

LONGHOUGHTON COMMUNITY AND SPORTS CENTRE TRUST

(Longhoughton Village Development Trust)

(Registered Charity Number 1133597. Registered Company Number 07031153)

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD TUESDAY 10th DECEMBER 2024 AT THE COMMUNITY AND SPORTS CENTRE

1 Trustees Participating:

Jeremy Pickard, Adrian Hinchcliffe, Stewart Barrett, Shaun Hastings.

In attendance: Richard Carlson

Apologies for Absence – Vicki Kelly, Vanessa Chapman.

The Secretary has written to Mike Pritchard regarding his trusteeship. Mike had responded to say that at the moment he is very busy with family and other issues and regrettably he does not have the time to attend the meeting. In view of this he tendered his resignation. The Secretary has taken Mike's name off the Charity Commission web site and the Companies Registrar.

Trustees were saddened by Mike's decision but were understanding of his reasons. Mike was thanked for the time he has given to the Trust and the many ways in which he has helped the Trust and the community.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting held 12th November 2024 were approved as a correct record.

3 Matters Arising

The matters arising were dealt with in accordance with the Actions Listing Summary attached.

4 Secretary's Report and Development Strategy. The following verbal report was given.

4a) Secretary's Report

- i) **Energy Audit.** Draft report received is still being considered by the Finance Group.
- ii) **Armed Forces Covenant.** No progress
- iii) **Health and Wellbeing Programme.** The next NHS health checks are taking place in February 2025.
- iv) **Health Walks.** Set up to commence on 08.01.25. A small number of responses have been received from the circular that went out with the Newsletter.
- v) **Thursday Together.** The Ballinger Trust has confirmed that the grant of £1,020 has been approved. The Thursday Together programme has started. 19 people attended the first session.
- vi) **Insurance Company.** Need to charge NCEL for insurance cover on solar panels and batteries.
- vii) **Artistic Plaques.** Adrian said that he had made contact with Jill McKenzie who had made the two plaques. Due to her circumstances she was not able to take the project any further and had handed over some materials. She had forwarded the design to Adrian. The Trustees thought that the project should be taken further if one of the craft groups was prepared to take it on. It was agreed that Adrian would approach the Monday Matters and Pins and Needles.
Action 179 - Adrian
- viii) **Alison Heating** has been invited to service the gas boilers.
- ix) **Longhoughton Church.** Amer Bashlaw has been in contact with Adrian and accepted the offer for the Church function. He will be back in touch once the concept has moved forward
- x) **Successor Longhoughton Summer Fete.** The meeting will be called in January 2025.
- xi) **Electricity Specification.** The Secretary will be drawing up a specification for the new electricity contract from 31.03.25.
- xii) **Community Action Northumberland (CAN)** - Help for residents with information technology. CAN has given a Lenovo Tablet and two HP Chromebook to the Centre. These are to use at the Centre for anyone who needs help with Information Technology and particularly getting benefit from using the internet. Two residents had emailed to say they are interested if this can be provided. However, what is needed is a knowledgeable person who can act as a Champion and give tuition in an understanding way.
- ixx) **Police Liaison Meeting.** To take place on 11.12.24. Agreed that Adrian would represent the Trust. It was considered that the problems that had been experienced with young people had not occurred recently.

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4b) Cleaning Contract. Lynette's has a two-year contract and December 2024 is the end of the first year. We promised to review her rate of pay after the first year due to the rate of inflation in the economy. The Trustees considered what increase in the hourly rate should be offered. The Consumer Price Index had increased by 2.3% over the last year whilst the Retail Price Index had increased by 3.4%. After discussion it was decided to offer a 4% rise.

4c) Business Plan and Development Strategy.

Still outstanding

4d) Northumberland Community Energy Ltd.

The Special meeting at the Centre after the CAN AGM had gone very well and was well attended. An NCEL Board meeting had taken place on 09.12.24. It was reported that there are now 70 buildings that have expressed an interest in taking the NCEL system and service. They are at varying levels involvement from feasibility through to operational. Four installations are live and NCEL now has 20 members.

4e) Developing the Community Hub – Memorandum of Understanding

This is now back with Adrian to move forward

4f) Community Orchard

A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MofU) has been sent to the Community Gardeners for consideration, but no response had been received. Adrian had sent a copy of the plan, produced by Jeremy, to the Estate to seek their agreement to the proposed orchard. A response was awaited. Jeremy suggested that the MofU could include a clause that the Community Gardeners could undertake some gardening/strimming work in the grounds of the Centre in return for an agreement to use the building facilities for meetings and fundraising events (gratis). Adrian to pursue this.

4g) LC&SCT – Emergency Centre

LC&SCT had been established as an 'Emergency or Rest Centre' in 2023. This followed a County Council initiative after the chaos of Storm Arwen. At the time residents were invited to volunteer to add their name to a list of volunteers who would be prepared to turn out should a similar emergency arise. 18 people are on that list. The adoption of the NCEL system had enhanced the Centre's ability to remain operational for a short period even if it lost the grid electricity supply. There was a discussion that there was no plan in place for the Centre to become operational should an emergency arise. It was agreed that Adrian would contact the appropriate section at NCC to determine what overall master plan there is and their expectations of individual Centres.

