**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Of the**

**BRADENSTOKE SOLAR PARK COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND**

**Wednesday 3rd November 2021**

**MINUTES**

Attendees:

Allison Bucknell (AB) Wiltshire Unitary Councillor for Lyneham, LGC Chair

Mel Wilkins (MW) Chair of Hilmarton Parish Council

Richard Tucker (RT) Chair of Bremhill Parish Council

Stephen Depla (SD) Chair of Christian Malford Parish Council

Matthew Ash (MA) Environmental Advisor

Frank Ball (FB) Lyneham & Bradenstoke PC

Ashley O’Neill (AO) Wiltshire Council (Calne Rural Area)

Harry Tipple (HT) Head of Community and Partnership Development, Community First

Mary Hardwidge (MH) Administrator Community First, LGC Secretary

AB: Welcomed everyone to the AGM

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Bill Tiko – MOD Lyneham

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM**

Signed as accurate by AB (Proposed by AB Seconded by MW)

**3. INRODUCTION OF HARRY TIPPLE**

HT gave a brief account of his responsibilities to Community First and everyone welcomed him to the meeting.

**4. NEW OWNER OF BRADENSTOKE SOLAR PARK**

AB reported that since the last AGM there has been a new owner of the Bradenstoke Solar Park. MH confirmed the new owners as Bluefield SIF Investments. MH reported that Peter Falding has passed on her contact details to the Management Accountant, Kerry Harben, who she is in contact with. Kerry will be the person to invoice every year around October/November. MH reported that the funds for 2021/22 have been paid at £57,500. SD commented that this did not seem enough if index linked. SD remarked that this is a reputable company.

***Action – MH to send the email from Kerry Harben to SD showing the calculations for this year’s funding amount*** - done

**5. REPORT TO AGM (Chair)**

AB reported that her Chairman’s report was circulated before the meeting, so there was no need to read it out, with one update that the planning permission to extend the Solar Farm from 30 to 40 years has been granted. There is uncertainty as to whether or not this means that the Benefit Fund would be extended – MH and AB to chase this up.

***Action – MH/AB to contact new owners to query whether or not the extended life of the solar farm will also extend the benefit fund.*** – done – awaiting reply

**6. REPORT TO THE AGM (Financial)**

MH had distributed an updated set of financial figures showing the income and expenditure. There showed a balance in the bank of £68,070.01 at the end of the period to 31st August 2021.

MH pointed out that the total of uncommitted funds was £**7605.66** at the end of the period ending 31st August 2021. Since then £57,500.00 has been paid into the bank by Bluefields SIF so that the balance at the end of August 2021 has risen to £65,105.66. There have been projects approved and paid since then but this will be reported at the next AGM.

**7. REVIEW OF GRANTS SINCE THE LAST AGM**

MH reported the following:

* Lyneham Village Hall were successful in securing funding from both Hills and Crapper and Sons as well as from BSPCBF. Very happy group!!!
* Christian Malford Recreation Ground withdrew their project application and secured funds from both Hills and Crapper & Sons for their Solar Powered Clock.
* Still waiting for Bremhill Village Hall application for air source heating. They are applying for £3,500.00. this is included in the accounts.

New Tytherton Village Hall are hoping to apply to Crapper & Sons and Hills for grants towards their new build, but both funds are low at present.

Foxham St John the Baptist rewiring. This project has now been approved for £1,700.

* MH reminded everyone about Community First’s Village Halls Advisor, Helen Akiyama, who would be happy to be contacted about any ECO conversations within the Village Halls sector. HT will ask Helen to update on this.
* RT raised a query regarding the situation regarding projects which have been approved but the money is not claimed. Currently Community First claims the admin fee when the project is approved as the majority of their work has been completed at that point. However if the applicant does not claim their approved funding then this sits as a cost to the fund with no benefit to the community. Need to monitor and committee members be more proactive in their discussions with potential applicants. MH confirmed that no admin charge is made for projects which do not proceed.
* The Terms of Reference were discussed and it was decided to revisit this (Constitution) at the next AGM in 2022.
* AB raised that this fund should not be making grants where there is alternative funding available.

***Action – HT to ask Helen Akiyama to update on any ECO initiatives within the Village Halls sector, which can be reported to Village Halls in the funding area, who are embarking on such a project – i.e. Bremhill Village Hall.***

**8. VOTING: LOCAL GRANT FUND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

All posts were reelected on block.

The committee consists of:

Allison Bucknell – Chair

Mel Wilkins – Cheque Signatory – Hilmarton PC

Stephen Depla – Treasurer - Christian Malford PC

Matthew Ash – Environmental Advisor

William Tiko – MOD Lyneham

Richard Tucker – Bremhill PC  
Frank Ball – Lyneham & Bradenstoke PC

**9. ELECTION OF CHAIR, TREASURER AND SECRETARY**

All posts were reelected on block:

Allison Bucknell – Chair

Stephen Depla – Treasurer

Mary Hardwidge - Secretary

**10. REVIEW GRANT CRITERIA / APPLICATION FORM / AREAS OF SUPPORT**

A discussion followed with regard to the above. Comments were as follows:

**GRANT CRITERIA:**

There was a discussion to

AB remarked that grant criteria needs to be for more wider environmental projects perhaps looking at any existing projects in the area which need funding. There was a discussion to suggest revisiting the re-vamped Application Form which is not yet being used. This application form merges the Expression of Interest with the Full Grant Application Form.

MA reminded everyone that on past projects, suggestions were made to make the project more ECO friendly, such as the installation of water butts on a re-roofing project and that he will continue to do this. MH reported that she will always make suggestions to the project if a committee member makes any.

HT asked if anyone had heard the initiative to encourage groups to use electric cars? He reported that this is a big area of discussion amongst the Community Transport world. AB suggested talking about this at the next AGM when the process was further on.

AB suggested that the fund could be used to “green plate” projects ie to encourage proper green credentials even if more expensive rather than taking the cheapest (in money) option.

**APLICATION FORM:**

MA has now distributed the re-vamped form to all by email (after the meeting)

AB suggested that a sub-group be formed of AB MA and RT to revisit this and distribute the new form to be approved by the committee after which it will be used as a replacement to the current one.

It was suggested that the form should be asking if there are any ‘green’ benefits to their project.

**GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF SUPPORT**

FB and MW both voted to keep the Areas of benefit the same for the time being. Everyone agreed.

AB encouraged all committee members to remind groups in their areas that the fund is there for them, especially if there are new Parish Councilors in the area. She also suggested advertising the fund in the Parish Magazines. SD remarked that this is a good way to raise awareness of ‘green’ ideas!

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

MH made the committee aware of a ‘Tea and Cake’ Party coming up on 3rd December at the Lyneham Village Hall to thank everyone for their support. AB is unable to attend. FB will be attending as will MH and may be HT. FB remarked that anyone would be welcome from the committee.

MH reported that Bremhill Village Hall will shortly be putting in a bid for a new ECO Heating System. Because of problems encountered when investigating the new system, the cost has risen somewhat to £9,000. They will be applying for the full amount. MH will include an email with the application which fully explains the groups problems when costing the project, and they are hopeful that the committee may grant them a good amount of the cost if not the whole amount.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

This will be circulated next year and will be on a Wednesday in October 2022