through HNLC.

Investments – Banbury Plant Hire (BPH) PV

Jem Hayward (JH) updated the membership on the progress of the BPH PV project – a large investment during the year to produce energy from Solar Panels to be used by the recycling equipment in the same building.

Car Club & Biodiesel

David Newton (DN) reported on the status of the Car Club, which now has 3 diesel vehicles (one of which is in Chipping Norton) running predominantly on HNLC Biodiesel, and 1 electric vehicle based at the school. TL thanked David for all his work running the Car Club and reminded all members that the HNLC Biodiesel is still £1.05 and available to all members.

E-Bikes

TL reported that the E-bikes have been used less this year than during the trial period and the following suggestions/comments were received from the floor

1. We need to publicise them more as people who are new to the village aren't aware of their existence. Use the Shop, Village Website etc
2. We should have another 'launch' event next spring and possibly another event in July to coincide with the Tour de France.
3. We should look at other sites for the bikes as the School is not central. The covered bus shelter near The Sun Inn was put forward as a possibility. The Memorial Hall was also put forward as a possibility, along with the suggestion that 2 bikes could be in one location and 2 in another.

3 Financial Summary

Mike Richardson (MR) provided a presentation of the finances from the previous year highlighting the 4 areas where budgeted figures did not match actual income/expenditure.

4 Financial Forecast

The presentation also included a forecast for the next financial year, which may require a top-up from reserves if a £10k capital project goes ahead.

5 Appointment of Auditor (Rule 52)

Resolution proposed in the Agenda for the meeting – vote for HNLC to apply audit exemption in accordance with Rule 52(b)

TL confirmed the adopted rules allow the members of the society to vote to apply audit exemption (rule 52(b) and (c)), if in the preceding financial year the society ‘met such criteria regarding low levels of income and/or expenditure or other factors as to qualify it for statutory exemption from the need to appoint qualified auditors.’

TL’s proposal to apply audit exemption in accordance with Rule 52(b) was seconded by Angel Powell and the members agreed unanimously by a show of hands.

6 Application of surplus (HNLC Rule 57)

Resolution – 100% to the continuation and development of the Society, 0% to making payments for social and charitable purposes

TL explained that the proposal means all income is used for the continuation and development of the Society and proposed that we should continue with this resolution. The proposal was seconded by Emma Kane and the members agreed unanimously by a show of hands on the application of surplus, with 100% for the continuation and development of the Society.

7 Election of management committee

Resignations: TL thanked Richard Averill for his input over the years. Thanks were also given to Paul Cooper, who has moved out of the area, and Iain Mortimer, who has new work commitments that prevent him continuing as a Board Member.

The list of nominations include the 9 remaining Board Members and one additional nominee.

Nominations	Charlie Luxton	Current Chairperson
	Tim Lunel	Current Secretary
	Mike Richardson	Current Treasurer
	Bethan Dennick	Existing Member of the Committee
	Catherine Hayward	Existing Member of the Committee
	Jem Hayward	Existing Member of the Committee
	Frank Lucas	Existing Member of the Committee
	David Shepherd	Existing Member of the Committee
	David Newton	Existing Member of the Committee
	Catherine Ryan	New Nomination

Catherine Ryan gave a brief summary of her reasons for wanting to join the Board.

Emma Kane proposed that all nominations should be elected onto the Board. The proposal was seconded by Janeen Wilson and the members agreed by show of hands to elect all nominated candidates. Posts will be decided at the next Board Meeting.

An additional request to join the Board was received after the deadline from Hugh Pidgeon, who also gave a brief summary of his reasons for wanting to join the Board. It was agreed that he would join the next Board meeting where there could be a vote on him being co-opted to the Board.

The official business of the AGM was concluded by 20.15

Proposed Community Housing Project

TL ran through the history of this proposed project and introduced Fiona Brown from Cherwell District Council (CDC). Fiona's role would be to facilitate the transfer of a piece of CDC owned land to a community land trust (CLT) – yet to be formed. The legal format of the CLT could be a Community Benefit company run in a similar way to HNLC, but it would be quite separate from it.

Fiona outlined how the process might work, with the land owned by the Community Land Trust, and the buildings owned by individuals. The community would then have more control over the housing design and affordability as land owners. Initially, a feasibility study will be carried out to ascertain whether there is a need for this scheme, what the need is, and to ensure that there is community support. There would then be a more detailed survey to get more information about specific needs.

TL introduced Alison Grunewald, a business relationship manager from the Low Carbon Hub. The Hub has a large pot of money (EU funding) to give to projects that will help develop Oxfordshire's Low Carbon economy. The proposed Feasibility Study could be funded by the Hub. They have a lot of knowledge and experience in Low Carbon infrastructure, and links to Oxford University research.

The Hub is also running an energy efficiency scheme. They are able to offer 136 Energy Audits for businesses and social enterprises at no cost. (these normally cost around £2000). Businesses can then apply to their Green Fund to implement the recommendations from the Audit at 25% of the cost. Members were encouraged to spread the word to local businesses. Sole Traders will not qualify for this offer.

