

**Whitley Community Hub**  
 Minutes of the Meeting Held on  
 Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020

<b>Present:</b>	
Nathan Hall (Chair) (NH)	
Alison Candlin (AC)	
John Lister (JL)	
Dom Szanto (DS)	
Duncan Whitby (DW)	
<b>Apologies:</b>	
Charlotte Yates (CY)	

No.	Item	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
	NH welcomed everyone to the meeting and proceeded to chair the meeting.  Apologies from CY were noted.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of 23 July 2020 Meeting and Review of Actions</b>	
	Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 were reviewed.  It was noted that the 4 actions listed had been completed.  DS noting that he had written Luke Johnson, expressing an interest in the premises on behalf of WCH. A response had not been received.  NH noted that an application of support to the Plunkett Foundation had been accepted, and that David Miskin had been nominated by the Plunkett Foundation as an advisor to the WCH. This was initially for 1 day of support, but further time could be applied for as the groups plans advance. A date had been set for 4 <sup>th</sup> September for David Miskin to meet with the WCH steering group.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Defining Our Purpose</b>	
	This was the first meeting of the newly formed steering group. The broad set of roles for steering group members, which had previously been circulated, were discussed and agreed. DS would lead on finance and fundraising, JL would	

	<p>lead on strategy and marketing, DW would lead on operations, AC would lead on communications, CY on programme management with NH chairing the group and leading on governance.</p> <p>NH stated the need for the group to have a set of terms of reference as an unincorporated association, prior to exploring options for incorporation as a community focussed enterprise. A suggested template constitution had been circulated and was discussed. <b>It was agreed that NH would develop this into a draft constitution for the WCH for agreement by the group.</b></p> <p>The aim of the steering group, for inclusion in the groups constitution, was discussed. The following was suggested and agreed, “to explore, develop and implement plans for a community shop and hub, to serve the village communities of Whitley and Shaw.”</p> <p>It was also noted that, in the event that a commercial buyer purchased the existing shop premises and provided a convenience store for the village, then plans for a community shop would likely be put on hold and the steering group stood down.</p> <p>NH also reminded the group of the importance of using our full membership to help develop and inform the groups plans.</p>	<b>NH</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Raising Finance</b>	
	<p>Discussion took place regarding the different potential scenarios that our capital finance plan would need to encompass. It was agreed that there were three potential scenarios that we would need to plan for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An outright purchase of the building formally known as the Toast Office, including the first floor flat</li> <li>- Leasing the commercial premises of the property from a new owner</li> <li>- Purchasing the commercial premises of the property as part of a partnership with another buyer (who would purchase the first floor flat)</li> </ul> <p>DS discussed with the group the various fundraising options potentially available. It was agreed that three key options that would all need to be pursued were: Grants (national and local), Community Shares and Loans. The extent of the three finance routes would differ for each of the three scenarios discussed.</p> <p><b>DS was asked to produce a very high level plan for how these funding routes might be used to cover the cost of each of the three scenarios.</b></p> <p>A number of questions were identified to raise with our Plunkett Advisor.</p>	<b>DS</b>

	It was also noted that a small amount of “seed funding” was required to help get the project moving. <b>NH agreed to seek advice from Phil Alford on accessing a small grant.</b>	<b>NH</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Developing our Business Case</b>	
	<p>The Plunkett Foundation Business Case template was reviewed and discussed. JL discussed the “mission statement” of the community shop/hub.</p> <p>It was agreed that this would focus on the delivery of a community owned and run shop which would be an essential service and focal point for the village, providing a range of fresh local produce and everyday essentials. The shop would be a social centre for the village offering a small basic café with free internet access and space for local producers and groups to hire/use.</p> <p>It was agreed that an essential next step in developing the business case was a more detailed survey of the village to better understand likely use and preferences regarding products that the village would like a shop to stock. It was agreed that such a survey would need to primarily be offered as a paper based survey, with an option for electronic completion.</p> <p><b>JL would develop a survey and covering note and engage the groups membership in helping to distribute this.</b></p> <p>Discussion also took place regarding the Post Office element of the shop. <b>DW offered to investigate further the current status of the Post Office in Whitley and the steps that would need to be required to make this operational again.</b></p> <p>In developing the income and expenditure projections for the plan, the group would learn from the experience of other local community shops, including Bathford.</p>	<p><b>JL</b></p> <p><b>DW</b></p>
<b>6</b>	<b>Choosing a Legal Form</b>	
	<p>NH introduced the guidance from the Plunkett Foundation on potential legal structures for community owned businesses. Overall, the key principles that such a business would need to include are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Open and voluntary membership</li> <li>- One member, one vote</li> <li>- The interests of the business to be linked into community control, disallowing any one member from having greater control than others</li> <li>- No profit distribution to members based on investment other than a payment of interest at the discretion of the management committee.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that the most common legal form for community shops was the Community Benefit Society. This structure allowed for community share offers which the group were keen to explore further. It also incorporated a statutory asset lock,</p>	

	<p>designed to prevent an enterprise from distributing assets amongst members on solvent dissolution over the value of their share. Finally, this form was focussed on wider community benefit and would support the groups aspiration for distributing any surpluses to community focussed projects.</p> <p>For these reasons, the group is minded to pursue this type of legal structure, but further discussion would take place to understand the model further.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Other Items</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Legal / Accountancy advice:</b> AC was pursuing a local firm for the provision of pro bono legal advice to the group. <b>AC</b></li> <li>- <b>Responding to public notice of sale of TO:</b> AC would draft a statement to be issues publicly at the point when the premises previously known as the Toast Office were put on the market. <b>AC</b></li> <li>- <b>Communication priorities:</b> An update would be required for members clarifying that the plans for the community shop are essentially unaffected by the ACV decision. <b>NH Agreed to draft this.</b> <b>NH</b></li> <li>- <b>ACV appeal:</b> The benefit of having the Parish Council on board with a future ACV application was noted. The response from AC to the ACV decision was to be discussed at the forthcoming MWPC meeting.</li> </ul>	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Date of Next meeting</b> 4 September 2020, 5pm-7pm</p>	