

Distington Big Local Ltd /Partnership Board Meeting
Tuesday 28 April 2020, at 12pm
Via Zoom

Present: Rhoda Robinson (Chair) (RR), Ingrid Morris (IM), Sue Hunter (SH), Pete Duncan (PD), Norma Pritt (NP), Julia Powley (JP), Paula Speight (PS), Vic Askew (VA), Lindsay Bodman (LB) (Notes) (Some Board members could not attend due to difficulties with Zoom)

Apologies: Elaine Ismay, Jean Skelly, Karen Hodgson, Josephine Greggain and Antoni Logan

275.20 Welcome The Chair welcomed everybody.

276.20 Conflict of Interests None.

277.20 Minutes of Previous Meetings on 19th February, 17th March and 6th April 2020 Were passed as a true record

278.20 Next Board Meeting The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday 11 June 2020 at 11 am.

279.20 Treasurer's Report (JP) JP had a query on Homes England as income and expenditure on this appeared to be out of kilter. IM advised that we had received the full amount from HE. £39,373 was received in the last financial year, and does not appear on these figures. IM said that £18,400 from Copeland's Community Led Housing grant has not yet been received. The Ward Hadaway fees should be less than expected as we no longer need to seek easement for drainage work. The Heads of Terms are still with Housing 21, so haven't been completed and invoiced yet.

280.20 Company Structure (This point held earlier as JP leaving meeting shortly) JP – I have no comment as I really need professionals to tell us what is best. I don't see why Parish Council should be a deciding factor. IM – the parish clerk was wary of it. The advisory body to Parish Councils said that the Parish Councils make their own decision but they would advise against having its members on the board of the new company especially once DBL disbands. The Clerk would need a special qualification. It was discussed that having charitable status means the new company needs to remain as a charity. Who will take it on once DBL disbands? Are there alternatives and what is the best way moving forward? JP – We need someone to take on a little company because the assets are charitable they can't go to a non-charitable group. It will need trustees. RR – Who then? We don't want Board members to have to carry this on. JP – is it easier for 2 or 3 people to deal with it rather like the Reading Rooms? IM – the company will still need members, a bank account, annual accounts, meetings. IM – Parish Council and/or whoever is in the Vicar's role – that is what we are aiming for. JP – just need a named person and say 3 trustees. PD – Did Distington Parish Council say that they 'didn't want responsibility' or 'not to be involved'? IM – Parish Clerk (JH) said he would encourage people to not be involved. PD – That advice is unreasonable and should be challenged. They should not advise against it, (just need to nominate a Chair and Trustees). Transferring assets would not be applicable. SH – T&H said when a charity is dissolved its assets must go to another charity. IM – It would carry on but would need new members (Trustees), if current Board members didn't want to stay involved, they wouldn't have to wait for DBL to disband, they could join earlier. There is no need for the company to stop – it would just carry on. IM – It needs to be kept going as it owns the land. SH –

The biggest asset is the land which needs dealing with in the future. SH – Need something in it that if the company comes to an end. JP – Surely it would just carry on? SH – Surely in the articles you need to state what will happen. PD – I think that perhaps some people are over worried about this. It will have an asset, hold and income and need Trustees. JP – Land will be more valuable when it has planning permission. SH – T&H advised that if the land get sold, the buyer would have to pay the tax on it. The Board agreed to carry on with this conversion. PD – IM are you going back to the Parish Council to clarify that they want to nominate Parish Councillors to attend? IM – Parish Council are not keen as I gave the Reading Rooms set up as an example (as some Parish Councillors are on it) but they maybe confused by thinking it's complicated, IM to address this again with the Parish Council. SH – Rhoda, we were saying that we can't see how the Parish Clerk can make the decision for all the Parish Council. RR – he can't. SH – We need to speak to Christine Pattinson as Chair of Parish Council. IM – So I will tell Trowers to carry on? Board – Yes. **ACTION: IM to instruct Towers to continue with converting DBL Ltd to a charitable Community Benefit Society.**

