



Distington Big Local Ltd /Partnership & Membership Board Meeting
Held on Tuesday 28 January 2021 at 12 Noon, via Zoom

Attendees: Rhoda Robinson (RR), Ingrid Morris (IM) (Chair), Sue Hunter (SH), Pete Duncan (PD), Alison Boyd (AB), Josephine Greggain (JG), Julia Powley (JP), Paula Speight (PS), Vic Askew (VA)notes, Norma Pritt (NP), Annette Whitehead (AW), Jean Skelly

Apologies: Karen Hodgson (KH)

Not Present: Elaine Ismay

1.21 IM welcomed everyone to the meeting. (RR delegated role of Chair to IM)

1a.21 Conflict of Interest NP, Community Centre. JP, School funding request (under AOB)

2.21 Minutes of Previous Board Meeting on 14th July, 18th August, 6th October, 5th November and 12 November 2020 were accepted as a true record.

3.21 Next Board Meeting The next Board meeting will be held on **Thursday 11 March 2021 at 10am** (via Zoom)

4.21 Annual Accounts to year end 31 March2020 (JP) Julia explained these in some detail, we had a turnover of £148K, and a corporation tax charge of £360. The Board approved the accounts which will now be signed off.

5.21 Final Budget Our final plan was approved by Local Trust in June 2020. It has since come to light that we have £78,772 less grant than we thought. The systems Local Trust use are very complicated and there is a time lag between grant approvals and send reports. We have written to Local Trust highlighting problems encountered with their systems and are waiting for their response. We have no choice but to reduce our budget. Due to a reduction in staffing, savings have already been made in wages. We are committed to our DCYP spend and can't reduce this. Further reductions were made to money allocated to a new play park with £24k now remaining. The community centre refurbishment was reduced to £28k and the community chest & transport grants to £7,250. The amount of £4,270 set aside for a new bus shelter on Main Street, if permitted by Highways, was cut. This is our final budget and we are spending out so we need to revisit the budget frequently.

6.21 Converting to a Community Benefit Society Due to our plans for the housing scheme we needed to change our company structure to a Community Benefit Society. In October 2020 we were registered as Distington Community Trust with the Financial Conduct Authority. It then came to light that an error had been made by the lawyers doing the conversion for us. Since this meeting, DBL has been informed that the conversion has successfully taken place and we are now registered as Distington Community Trust but will still be known as, and continue to trade as, Distington Big Local. A meeting will be arranged to go through the rules of the new organisation.

7.21 Land Development Things are progressing well with H21 who are partnering with us on the 35 unit apartment block. We are also working with Castles & Coasts who are hoping to take on the building and management of the bungalows. Both have had positive feedback from Homes England regarding the grant they can apply for to get the scheme built, which will cost more than normal due to the innovative design. We have been successful in getting some more funding in from Copeland to help pay some of our land development costs. The architects are hoping to submit the amended design to the planners by the end of February 2021. They have made changes to the plans to address objections raised and accommodate H21's design requirements; the apartments no longer have windows overlooking the school and the height has been reduced, although it still needs to be 3 stories high to make it viable. Two more bungalows have been added to improve viability as the scheme will be split between 2 housing associations, making it 11 in total. PD advised that the government have just announced a new community housing fund which we might be able to apply to (through HE) if we do encounter any additional costs.

8.21 Village Maintenance RH's van broke down and he needed to buy a new one which he'll get soon, in the meantime he has been using his car. He has been tidying verges, removing rubbish, cleaning bus shelters, gritting paths etc. Sustrans, who own the cycle path, advised in the past that he contact them if anything needs doing, but it takes them a while to get round to it, so RH often tidies this area. He will remove wreaths from the church yard as requested.

9.21 Fareshare / Friends not Foe Friends not Foe have started up again in this 3rd lockdown. Nominated by DBL, they were awarded Sports Club of the Year Award at the Community Sports Awards in November 2020, which is a fantastic achievement. There is less demand than in the first lockdown on both these groups. As decided in the last Residents Wellbeing & Community subgroup meeting, we will help the Fareshare group to take on the remaining admin tasks done by DBL. This will make them more self sufficient. The group can always ask DBL staff for help in the future if needed. IM will be completing the grant report for the £800 awarded to the group by Cumbria Community Foundation. JP has offered to help with their finances and budgeting if needed.

10.21 Distington CASC DBL agreed to fund Distington CASC up to £19,000 for the club refurbishment. This was made up of £12,000 plus £7,000 contingency. Their project manager advised that they have gone over budget and asked for the remainder of the contingency with is £298. I have requested a project report including evidence of spend. PS reported that there are a few last bits to do but the club is looking great now.

11.21 DCYP As in previous lock downs, the club is keeping in touch with members online and by phone. Following submission of their latest report this month, DBL paid their second instalment of £6,000 for this year as agreed.

12.21 Play Park There are concerns about DBL running out of time to deliver this project. The asset transfer of land on Hinnings Road to Distington Parish Council has been ongoing for nearly a year now and is still not completed. The board agreed that the money be put in a pot for an organisation or group to deliver the play park. PD advised that this is common practice for Big Locals and it would provide another legacy for the village. Local Trust have requested that land, required permissions and match funding are secured before they release money for the play park.

Distington Parish Council is the obvious choice for this. RR (also a member of DPC) agreed to raise it at the next Parish Council meeting. A group of proactive residents need to come together to get this project delivered.

13.21 Active Cumbria Funding DBL were successful in getting £1,320 of funding for an over 60's exercise class which is being run by Tina Spedding. Sessions started before the second lockdown, re-started before the third and will start up again when they can. People weren't keen on doing them via Zoom. 7 sessions have taken place and there is funding for 15 in total. It looks like the classes will continue once the funding has come to an end as people seem willing to pay the full amount for sessions in future.

14.21 Positive Postcards Two lots have been sent out with JJ' help. It was agreed to send more out, with JJ writing them and JS hand delivering them.

15.21 Covid 19 Staff continue to work mainly from home, going into the office to pick up messages, collect post, check defibrillator etcetera.

16.21 Staffing

[REDACTED]

17.21 AGM We provisionally set the date for 12th April 2021. However, this is during the Easter school holidays so it may be best to change it.

18.21 AOB We received a letter from Distington Community School asking for help to fund a sensory room / nurture room which is needed more than ever now. DBL agreed to allocate £2,000 provided we can move this amount out of our community events budget, and get agreement from Local Trust to do this.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.