Action 180 - Adrian

5 Safeguarding

Stewart raised the issue of whether the user groups that use the Centre have safeguarding in place. It is a matter of asking each group. Jeremy said that the Lemon System service email capability may be a useful way to achieve this.

Action 181 - Stewart

Stewart made the point that the entertainer at the Children's Party was now DBS checked.

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6 Treasurer's Report as at 30.11.24

6.1 Monthly Cash Report

Lloyds Bank	£	
Treasurers Account:		13,967
Warm Hub		2,561
(includes £813 Lunch Club & £200 From Alnwick Lions for Xmas gifts & £480 Xmas Party).		
Sport England Grant account		131 (Summer Fete funds)
Aldermore Bank		
(1 Year fixed rate) (4.12%)		25,330
(Easy access) (3.6%)		15,000
C & C Bank (120 day notice account) (4.41%)		85,000
TOTAL		£141,989

Restricted/designated funds included above £110,369

£25,222 Restricted - Play area(£15,057), Ballinger Trust(£165) & 3G renewal(£10,000).

£ 83,654 Designated - 3G(£77,523) and Centre sinking funds(£6,000) & Summer Fete (£131)

£813 lunch club monies & £200 Xmas gifts & £480 Xmas Party monies held in Warm Hub

General funds balance £31,690 (including Warm Hub)

Looking ahead

Facia boards replacement cost £3,700

Pickard Electricals' works – amount unknown (**post-meeting note : the amount is £267.30**).

Outstanding debts . Figures awaited. Adrain agreed to ask Laura if there was an additional email address appropriate for RAF Beacon invoices (kids' kick about). There are 3 outstanding with a fourth to be issued at the end of December. **Action 182 - Adrian**

6.2 Budget 2024/25

On behalf of the Finance Group, Stewart presented the Budget for 2024/25. Overall the budget presented a financial outturn which is close to balancing income and costs although, it was proposed to draw down £3,684 from the Building Sinking Fund to enable important building maintenance work to go ahead, otherwise a deficit of circa £3,000 would have been incurred. It was also pointed out that the transfer to the Astro-turf pitch sinking fund was £8,125 when the recommended amount is £8,500.

The budget had taken time to prepare and it had been done with significant attention to detail and estimates of income had been generated. In fact, the actual figures to date are very close to the estimates in the budget.

The budget statement is attached to these minutes and contains 7 notes of explanation which reflect upon the budget figures and the Trust's financial position.

It was considered that no increase in hire fees for either the Hall or the 3G is needed this year although it is of concern that the income from the 3G is dominated by LRFC and the RAF who pay at the 'Founders rate'. Due to the increase in the number of LRFC teams this is impacting upon the revenue earned from the pitch (ie more sessions, but at a reduced rate). Also, it is hoped that the pitch will be re-surfaced in 2025 and if so we would expect the annual transfer to the sinking fund to need to increase from £8,500. These two factors do lead to a situation in which the 'Founders rate' may have to increase significantly from 01.08.25. One alternative which may help to limit the increase in the Founders Rate is for the pitch to be hired out at other times of day, but this would need considerable marketing.

Cash reserves. It was reported that the Trust was in a strong position due to the amount of cash that it is holding in reserves. At 30.09.24 the accounts show a free cash balance of £29,220. Of this the Trust would

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ideally keep a reserve equivalent to six months trading which is estimated at £17,902. This would still leave £11,318 as free cash. This is a good position to be in.

The meeting approved the Budget and thanked the Treasurer and the Finance committee for the work that had been done.

7 LRFC Liaison

Concern was expressed about the level of cancellations on the 3G (not all weather related) and the low usage of MR3 without matching bookings.

8 Site Safety and Maintenance

Jeremy reported that Crusader Fire had completed their first 6-monthly checks of the alarm system, extinguishers and emergency lighting. Two difficult-to-reset fire call points had been replaced, as planned. Otherwise all was in order and certificates had been received.

There was nothing to report with respect to Legionella safety except that Changing Room 4 shower area was becoming used as storage again. The stored items need to be moved because they will be soaked by running the showers.

Jeremy reported on the repair work that he had been doing on floodlight control cabinets. He had managed to improve one of the cabinets with a rivetted sheet metal patch where there was a large rusted-through hole previously. He had also fixed the cabinets' hinges and locks. He is working his way around the six cabinets with respect to wire-brushing and Hammerite repainting. This should give each cabinet a life extension of a few years before a major replacement is needed.

Vanessa had produced her first report of the Children's Play area. There is nothing that urgently needs doing.

9 Communications and Events

Stewart reported on the excellent work that was being done by the Events Group.

Children's Christmas Party – To be held 14.12.24. Expect up to 60 children. Food, drinks, gifts, toys, selection boxes all organised. The Wellbeing Room is being used as the Santa's Grotto. A professional Entertainer has been engaged. Thanks to all those involved.

