

# **Ringmer Area Community Land Trust AGM Minutes**

Held at 7.00 pm on 6th. December 2022  
at Alan West Room in Ringmer Village Hall

## **Attendance**

|                     |     |                            |
|---------------------|-----|----------------------------|
| Max Pengelley       | MP  | Chairman & Director        |
| Gavin May           | GM  | Treasurer & Director       |
| David Terry         | DT  | Vice-Chairman and Director |
| Julian Morgan-Jones | JMJ | Director                   |
| Sy Morse-Brown      | SMB | Director                   |
| Emma Petrykow       | EP  | Director                   |
| Linda Grange        | LG  | Member                     |
| Richard Turner      | RT  | Member                     |
| <b>Ann James</b>    | AJ  | Member                     |
| Geoff James         | GJ  | Member                     |
| Richard Vincent     | RV  | Member                     |
| Meriel Vincent      | MV  | Member                     |
| Christopher Haywood | CH  | Member                     |
| John Kay            | JK  | Member                     |
| Eleanor Robins      | ER  | Member                     |

## **1. Welcome**

- Meeting was opened by the Chairman.

## **2. Apologies**

**Gordon Sims**

## **3. Conflict of Interest.**

- None

## **4. Approval (by show of hands) of minutes of AGM held on 5th. October 2021.**

- LG commented that they had taken a long time to be presented and some points raised at the AGM were missed. The comments were noted and following a show of hands the Minutes were approved.

## **5. Formal election of Directors (by show of hands).**

- The Board recommends that at least a third of the Board should be elected every year. Accordingly following the receipt of applications for re-election to the board by MP and JMJ and there being no other applications received, MP and JMJ were proposed for election by JK and seconded by RT, and were duly elected to the Board.
- JK having not put himself forward for re-election, is no longer a Director but remains as a member. A vote of thanks to JK for his part in setting up RACLT and much valuable work since was supported by all present.
- It was noted that RACLT website needs updating to reflect both past and present changes to the Board.

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## 6. Chairman's Report.

Chairman was pleased to report that despite COVID and the war in Ukraine causing significant economic ructions leading to sharp increases in materials costs and an uncertain labour market, your CLT has continued to progress. Most notable events include the successful transfer to RACLT of a Community Woodland adjacent to the new housing at Roundhouse Road. This will be known as the Molly Talbot Community Woodland - in honour of the original donor,

Following the completion of ground works including all foundations, laying of drainage and connection of services to the four houses to be built at our site off the Laughton Road, we have now started the build of the superstructure. Our aim is to complete the build by the middle of 2023.

We can now look forward to having our first tenants in these four new houses in 2023. They will be known as 1 - 4 Parsons Green in recognition of Mr. and Mrs. Grant Parsons generous gift of the land they are built upon.

## 7. Treasurer's Report by Gavin May.

- GM requested that Accounts for y/e 30th April'22 should be approved, after commenting that funding from Lewes DC (from S106 monies) and Ringmer PC (CIL monies) amounting to £175,000, received during the year, had largely been expended on the Neaves Lane Project. There was a surplus of £24,197 remaining at y/e.
- SMJ commented that the item shown as "Roofing costs" under expenditure, should actually be for "construction costs".

Subject to this correction the Accounts were approved by a show of hands.

- The decision on the appointment of an Auditor was held over as the turnover was low enough not to require the Society to have one as yet. However this is likely to change in subsequent years.
- GM confirmed that RACLT continues to bank with Barclays.

## 8. Finance Update by Max Pengelley

The Chairman was pleased to report that our Neaves Lane development has continued to receive significant grant funding from Lewes DC of £138,000 from S106 monies and a further £100,000 expected shortly. In addition, RACLT has received £100,000 in donations. This has meant we have been able to proceed with the next Stage of construction at Neaves Lane without recourse to borrowing.

We have been in discussion with the Ecology Building Society about development finance for the last Stage of Construction covering internal fitting out, including plumbing, electrics, plastering, painting and decorating. Once we have been able to complete the build and have tenants, we will convert the development loan into a long term mortgage. Assuming a finance requirement of upto £500,000 being required, we have run a project finance model which shows that we can expect to be able to offer our houses for rent at our target rate of 60% of market rates.

We are still hoping to attract further grant funding from Ringmer PC, thus further reducing our borrowing costs and enabling us to generate a significant yearly surplus which can be used to acquire/build further homes for rent in the future. Once we have been able to update our budget costs for the completion of the Neaves Lane houses, we will be putting a further application for CIL funding to Ringmer PC.

