

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 18th June 2017, Bridgend Farmhouse

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Will Golding - Chair, Ruth Nay - Board, Niel Hansen - Board, John - Supporter, Mike Henderson - Supporter, David Ingram - Supporter, Henry Wilson - Supporter, Stevie - Member, Jen Davis - Member, Andrew Naismith - Board, Ant - Supporter, Hazel Cornish - Board, Yasmin Ali - Supporter, Irene Schofield - Supporter, Brendan Hill - Member, John Nowak - Supporter, Kenny Nelson - Member, Claire Stevens - Board

Apologies for absences: Anna Danby - Secretary, John Knox - Treasurer, Lynn Colombo - Board, Tania Stuart - Board, Hilary Morrison - Supporter/Sessional contractor, Darla Eno - Supporter

1. Introductions and welcome

Will Golding, Chair of BIG, welcomed everyone and we all introduced ourselves. A record was taken of all those attendance, and absences were duly noted.

2. Minutes of AGM held Sunday 6th June 2016

Everyone received a copy of the AGM minutes for the previous year.

Minutes approved as accurate by Hazel Cornish

Seconded by Will Golding.

3. Reports

a. Chair's Report

Will Golding delivered the Chair's report. Past year BIG have raised over £1.2 million and made savings of over £100,000 on the initial renovation costs of Bridgend Farmhouse.

He also reports that BIG is hosting a wide variety of activities and groups, such as running the 'Come Dine wi' me' cooking and the Natural Cosmetics Group, and also has seen many people coming to transform the land together. Additionally, BIG has hosted forest skills classes, welcomed students on placement, partnered with Edinburgh city council, welcomed people to learn in different workshops such as foraging and bird box houses. Stone wall restoration/rebuilding is currently under way, as are plans for a straw bale build and developing an eco bothy.

Will Golding also notes that BIG currently holds a board of 10 people in addition to drawing many volunteers and is continuing the Sun/Wed drop in sessions from 11 am - 3 pm. The drop in sessions have been funded for the next 2 years, running until January

2020.

There are also plans to set up share holding to make the purchasing of shares available, and this will enable people to become co-owners. This incentive will bring in revenue to further support and invest in other BIG projects. It was also made known that those who own the most shares will not have more of a vote than those who own less or none, ensuring a co-operative structure and model.

BIG's other activities and achievements were highlighted and include the running a food cafe, being published in three magazines, and having an upgraded website and an improved mailing list courtesy of Kenny. A solid board of trustees has been formed with five different sub groups having various meetings to decide how things should be run.

b. Finance Report

William Golding Passed out copies of BIG statement of receipts and payments for the year ending 31.3.17, prepared by the treasurer, John Knox. Available on request.

Showed over 50% of Big Lottery funds for the renovation were now spent.

Will clarified that BIG owns the land and farmhouse, and that the disposition makes clear that the site must only ever be used for the purposes of a community centre for learning, eating and exercise, even if BIG were to fold in the future.

Will asked for any questions to be raised. Brendan suggested that the figure of £200,000 for the value of the property at present should not be the current value of Bridgend Farmhouse due to ongoing redevelopment. Will noted that an independent examiner must be contacted to clarify this. Andrew pointed out that the report is an old report for year ending in March 2017. It has been pointed out that the money from the lottery fund has been the primary funds responsible for covering the cost of the renovation, thus an updated figure for value assessment of the property should be recorded after the renovation is complete. Graham Harper and design team are to be contacted about this, and this will be examined further at a later date.

Will now discusses having a tighter focus on fundraising and community events outside of the lottery funds to bring in additional funds in the future.

Accounts approved and passed by the members.

c. Build Group Report:

Report delivered from the Build sub-group (Andrew, Brendan and Will).

It was noted that there has been frequent phone calls between the Build team and build project manager, Graham Harper, to establish the progress made. Graham says there is more in the contingency fund than anticipated. Wall has been removed and replaced where it was previously damaged by fire. Some internal work like this has required more funds than was originally planned for.

Graham Harper was thanked for his incredible work in ensuring BIG could find the appropriate savings to ensure the Build could go-ahead at the end of 2016. A connection for electricity has been installed in the workshop spaces, and a disabled ramp has also been installed in the Farmhouse. Builders have reported that they were three weeks ahead of schedule. It was expressed that there is a desire to purchase decorating materials with extra funds for volunteers and BIG members to do this ourselves after the build is complete.

Workshops are due to be ready the 14th of July, about 1-2 weeks behind schedule.

Cladding and charring of wood will be done by a BIG skill-share through July - September.

