

Minutes of the AGMs East Lammermuir Community Benefit Trust Meeting 1st October 2024

The Meeting Commenced at 20.30

Trustees Present : C Bloomfield (Treasurer), C Bruce (Chair), Helen Taylor-Brown David Mumford (by video link) and Wendy Smillie

Apologies: Kelvin Darcy-Burt

Additional Attendees: Lennox Web, Anne Lyall, Cllr. Lynn Jardine, Mitchel Stevenson.

Trustee Resignations confirmed : Peter Branfield on 19th June 2024

2. Opening of ELCB Trust first AGM

The meeting was declared quorate (4 Trustees are required), It was noted the Trust was formed and first accounts were due on 31/3/2024. First accounts had been prepared by ADCA Accountants and would be tabled in the meeting.

3. Confirmation of Trustees

Chris Bruce and Colin Bloomfield formally stood down from their roles.

Their re-election was proposed by David Mumford and seconded by Wendy Smillie, All present agreed to their re-election.

It was proposed to elect Suzie Fletcher as a Trustee and this was accepted

4. Treasurer's Report.

One of the first key points to make is that both ELCBT (and ELCBF Ltd) bank accounts require higher security compliant with normal charity/company rules. Any transaction requires multiple signatories (available electronically via Virgin Bank). This moves us on considerably from RBS (who are currently used for the ELCC account) who will not provide multiple signatures via internet banking.

We have our first accounts for ELCBT finalised ready for submission to OSCR after employing ADCA accountants (who came recommended for Cairnsphairn community ventures over in Dumfries and Galloway) Copies were made available. Our constitutions used in part various ideas from Cairnsphairn published constitutions and I had various discussions with the originators at Cairnsphairn, as their aims aligned largely with our own, in combination with building on the many years of previous work put in from our previous ELCC councillors - Barbara Wyllie, Janice Hanvidge and Janette MacDonald, who I again wish to thank for their hours of hard work that went before me.

Our first formal account for our first year end amounts to one opening deposit of £6719.93 - the balance of social support funding left over from the Covid pandemic.

Subsequent deposits are £1000 from FOR as an admin grant which is being used for Google Workspace and other web hosting costs. Google costs are being paid from ELCBT as it is a registered charity, so gets around a 40% reduction in fees. The web/email fees support all 3 organisations and run at £90-100pcm plus some other one off annual fees for web hosting. Current balance is £7221.22

5. Chairpersons Report

I'm delighted to be speaking at the first Annual General Meeting of two new bodies designed to ensure the appropriate distribution and use of community benefit funds in East Lammermuir for decades to come.

The Fund will focus on providing grants to community groups, voluntary organisations, charities, schools (for projects out-with the statutory responsibility of East Lothian Council) and social enterprises to support their activities within the East Lammermuir catchment area. Ideally, the Fund will support projects and infrastructure which promote the economic, social and/or environmental sustainability of the catchment area.

It seems right this evening to remember a little history.

The first meeting to consider a set of criteria for distribution of community benefit funds from the Crystal Rig 2 Windfarm was held on a Sunday in a farmhouse near Stenton in Summer 2010.

At that session it was felt that in due course we ought to establish a body separate from the community council, specifically to administer benefit funds – and to protect the individuals volunteering to help with this.

I want to mention Barbara Wylie, Janice Hanvidge and Janette MacDonald who as previous members of the community council did many hours of work to investigate what was required and how to get it to happen.

Since those three stepped down from the community council at various times, our new Treasurer Colin Bloomfield took over the work – and over several years of dogged determination has worked with legal advisors to get us to the point where we are up and running and able to hold these AGMs.

I wanted to put on record my personal thanks to Colin for the unseen hours and hours of work that have got us to this point. I appreciate it. I am sure the residents of East Lammermuir will benefit, and would thank you too Colin!

So what are these bodies we are here to oversee?

ELCC administer the allocation of funding for local community projects from Fred Olsen Renewables, operators of the Crystal Rig wind farms. This currently amounts to £80,000 per year (from Crystal Rig 1 and 2).

East Lammermuir Community Benefit Fund Ltd and ELCB Trust have been set up to administer funding from other local renewable energy developments. At present this includes funding for local community projects from Fred Olsen Renewables, operators of the Crystal Rig wind farms, in the form of £57,000 from Crystal Rig 3. These sums vary annually in line with the Retail Price Index over the 25 year life of the wind farm schemes.

After some 15+ years of trying to make the most of the benefits funds available, the Community Councillors were keen to ensure that good ideas have the best chance of

coming to fruition. Sometimes fully formed proposals come forward, with people ready to implement them – they are easy funding decisions to make. But at other times a good idea has no one willing to make it happen. So we prepared an arrangement that allows the trustees to act, as well as to provide funding.

East Lammermuir Community Benefit Fund Ltd (Registered Company Limited by Guarantee: SC792584) administers funding in the East Lammermuir area. Any group can apply for that funding according to the criteria set out on our website.

East Lammermuir Community Benefit Trust (Registered SCIO: SC052845) suggests, administers and implements charitable works. It will apply to the Fund for money to do such works.

Both the Fund and the Trust have a majority of members who are community councillors. This means that there is a democratic route to change the trustees should the community wish to do so, as all community councillors are required to stand for election once every 5 years.

At the same time, there are seats on each body for non-community councillors, to ensure a broader perspective on decisions, and a differential between the two groups.

The future

In the light of the (currently 14) known electricity generation and infrastructure developments proposed for the East Lammermuir area, we anticipate additional funding will flow through the Fund and Trust over the coming years.

The first example of this is the proposed Co-ordinator Post to work between the community, the developers and the Council. We are in discussion with SPEN and SSE about the funding route for this post which they have agreed to fund for the first three years.

If anyone listening feels inspired to get involved, please do talk to one of the trustees after the meeting closes.

Thank you for listening.

Minutes recorded CBloomfield 17.10.2024