

Stoughton Community Centre Project

Meeting Minutes : 3rd May 2003 – Methodist Church Hall

In attendance: Jonathan Dawson, solicitor
Maureen Bell, chair
Peter Gunner
Ian Godfrey
John Allford
Guest: Cllr Jayne Marks

Apologies were given for Nigel Horton (overseas), Cllr Pauline Searle (LibDem meeting)

For ease of referral, the paragraphs are numbered:

1. Jonathan Dawson, (JD) explained our double entity as STAG and as SCCP and agreed that it was good we had separated the two functions. We have a need to formalise both groups and with SCCP having a priority, our immediate need is for a constitution. SCCP needs a lot of help to achieve the immediate goals and it is now time for us to bring some professionals on board – in particular, an accountant.
2. JD commented on the excellent help we have and are receiving from Martin Moss of Village Halls and agreed that the appropriate constitution is not that of Acre but is the model prepared by Community Matters. MB reported all Community Matters documents can be down-loaded from <http://www.communitymatters.org.uk/> by using our membership number 1969 and use of the password (case sensitive) ***** [deleted later for putting on the web-site].
3. The differences between whether to be an incorporated or unincorporated body were discussed and it was agreed to remain unincorporated at this stage. JD reported he had never come across a situation where trustees had made great losses because of their 'liabilities'. Being unincorporated means having no legal existence, and without a legal entity individuals must sign 'on behalf of the organisation' [*Refer to JD's paper on the pros and cons of being un/incorporated.*]
4. JD recommended we agree and adopt a constitution as soon as possible. Once the proposed constitution has been agreed, it needs to be formally adopted by the committee at a formal minuted meeting. JD agreed a public meeting is not required because the meeting held in May 2002 gives the steering committee authority to adopt a constitution.
5. Cllr Jayne Marks and PG agreed to read and comment on the model constitution and to feedback their recommendations by the following weekend.

6. The topic of a public meeting was raised several times, initially by JD (see point 4). It was suggested by PG and agreed to hold an open meeting in June for Stoughton residents, the purpose of which will be PR and to reach more possible participants. It would also be used to obtain further formal 'expressions of interest' (see point 8). Simultaneously it is hoped to have an editorial spread in the Surrey Advertiser with images of the proposed building. MB reported that Ivan Ball had told her they now have elevations and the alterations to the floor plans requested by SCCP were being approved.
7. JD referred us to para 10 in the model constitution, which refers to the structure of committees. Decisions need to be made with regard to honorary officers, the maximum number of committee members we want, associate members with no voting rights and also affiliated members. JD recommended that a maximum number is not specified in the constitution for the general committee and he does not favour having both an executive and a general committee – one will satisfy the requirements for the Community Centre.
8. JD recommended that as the Charity Commission will need 'expressions of interest' to support our application. We should be making it easy for all of the possible end users and potential trustees to indicate their interest and willingness to become members, by sending them letters to which they can easily respond. IG was volunteered to draft an appropriate letter by the following weekend, needed quickly to start the process. JD recommended we should have at least 40 responses.
9. We also need trustees to formally accept their proposed role as these will be needed as evidence as part of the application as well as completing the DEC1, which is a declaration that must be signed by potential and known trustees.
10. It was discussed and agreed that because of the priority of the community centre, the proposed letter about the proposed Stoughton Community Partnership should be delayed until such time as we have acquired adequate expressions of interest for the community centre.
11. No conclusion was arrived at whether the model constitution would suit an umbrella organisation or partnership, and it was agreed that this was a distraction for the priority of getting the constitution agreed.
12. JD recommended that a start should be made on APP1, the application to the Charities Commission (available on the web) which will require copies of all of the "expressions of interest", the proposed trustees, the feasibility study, the demographics, the planned activities and the names of the users, flyers, our business plan (for the first three years), and details of the financial shortfalls. We also need to supply supplementary evidence of sustainability. JD suggested he reviews the application prior to submission.
13. JD recommended we engage our own chartered surveyor.
14. We need to consider VAT and JD recommends we arrange a meeting with a VAT expert.

15. Community matters can assist (as brokers) with regard to the insurances we will require. At this stage, only 3rd party liability is required. Trustee indemnity insurance might be considered – but we will check with JD first.
16. JD pointed out that Community Matters offer training for personnel. PG pointed out that in Basingstoke, staff are given training at least a year in advance!
17. Tenure was discussed and JD felt SCCP will gain more credibility if we provide L&L with a draft lease document, even though this was L&L's task. It was agreed that JD will supply a possible draft, which will include an option to renew the lease on the same terms. When agreed the lease would not be signed by SCCP but by us, as individuals, and the lease should be vested in the official custodian.
18. JD suggested we should be able to have a copy of the amendment to the S106 as the document is in the public domain.
19. The meeting concluded at 11.45 and those available then had a tour of the site in the Laing Homes people carrier.

Minutes taken and produced by Maureen Bell

Approved by those attending the meeting on

Approved by members of the SCCP Steering committee on