CL ran through some examples of similar Community led schemes, and went on to show two examples of what could be achieved on the plot of land in question. Solar access would be a key element for heating and car charging, and suggestions were made for shared spaces which could include things like tool stores, shared heating provision, allotments, a laundry etc. It is the hope of HNLC that if the scheme goes ahead, the design and layout of the area will be shaped and driven by the people who express an interest in living there.

TL pointed out that until we get the results of the Feasibility Study and Survey, we won't know if the housing is likely to be 'starter homes', 'rightsizing', 'bungalows', 'shared ownership', or a mixture.

Questions from the floor included :

- How easy would it be to replicate this elsewhere if communities didn't have land such as the piece that CDC are making available?
 - CL responded to this by explaining how Exception Sites are often granted planning permission for Community Schemes like this, where permission would not be granted in normal circumstances.
- Are there likely to be local objections to this scheme as there were to the Taylor Wimpey (TW) site?
 - TL responded to this by clarifying that the Feasibility Study will be carried out first to ascertain whether there is community support. If there is not broad support for the scheme, HNLC will not go ahead with the project.
- (TW) promised 'Affordable Housing', and what they delivered wasn't what some members of the community considered to be 'affordable'. Will this housing be truly affordable for the younger members of the community?
 - TL confirmed that one of the questions on the survey would be to find out what members of the community consider to be 'affordable', and if that is in fact the most important consideration for the housing on this site. CL added the point that there could be an element of 'Self Build' to keep costs down.

- How would the community benefit from a scheme like this?
 - CL outlined the areas –
 - Shared spaces/facilities for the community as well as the residents on this piece of land.
 - Low energy housing that will contribute to the reduction in energy costs and our carbon footprint.
 - Freeing up of larger homes if ‘rightsizing’ houses are built.
 - The increasing value of the land would be retained by the community.
 - The purchase of properties could be restricted to an agreed criteria of ‘connection to the village’.
 - Covenants could be attached (see below).
- Will any units be available to rent?
 - MR agreed that they could be if the survey shows a need for that.

TL asked the floor if anyone present felt that HNLC should not get involved with the Community Housing project and no one raised any objections. TL went on to introduce the subject of the proposed Housing Survey and used one carried out in Ardley as an example.

Housing Needs Survey –

What do we need to ask?

- Are you as a member of the community, supportive of the principle?
- Is there a need?
 - Are there members of the community needing homes within the next 5 yrs?
- What is the need?
 - Downsizing, First Home, Self Build etc?
 - Rent/buy?
- Do you have a specific need?
 - Bungalow, Maisonette, House?
- General questions to get statistics about householder’s current status
- What is your definition of ‘Affordable’?
- Whether the proposal should include any small business units? –
 - Is there a need?
 - Is the plot large enough?
 - Would business units be better sited on the edge of the village?
- Should the project include a Self Build, Self Finish and/or an Apprenticeship scheme?
- Is a community space important?
- Are shared facilities e.g. laundry, allotments, important?

How do we distribute the survey ensuring that every householder respond?.

- Door to door – guarantees coverage – members doing their own street? (there was general support for this approach at the meeting from those present) Deliver one day and pick up a week later?
- Leafleting - with the Newsletter?
- On the village and HNLC websites
- Survey Monkey
- Left in the dentist/doctor’s surgery – possibly with someone to help with filling in?
- Church – “
- Playgroup – “
- Social media?

How do we encourage each occupant to respond - rather than one representative of the household?

Further items to be discussed

- How do we set the criteria for the covenants?
 - There are examples that can be followed.
 - The newly formed Trust would have to agree to and control the criteria.
 - We wouldn't have to comply with restrictions that Local Councils do.
 - How do we define 'local' or 'an interest in' the village?
 - We can write in a covenant term that prevents homes being used as holiday homes or being sub-let
 - We can ensure, for example, that on re-sale, properties are offered to village residents for a set period or in perpetuity
- Design of houses – number of bathrooms etc once needs have been identified.

TL thanked everyone for coming and giving such helpful feedback, and encouraged them to spread the word about the project and the need for views both positive and negative.

The Meeting was closed at 21.30

Some additional questions were emailed to Board members prior to the meeting by Members unable to attend :

- If HNLC is involved in a project creating more housing, surely this will increase the number of car journeys in the area and therefore be against the group's Low Carbon initiatives?
 - The village has no way to prevent additional housing being permitted, so if there is community support for this project, we would endeavour to ensure true affordability and Low Carbon measures are used in the design and build stages, which we are not able to do with developer-led sites.
- Is flooding going to be an issue as it has been on the TW estate?
- Will the project be able to make use of NEETS (those not in Employment, Education or Training)?
- Could the project provide Housing Association type properties that are rented rather than purchased?