Children's Film. Saturday 21.12.24 Polar Express. Popcorn, crisps and drinks to be provided.

Christmas Quiz – Evening of Saturday 14.12.24. Bar to be run. Pizza van present.

10 Any Other Business

10.1 **Risk Assessments** – These are loaded onto Lemon and made available to those hirers that request them. Because the Car Park Risk Assessment says we have one, the Trust should install a disclaimer sign on the use of the car park. Agreed. **Action 183 - Jeremy**

10.2 **The Chair** said that he would be missing for the all of January 2025. He is working on a programme for cover for this period. He will circulate it. The Treasurer would also be away from mid-January and Shaun is away for 5 weeks.

10.3 **Wellbeing Room** – Bookings have taken off. Also MR3 has been booked for a new pilates group.

Meeting closed 9.34pm.



18/02/2025

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Budget - Income and Costs for the Period 01.10.24 to 30.09.25

	Basis of Allocation	Community Centre £	Astro-turf Pitch £	Children's Play Area £	Turf Football Pitches £	Total £
INCOME						
Hire Fees		13,800	19508			33,308
Grants	Parish Council	980				980
Fund Raising	Various events	3,800				3,800
Interest	Split 18.5%, 70.7%, 10.8%	703	2,687	410		3,800
Sub Total Income		19,283	22,195	410		41,888
Expenditure						
Rent	% 3, 16, 3.8, 77.2	33	176	42	849	1,100
Electricity	% 58, 42	2,320	1,680			4,000
Gas	% 88, 12.	2,466	336			2,802
Water	% 76 , 24	520	164			684
Telecoms	% 76, 24	64	20			84
Insurance	% 46, 33, 9, 12	805	578	157	210	1,750
3G Maintenance	% 100		1,877			1,877
Building Maintenance	Routine Maintenance £2,960 One off Maintenance £3,560 Facia and Barge boards £3,684	7,657	2,547			10,204
Cleaning	% 88, 12.	2,094	286			2,380
Miscellaneous	% 76, 24	2,349	742			3,091
Administration	% 50, 50.	602	602			1,204
Corporate Governance	% 50, 50.	1,113	1,114			2,227
Depreciation	Audio – 100%. Floodlights 100%	1,602	2,800			4,402
Sub Total Expenditure		21,635	12,912	199	1,059	35,805
Share of Non trading costs	£199 -50:50. £1059 – 100%	100	1,158			
Total Expenditure		21,735	14,070	-	-	35,805
Surplus/Deficit		(-) 2,452	8,125	410		6,083
Allocations to Funds						
Allocation of Interest to funds		(-) 703	(-) 2,687	(-) 410		(-) 3,800
Transfer to the Sinking Fund			(-) 5,438			(-) 5,438
Transfer from the Building Reserve		3316	368			3,684
Total of Transfers		2613	(-)7,757	(-) 410		(-) 5,554
Surplus/ Deficit after Transfers		161	368	-	-	529

Budget Commentary

1. If re-surfacing of the 3G is achieved in 2025 it should be expected that the initial-year sinking fund contribution will have to increase from its current £8500 pa and that the annual sinking fund contribution should increase in line with inflation (to preserve its real value).
2. The budget makes no savings provision for future replacement of floodlight electrical cabinets (for which a low coat sticking plaster solution has been adopted which may see us through another 2 years or so), fencing, floodlights (and associated masts) nor for the master floodlights electrics. Depending on efforts in 2024/25 to secure funding to assist with upkeep of these items this issue may have to be revisited for the 2025/26 budget.
3. Maintenance of the building and site. High levels of building and site maintenance are becoming essential during the year. The budget has been set at £10,204 to cover routine and one off maintenance. This amount

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includes a quoted amount of £3,684 for covering the facia and bargeboards which are showing significant signs of wear and tear. Rather than fund this from revenues, it is suggested that this amount is funded from the £6,000 Building reserve. This will leave £2,316 in the reserve.

4. The recommendation of the Finance group is that (subject to no dramatic external economic changes) there be no hire fee increases for the 2024/25 year. Even though the forecast is for a close to breakeven position, this is against the backdrop of a significant maintenance catch-up spend. It was considered (by the Finance Group) that one, or two, years' of extraordinary maintenance should not, of itself, prompt long-term price increases. This situation will be monitored throughout the year and re-examined for 2025/26 budget.
5. 3G income is almost exclusively at discounted Founders' rate. The Trust should, as a priority, seek to increase 3G utilisation outside of the primary Monday-Thursday 5pm – 9pm window and decrease (non-weather-related) cancellation losses. If this does not prove possible, then hire fee increases are very likely for the season commencing August 2025. A non-refundable booking deposit may be appropriate for non-weather-related cancellations.
6. 3G income projections for 2024/25 have been affected to some small degree by the forecast unavailability of the pitch during June and July re-surfacing (traditionally low-usage periods).
7. The Miscellaneous 'column' includes bar restocking for events, training costs and other minor purchases that do not fit under other heads.