

Holton Pits Community Interest Company

Public meeting Holton Village Hall at 19:00 on Monday 9th July 2023

Minutes

Present:

CIC Directors: Kevin Moores, Rachel Kellett, Caron Stainton, Gaina Dunsire, Jamie Leverett, Marion Gaze, John Attridge

39 members of public

Kevin chaired the meeting. He welcomed everyone and gave a brief overview of what had happened since the last public meeting

He reported that the bank balance is now approximately £101,000 which has come from public donations; from local businesses; a GoFundMe page; Marion's sponsored cycle ride and the Variety Show. He explained that the community's revised bid of £179,000 had been accepted by CEMEX and that the purchase is now in the hands of the solicitors. He explained that "match funding" is being sought through the Government's "Community Ownership Fund" (COF) which is administered by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities under the Secretary of State, Michael Gove. He said that he had sought advice from the Plunket Foundation to support our bid. The COF application had to be submitted by Wednesday the 12th July for the current application round

Rachel then outlined the Business Plan which is part of the COF application. She explained that it is a working document subject to change and amendment. She explained that currently the Pits main income is from the fishing lake but that the expenses of the Pits should be relatively low because there were not many outgoings. She said that the criteria that needed to be investigated when CEMEX offered Holton Parish Council the Pits to the community, are all fulfilled in the Business Plan

Questions from the floor:

The area to be purchased by the owner of the Industrial Estate has been marked out. Could it be requested that any new buildings are coloured green rather than being bright galvanised steel. Rachel said that she would look into this

A further question related to what would happen if our bid for funding fails. Kevin explained that there is a Plan B. If we do not get the COF funding, loans have been offered to enable the purchase to go ahead. These loans will have to be paid back at a later date but there will be other opportunities to apply for COF funding and there is also the Heritage Lottery Fund that we could apply for. General discussion ensued around this and following a further question, Kevin repeated that if the current COF application was unsuccessful we had access to private loans that would allow the Pit to be purchased and then we could apply for further rounds of COF funding or for example, the Heritage Lottery Fund

Someone asked if CEMEX could sell to someone else while negotiations about the sale are proceeding. This was thought unlikely as CEMEX had stated that they are prepared to sell to us

Is the Heritage Lottery Fund the same as COF in that it will not fund a loan? The Pits group will look into this

Can we reopen the possibility of becoming a charity because of the benefits this offers and might we have a share option? Gaina outlined the many reasons why we became a CIC. It was pointed out that the Millennium Green are changing from being a Charity to CIO and that yes we will look again at the range of options, including a share option

A question was raised about the income from fishing. In the discussion it was pointed out that in the feasibility study, 3 options had been outlined including a renegotiation with Woodbridge and District Angling Club, bringing fishing in house, and finding another fishing club to manage the site. Someone pointed out that some of the swims are in a poor state of repair. We are aware of this and perhaps Woodbridge and District Angling Club have been reluctant to invest in the swims because they were themselves unsure of the future at the Pit

An enquiry had been received about wild swimming

If the community acquires the site and it becomes more popular, will there be sufficient parking for vehicles at the Southwold Road entrance? Discussion ensued around this topic and it was pointed out that the feasibility study that had been carried out stated that we should consider making more parking spaces available. There was further discussion around parking in Sandy Lane. It was pointed out that the parking in Sandy Lane did not form part of Holton Pits. A further question related to access to Blyford Lane from Sandy Lane. It was pointed out that this was a public right away access and could not be blocked off. Further and general discussion continued. David Green offered thanks to the Committee for all their hard work

Kevin thanked everyone for attending and invited people to look at the variety of documents that were available including the Business Plan had to discuss any points with the directors that were present

The meeting closed at 20:00