JK commented that mortgage rates were likely to be of concern in the short term but some of the wilder forecasts of rate hikes are receding.

## 9. Current Project Reports

### a. Neaves Lane **Sy Morse-Brown**

Following the completion of Stage 1 works comprising of the foundations, drainage including attenuation of rainwater run off and connection to the sewer, electrical and water supply on time and within budget by our local contractor REDS, it was decided to continue to use them for the Stage 2 construction of the main superstructure, roofs etc. of the four houses. It should be noted that during a visit in July '22 by Cllr.Nicholson and Nathan Haffenden, Head of Development, Investment and Delivery for Lewes and Eastbourne DCs Property and Development Department, they

both commented on the excellent workmanship and high standard of the site. High praise indeed and almost certainly played a significant part in our being able to secure further funding from Lewes DC.

As we near the end of Stage 2, we are now seeking a quote from REDS for Stage 3 works which will include plumbing, installation of Air Source Heat Pumps for heating and hot water, electrical wiring, plastering, fitting out of kitchens and bathrooms, painting and decorating. Because of the inclusion of high levels of insulation, ASHP and PV panels on the roofs, we expect to achieve an EPC A rating for our houses, which will mean lower running costs for tenants. It will also result in a lower mortgage rate from the Ecology Building Society.

Once we have the Stage 3 quote, we will be in a position to confirm our funding requirements to complete the build. We will then be approaching Ringmer PC for further grant funding and submit our application to Ecology Building Society for the remaining finance to complete the houses.

#### **b. Community Woodland      John Kay**

The freehold of an area of woodland adjacent to the new housing development at Roundhouse Lane was transferred by Optivo to RACLT in March '22. It will be known as The Molly Talbot Community Woodland and a new sign to that effect has been erected at the entrance to the woodland off Roundhouse Lane.

The woodland was used quite extensively during the spring and early summer by walkers and mothers and children from the new housing. Unfortunately the entrance then became overgrown with nettles and brambles and became impassable. Despite contacting local residents for assistance in clearing the entrance, no help was forthcoming.

**SMB** proposed that we should set up a community group to take on the bramble and nettle management. RT offered to assist with this including providing equipment. It was agreed that we should put out a call for volunteers in the Parish magazine and on our website, with a view to forming a support group by the Spring of '23.

**LG** advised that there was an application coming forward for a Care Home on land north of our site and accessed from Broyleside. She further suggested that we should contact the contractors to see whether we might be able to obtain grant funding via S106.

Subsequent to the AGM, this application by BokLok was turned down on 16th December '22. So subject to any appeal, there does not appear to be any opportunity for discussion at the moment.

#### **c. Firle Estate      Max Pengelley**

MP advised that we were waiting to hear from the Estate the results of their legal advice concerning tax implications of donating land for the building of affordable houses by a Conservation Trust. Until this issues has been resolved the Estate is not in a position to move forward.

#### **d. Broyle Gate Farm Sports and Leisure Facilities      Gavin May**

Following the granting of outline planning at Appeal, Croudace has confirmed that RACLT is the nominated recipient of proposed sports and leisure facilities that they will be delivering with a budget of c.£2m. These currently comprise of an all-weather football/rugby pitch, cricket nets, hard tennis courts, outdoor gym and play area. A maintenance fund of c.£1m will also be provided by Croudace following commitments secured during the Appeal.

The site is south of Broyle Gate Farm and adjacent to the Kings Academy. Previous discussions with Ringmer Football Club and the Academy has indicated that there are potentially significant opportunities for some form of joint development of existing facilities such as hard tennis courts, swimming pool and parking. This has the potential to provide a major Sports Hub for the village with match funding from Sports England.

There was some concern expressed about how quickly Croudace would proceed with the development and whether the proposed sports and leisure facilities would be left until last. However, as Croudace have been pursuing this development for over 15 years and the funding for the Sports and recreation facilities is coming out of the purchase price to be paid to the current landowner, Croudace have confirmed that they will be proceeding as soon as the Judicial Review period has ended in January '23 and have already started with site drainage investigations. Having access to the Sports and Leisure facilities will also form a significant part of their marketing campaign for the housing.