281.20 Plan Submission to Local Trust RR – Does anyone have comments on this? SH – Just on Finance. PD – Yes. SH - £40,000 under the Land Development We still have bills coming in. Have we got enough money to cover them all? I am concerned that DBL are financially responsible for these bills. We need to focus on how much it will cost if there is no help from Housing 21 (H21). SH – Homes England (HE) money all used up. IM – more fees from Elliotts will be coming in. Some of their fees (for the construction period and making good defects) will be novated across to the Registered Provider (in this case H21). SH – I'm worried where the money will come from and what are we committed on. PD – The total for the next plan / budget is £450,000 over the 3 years – should it not be different, has some of it been double counted? IM – No. There is £80,000 in our account at present (plus £89,000 underspend in our current plan, not yet paid to us). SH – What will happen about the money set aside for projects if those projects are not used? PD – The money will be lost. £40,000 is in for the community Centre. NP – Plans have been submitted to planning department. IM – If we underspend on one category then we can usually move money across to another project if we need to. Staffing might change. PD – You will not need 3 members of staff until the end of the project. PD – Who is responsible for paying redundancy? Is it CVS? IM – No, it's DBL. The workload will not run at the same pace until the end of the project so the amount in this category can be reduced. PD - DBL doesn't still need to be running while the build is completed. PD – If the money is not spent on the play park it would only be lost, if not spent by March 2026. SH – There is also the option of selling the land to HE21, or someone else. PD – I hope that you can avoid that option. SH – We will unless all else fails. SH – It should be a decision for us, not H21 though. What does anyone else think? RR – I haven't given it a thought. IM – It does provide a fallback. SH – Ground rent would be ideal but the main thing is that it gets built, whoever the land belongs to, it will provide a legacy for the village. PD – Back to budget, are you saying it's ok? IM – yes. PD – You can use £50,000 allocated for the play park for other things if it doesn't happen. NP – Can we add some money in for a new bus shelter in case we succeed in getting the go ahead for it? RR – We have not had any feedback from Highways, it's not on the cards at the moment. PD – Which bus stop is it? RR It's to move the Main Street one to a different location. There were 19 names against this on a petition. The Board agreed to add £5,000 for a bus shelter to the budget, taking it from the land contingency amount. **ACTION: IM to run past JP (TREASURER who had to leave the meeting early)**
IM – Are there any comments on the draft plan? SH & PD – The plan sounds good.

282.20 FareShare and Friends Not Foe These groups are continuing to do a fantastic job supporting older, vulnerable people living on their own, those who can't make ends meet and those who have lost their jobs during the current situation and / or are unable to drive to get shopping. As well as funding from DBL, the following raised funds for the group: Tina Spedding, Gary Hewer, Together We, CIC Fitness & Wellbeing Centre. They have gone from giving out approximately 30 bags to about 80 and have reduced this down to 70 now. This extra food has

been sourced through donations from Morrisons and other places and from top-up shopping by the volunteers. Increase in demand has meant the group has had to source, pack and deliver to more homes, this level of activity means the group are at times struggling to get everything done, it may deplete their funds quite quickly, and be too much for them to sustain in the weeks to come. We have advised they ensure food only goes out to those really in need and who don't have help from family members or friends to get supplies for them. Residents not normally in receipt of Fareshare who can afford to pay for the food (but can't shop for it) should be asked if they can donate more than £1. When delivering, volunteers will also find out if food is needed this week and if not it can go back in the store cupboard or to those that do need it now. This will hopefully ensure that food goes to those that need it, when they need it and lead to more understanding that it is meant for those really struggling. This is now being done. With help from Vic, these two groups are now coordinating their efforts.

283.20 Village Maintenance Following review of government guidelines and discussions with Pete, Rhoda and Ronnie it was decided to start up the gardening service again on Monday 27 April. Ronnie has been issued with guidelines in which to work, to ensure he and the residents remain safe. Correct amounts of payments will either be collected in a container by Ronnie, or a record kept for residents to pay for at a later date. Ronnie is currently being kept busy with cutting grass around the village, disinfecting areas and mending the Kubota mower. PD – Has Ronnie got PPE? IM – Yes and he also using disinfectant sprays. Discussion were had about taking on another worker for summer. Both Paul and Chris, who have worked for us in the past are not available. Due to Covid 19 and the extra challenges it creates, the Board decided not to hire a temporary worker this summer. we need to consider whether we try and hire a temporary worker this summer. SH – The service will change in a year or two anyway. RR – If people want their grass cut once a week then they need to understand that Ronnie can't do it all if he is on his own. Customers will have to be patient.