There are zero on-sight catastrophes to report. Loft space above office has unstable flooring so should not be stood on, but can be used to store cleaning material. Loft above exhibition/events room is strong enough to hold people to go up in. Sound insulation has costed about £1500 extra.

d. Food Group Report

Report presented from Hazel and Tania. Hazel reports that she'd like more people to come along and integrate the cafe with the food group. There is a professional chef who will be coming to help. Food strategies are being discussed. There were a few questions from others, one of the enquiries sought to establish what type food would be served, another wanted to clarify the opening hours would and the last one asked about the meeting times and dates for the food group. It was established that there will be all types of food served for various tastes, and the opening hours as discussed would be 10 am - 5 pm, and the food group meets on the first and second Monday of the month, but the time is going to be changed. Will Golding will be in charge of updating the times on the website.

e. Land Group Report

Report presented from Andrew and Hilary. Until the builders are finished, limited plans can be made currently. Will says we have wind turbines and batteries, but due to their rather large size specialists are required to handle them. It was reported that the value of the 3 solar units plus 1 turbine is £80,000. There was an enquiry made regarding a potential meeting with an eco turbine maker, and a further discussion about this in future has been proposed.

Will mentioned the regular weekly drop in sessions, and funds for projects, and that the Wednesday and Sunday sessions are funded until January 2020.

Mike H proposes a permaculture interest group. Further discussion about the surrounding walls and developing plans to make them all safe and re-build them using traditional lime mortar techniques. Will informs the enquirer that we'll need a conservationist architect's report.

f. Business Group Report:

Prepared and delivered by Claire. Claire leads the discussion, and advises that the group considers how BIG become an employer. By end of calendar year, the aim is to employ five people. BIG are currently recruiting a community history project officer. Help is needed to sort out policies and procedures, HR, payroll, pensions, etc, and other necessary tasks that the position covers.

g. Community Projects Report

Presented from Hilary's report. We noted some of the ongoing projects, and briefly skimmed over them: Food cafe - cosmetics group - forest skills group. No further questions have been made about these groups. Bothy Build is currently behind due to the current issue with the wall and will be pushed back till spring 2018.

h. Share Issue Update:

Shares will be sold for between £10 and £10,000. Anyone can purchase the shares and can get their money back for them at a later date. BIG is intending to become a charitable community benefit society to enable this to happen. A question was raised as to whether owning shares would affect a person receiving their benefits. Will responded that he did not think so, but he will consult an expert. Tiers of membership were discussed. Local membership versus (other) type membership. It was noted there is further work to be done to finalise all the details of this.

i. Constitutional Amendments:

Constitutional amendments proposed to the members which had been sent out prior to the meetings, which are available on request.

Kenny has been working on the member database to ensure all are contacted, and suggests we need to gather phone numbers for those without email address. Also suggest we write to existing members who have not been involved in a long time and ask if they would like to continue as members, and if they don't respond, within 28 days to remove from the database.

Claire mentions that the map we are currently using in the formal constitution should be updated. Proposal was presented (which had been circulated with the calling notice before the meeting). There was a unanimous decision made by all in support of the changes proposed.

j. Election of Board of Trustees:

There are 10 board members as of Sunday, 18th June 2017 who all stood down. Then the nominations for Trustees was open. We are informed that if there are more than 12 people wishing to be on the board, it must be decided by vote.

Those who wish to Nominate themselves and have been supported by another existing BIG member:

1. Jennifer Davis - supported by Will Golding
2. Anna Danby - supported by Andrew Naismith
3. Will Golding - Supported by Jennifer Davis
4. Lynne Colombo - Supported by John Knox
5. Claire Stevens – Supported by Will Golding
6. Niel Hansen – supported by Lynne Colombo
7. Andrew Naismith – Supported by Stevie
8. Tania Stuart – Supported by Ruth Nay
9. John Knox – Supported by Anna Danby
10. Hazel Cornish – Supported by Brendan Hill

Will mentioned BIG are also looking for people to join the Board with business or building experience.

All those who have wished to join the board as new board members were approved unanimously by all.

k. Any other current business

A gentleman has brought up an issue regarding people who have disabilities who find it hard to gain employment. Will proposes having a separate discussion about this matter later.

Discussing lottery project and sustainability and the community cafe, Brendan highlights community cafes that have failed to bring in money before. He continues to discuss the burden of a charity managing a cafe. it is proposed we speak of this during the first board meeting held in July.

It is noted that the first BIG Board meeting will be held on the 3rd of July 2017 at Claire's house. The AGM for next year shall commence next year at roughly the same time.