GM pointed out that a considerable amount of time and effort will be required to establish details of the specifications and delivery of the facilities. He proposed that a working group be set up asap to investigate the various options both on 'our site' and in cooperation with Kings Academy and ESCC. This group will need to give regular updates to our membership on options being explored and resulting proposals will then be presented to the membership for confirmation of the way forward.

**JK** raised the issue of our potential liabilities re proposed play area but the Board felt that in consultation with the police we should be able to minimise any potential liabilities, particularly as we can expect significant use of the area not only by the many sports clubs and the Academy during daylight hours, but also from families walking their children and dogs.

## **10. Fundraising and Marketing      Julian Morgan-Jones**

a.        **JMJ** regretted that our communications to members over the previous year had been poor, which was unfortunate as much progress had been made on a number of fronts. Now that we had the Community Woodland ready for use and the building of the four houses at Neaves Lane continued at pace, RACLT has much to be proud of.

The high level of grant funding and donations received is also a major achievement and needs to be publicised. In that regard we are awaiting a further visit in the New Year from LDC councillors and officers to Neaves Lane and about which they wish to make a press release promoting the building of affordable housing with the aid of significant grant funding from Lewes DC.

**LG** raised the matter of the Commuted Sum in lieu of affordable housing from the Caburn Fields development, which had been ring-fenced by the LDC Planning Committee for affordable housing in Ringmer, when it granted Planning Permission. It was not clear whether LDC was intending to use this funding for its developments through its own subsidiary Homes First, or could be made available to RACLT projects. **LG** kindly undertook to investigate the matter.

b.        **JMJ** advised that we would be making appeals to our members for suggestions about where we might find accountancy and legal advice that will be needed as we continue to grow and become involved in major undertakings such as Broyle Gate Farm Sports and Leisure Facilities. It is hoped that as we generate more publicity, we can get more interest.

## **11. Membership Updates                  Julian Morgan-Jones**

### **a.        Membership Numbers and status**

Historically we have over 70 members, with 8 new members joining in 2022. 7 of these new members are likely to be eligible for the new housing at Neaves Lane. The majority of our members however would be considered 'senior' citizens and **GJ** suggested that we should look at building suitable accommodation for those in later life, such as bungalows which are rarely considered by developers these days.

Now that we are building the new houses at Neaves Lane, more can be made of this to raise awareness of RACLT and get more members to join with us. **JMJ** undertook to provide more regular postings on our website to raise awareness. These may also be posted to the Ringmer Village website for additional coverage.

**SMB** commented on the need to update the RACLT website as regards Board Member changes and the Membership Application Form, which still shows the old admin rate of £5 pa.

**RV** suggested more could be made of our very good "eco" credentials such as the use of Air Source Heat Pumps and PV electrical generation and the extensive hedge planting and 'wild flower meadow strips' at the Neaves Lane site.

### **b. Membership Fees**

Following the decision to raise the annual administration fee to £10 pa from the original £5 pa in 2022, the Board was not recommending any increase for 2023.

## **12. Consideration of any resolutions made by members**

**DT** proposed the following resolution " **The membership of the Ringmer Area Community Land Trust ( RACLT ) agrees to constitute a "Ringmer Leisure Hub" committee that will consist of at least one RACLT Board member and two other RACLT members. The committee will work independently of the Board to develop the sports and recreational facilities related to the site at Broyle Gate Farm and any other facilities within Ringmer that have been allocated to RACLT. The committee will report to the Chairman of RACLT.**"

Following concerns expressed by **JK** and others about membership consultation and engagement in the matter, it was agreed that a call for members to join the proposed committee should be posted on the RACLT website. It was further agreed that regular updates of the committees activities would be posted to the website and via email to the membership. When concrete proposals for any facilities to go forward are ready, they will be put to the membership for their consideration and endorsement.

**13. Any other business**

**GJ** kindly suggested that in regards to fund raising, he would look back through his files to see if the work done to raise the funding for the Swimming Pool in Ringmer might be of use to RACLT.

**LG** suggested that the RACLT Allocation Policy should be reviewed before posting on our website. Now that we are approaching completion of the Neaves Lane houses it is timely to do so. We also need to start publicising the houses and start seeking potential candidates to rent the houses when they become available.

The Chairman confirmed that these matters would be acted upon at the next Board Meeting in January '23.

**RT** wished to thank the Board for all their efforts to date.

**14.** There being no further business, the Chairman thanked all those present for their participation and closed the meeting.