284.20 Newsletter 300 copies have gone to print. The local printer we were hoping to use can't get the part his needs for his machine so Mike Taylor printing are doing it for us again. They will go out to people receiving deliveries and be available from McColls and online.

285.20 Land Development SH – Land transfer (for the access road and freehold area) has finally been completed. SH – Land Registry is very slow just now. We now hold the freehold for the access road and all land. SH – We are currently waiting for H21 to continue with our negotiations for the Heads of Terms on how we will work together. RR – Our project may be on the back burner for H21 after Covid-19. SH – I agree. We have set things into motion for the next stage. PD – They may want to proceed quickly as soon as the construction industry restarts properly.

286.20 Postcards At the last meeting on 6th April 2020 we discussed the possibility of sending postcards of encouragements to elderly residents who are not on social media. (Since the meeting VA has started a list of whom to send these to in the village). We need to work out the postage cost of sending monthly postcards. Can everybody please have a think whom to include on the list and feed that information to VA . IM – What are the thoughts on getting post cards printed our logo and a picture on? The Board decided it was a good idea (especially a village one). RR – it will be good to have some in stock for other occasions. VA – FareShare have let me know those who are alone. Need to ring Covid Support to find out about any other people in the village who are alone. **ACTION: LB to ring Covid Support, VA get quote from printers**

287.20 History of Covid-19 in Village / Writing / Creative Memory Competition AB – There was a request from Archives, Whitehaven to keep a log of the time during lock down to preserve our local history. It would be a good idea to get the village involved to do this. We will then be left with a legacy of our time in the village during this unprecedented period. AB – Nicola

Stephenson did a video clip of key workers in the village, parents who are home schooling could involve their children to record their views/drawings etc. NP – This is a good idea. Perhaps we could target those who live alone and are diligent at recording feelings/occurrences (possibly MH?) We could do a competition – write something about lock down or draw a picture. Try to encourage people by letting them know that they would see their work in a publication representing home life for your children/grandchildren/neighbours to read in 20 years. PS – Shared how her family have made a Covid-19 memory box. AB – We can include posters/leaflets etc from this time. AB – Little ones could do a painting. AB – It needs to be appealing – to produce a ‘scrapbook’ of living through coronavirus. AB – Closing date for the children could be 8 June as school will possibly restart that week. We could a community event with display boards etc after we exit from the pandemic. LB – It would be great to incorporate some of these memories onto canvases/video clips and incorporate them into the over 55’s housing development. The Board agreed to a £100 max budget.

288.20 CVS and Staff Furlough PD – advised: furloughing is a national issue for Local Trust. Some Local Trusts (LTs) are furloughing. 144 LTs are supporting 150 Big Locals. LTs want Big Locals not to lose money. LT is worried about 10 Big Locals that could go under and 15 that are in a financial position which causes concern.

Cumbria CVS are having financial problems (and have done over the years). Their reserves are tied up in buildings and assets. That is the reason CVS is going down the furlough route as the Government will pay wage costs. PD spoke to David Allen (Cumbria CVS’s CEO). David said that at the end of the day it’s Cumbria CVS’s decision whether or not to furlough, not DBL’s. Cumbria CVS will take the views of all the staff into account, all staff, including DBL staff, have been requested to fill in a questionnaire, relating to whether they think they should be furloughed and what the consequences would be. Cumbria CVS is contractually the employer of DBL staff. NB Since this meeting all DBL staff were advised that (for now) they have not been furloughed.

289.20 Local Housing Support for Resident

Home Group have advised that they have been in touch with their tenants over the age of 70 to ensure that they are getting the food, medication and so forth that they need. They will continue to carry out welfare checks on their residents. Impact Housing have not responded to our enquiries on how they are supporting their residents during this time.

290.20 Any Other Business

IM – Zoom have advised that they have addressed their security issues and all users are urged to download the latest Zoom updates.

PD – All of you are doing fantastically well despite the challenges around Covid 19 lockdown.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.