

Minutes

Meeting Six

Tuesday 23rd January 2007

8.00pm – 10.00pm

Upstairs Function Room at the Waldegrave Arms

Present

Mark Calverley, Nigel Hall, Chris Head, Jackie Head, Richie Hester, Lisa Jones, Mari Martin, Bernice Roberts, Ann Shirley, Gill Stobart, Jem Thompson-Smith, Kate Towers

Apologies

Dylan Martlew, Patricia Woods, Mike Jennings, Linda Milverton, Nicky Gibney, Rodger Martin

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting 28th November 2006 were approved and signed.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising not covered in the agenda.

Business Plan

Statement of Aims, objectives and activities

- CH presented the statement of aims, objectives and activities for the village shop in its developmental stage (copies were previously distributed to the group). The first paragraph is the aim and encapsulates what the project is about. The objectives and activities which follow will be expanded in the business plan, with concrete examples for each of the headings. It was noted that the copy circulated needed to be limited to 250 words as a summary for the grant application.
- Some discussion followed about the language used. A suggestion was made to remove “improving equality” and leave the words “meeting the basic needs of the community”. Also, “mental well being” needs more explanation.
- It was agreed that, with these minor modifications, the Statement of Aims, objectives and activities were accepted as the broad principals and basis for the setting up and operation of the Village Shop.
- CH to further develop and summarise for the Sub-committee approval

CH

Type of legal entity

- MC explained the key issues and possible legal structures of the Village Shop. The group has been working from a guide published by Plunkett (Organisational Structures for Rural Social Enterprises, Section 6, Decision-making Exercises and Tools)
- It was noted that one type of legal structure has been generally used for this type of enterprise but consideration had to be given to various options before making an initial recommendation.
- The group had worked through the Co-operatives^{UK} (ICOM) ‘Select-a-

Structure' exercise from the guide to reach its recommendations. These workings will form part of the Business Plan to ensure transparency of decision making.

- The recommendation made by the group is to use the Industrial and Provident Society (For the benefit of the community) model because:
 - it provides an element of charitable status (if objectives are correctly drawn up) but it is not a formal charity
 - any profits made cannot be distributed to members and must be kept in the community or enterprise
 - one member has one vote (irrespective of the number of shares they own)
 - it is widely used and understood for community shops
- Further details are contained in Plunkett Fact sheet 4 & 6 appended to these minutes
- It was proposed to continue develop the business plan using the I&PS (for the benefit of the community) model. **The recommendation was accepted.**
- At the next meeting it will be necessary to:
 - come up with a name
 - look at the management structure
 - discuss what level of membership subscription
- A question was asked about administrative set up costs. MC advised that there would be an initial fee of between £100 to £950 dependant on the number of amendments required to the model agreements and an annual fee of between £60 and £370.

Financial planning

- Presented by LJ who explained that the figures must be seen as “work in progress”.
- Graham Brown (Blagdon Stores) has provided information about the finances of the previous shop. He found that customers were not price driven but more concerned with convenience and choice. The busiest times were 8 -10am and evenings. The evening sales were most lucrative. DVDs were worth doing. He stressed that having a PO in-store would be particularly useful. He also warned against bad debts as some cheques had bounced.
- It was noted that although cigarettes accounted for the largest part of the turnover (17%) they made the smallest profit margin (3%). In addition the suppliers required a stock of £3.5K to be kept on display. The financial reasons for not stocking cigarettes was discussed and it was agreed at this stage, not to carry them and this will need to be reflected in the financial calculations.
- LJ has used the figures, minus the cigarettes, with a margin of 19% and a manager's salary of £12,000. Even with no growth it could break even within two to three years and after that make a surplus. Much more information is still needed e.g. rent of premises, IPS expenses, marketing, training, renovations and membership donations.
- It was also noted that the main grant from Esmée Fairburn needed to be matched by the other two funding streams, the loan from Cooperative Finance and the community element.
- The business planning team is meeting again at the beginning of March.

The Post Office

- JH had spoken with LM who confirmed that the PO discussions with the government about closures of rural post offices will be completed by mid March. From summer 2007, over an 18 month period, the closures will happen. LM does not know what the future holds for EH Post Office.
- If it were to close, consideration should be given to moving a post office facility to the shop which could be phased in at a later date.

Premises

- NH presented proposals for use of premises Old Forge at The Theatre but all proposals would first have to be agreed by Theatre Trustees, key stakeholders (users) and would then subject to planning permission, building regulations etc.
- Three possible options were tabled and discussed.
- It was agreed that the impact on other users and neighbours must be minimised.
- It was noted that a full specification would be necessary to give accurate costs. Potentially, there could be different funding stream for capital works to community assets.
- It was agreed that the relationship with the Theatre Trustees was of paramount importance for the successful delivery of any proposal and that partnership working would be essential.
- Consideration needs to be given to how much space is actually needed. CH to requested figures from ViRSA.
- It was noted that the rear access to the Old Forge is very narrow and would be unsuitable for anything other than emergency access.
- It was agreed that the way to take this forward is to initially have a meeting with the Theatre Trustees as soon as possible. Subsequently, a wider stakeholder meeting with other interested parties, Alison Batt (Solo), Roly Currell, Nick Houghton and Brenda Bishop (Club) and Margaret Ballantyne (pre-school)
- CH to speak to all four trustees to request a meeting, to include NH, BR and JF.
- CH thanked NH and premises group.

Interim Shopping

- Current position is that there is funding until the end of March. Community Action denied a funding application on the grounds that it potentially undermined the B&NES ring and ride scheme.
- There is a meeting next week which will consider:
 - applying for funding elsewhere
 - trying to fund existing service by fund raising
 - making the ring and ride service work using the present system
- It was agreed to speak to Nick Branch about situation.
- It was agreed that the Friday Shopping Club has been a great success and the work of Jenny Cruse and Alison Gibson was appreciated.

JH

Publicity

- Another poster is needed to replace the one outside the post office.
- It was agreed that keeping the information on the website up to date was important and Barry Rider is thanked for his work.
- A written briefing is now given to the Parish Council monthly.
- A press release should be prepared for the March publications (copy deadline mid February).

M&RM

Revised roles and membership of working groups

- New groups needed for fund raising, operation of shop and a volunteers data base.
- It is essential to do a market analysis for the business plan. JT-S and KT happy to research other shops.
- AS possibly help with volunteers.
- NG is researching young people in the community, in order to identify beneficiaries.
- LM and PW not present to discuss their roles.
- Would Jenny Cruse be willing to take the volunteers work further?

Review of Action Plan

- The action plan was reviewed and revised dates noted.
- It was agreed that as additional tasks were added completed items would be removed but a copy would be kept for audit purposes.

AOB

- Nick Branch is happy for the project to have all the equipment from the shop but it must be removed by the end of February. LJ has kindly offered her barn for storage so a working party will meet on Sunday 11th February to move everything. This could be an opportunity for publicity.
- It was noted that all this equipment will count as matched funding and would need to be listed.
- It was agreed that as the ViRSA representative has copies of the minutes they did not need to be invited to the next meeting but will be invited to a meeting at some time in the future.
- Volunteer hours must be recorded and forwarded to LJ who will collate them.

All

CH

All

Items for next meeting

- Review of new working groups
- Agreement of name for the I&PS
- Look at the management structure
- Agreement on the cost of membership subscription

Date of next meeting

27th February 2007, 8pm Upstairs at the Waldegrave Arms