

LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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Registered Society includes a Community Benefit Society)

PARTS I AND II MINUTES OF THE 318th BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING HELD ON 28th NOVEMBER 2023 AT ONE GARDEN CITY, BROADWAY, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3BF AND VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present:	Gareth Hawkins (Chair)	GH
	Chris Pattison (Vice-Chair)	CP
	Joanna Dew	JD
	John Coling	JC
	John Hillson	JH
	Kevin Jones	KJ
	Lucy Gravatt	LG
	Michael Collins	MIC
	Roger McIntyre-Brown	RMB
	Simon Franklin	SF
	Terry Hone – HCC Nominated Trustee	TH
	Ian Mantle – NHC Nominated Trustee	IM
In attendance:	Graham Fisher (Chief Executive)	GF
	Matt Peak (Executive Director – Finance)	MP
	Stuart Sapsford (Executive Director – Communities, Culture and Heritage)	SS
	Kerry Kyriakou (Director of Regeneration and Growth)	KKY
	Jo Walker (Governance Support Executive)	JW
	Steven Gordon-Wilson (Head of Comms and Marketing)	SGW
	Kris Karslake (Sustainability Manager)	KKA
	Emma Santos (Finance Business Partner)	
Apologies:	Amanda Egbe	AE
	Mark Coles (Executive Director – Property)	MAC

APOLOGIES, MEMBERSHIP & QUORUM

The Chairman reported that notice of the Meeting had been given in accordance with the Rules of the Foundation and that a quorum was present.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 317th meeting held on 19th September 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record.

BRAND LETCHWORTH

The Trustees noted the video had been circulated as an update on Brand Letchworth. SGW invited feedback from the Trustees.

Discussion Points

- This is a strong place-brand with strong stakeholder involvement.
- Comment on use of AI to change faces, need to be careful.
- Love the image, it is bright, fresh and modern.
- The brand rollout will start with an online application followed by an event with key stakeholders and everybody that has been involved in the consultation.

- HF will be using the brand from day one, with outdoor activation and lamp post banners. After which a public forum event including press involvement. Second phase will be a marketing campaign involving the brand development committee.
- Advanced discussions on a Letchworth Board Game.
- We need to have quantitative and qualitative measures.
- Include something like 'innovation' or 'pioneering' to assist with attracting new businesses.
- Nature should also be there as it is one of the three magnets.
- Always use the full name with LGC. LGC on it is on could become problematic. Local views need to be sought before it is finalised.

The Trustees AGREED Brand Letchworth being taken ahead.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The Sustainability Strategy had been published for viewing and comments. The Board are asked to ratify the strategy. KK gave a brief overview. The approved policy is available online but has not been publicly communicated, it will be launched with the sustainability strategy. Currently working with the exec team to produce KPI's.

Discussion Points

- Request that the blanket renewable energy statement is changed to be explicit for low carbon.
- Currently seeking approval for net zero carbon emissions.
- The wording around the specific and deliverable energy is implied but stating 'low carbon' includes the full renewable spectrum.
- The KPI's will show that HF is committed to reducing carbon emissions.
- The target dates are deliverable.

That the Trustees APPROVED the publishing of a Sustainability Strategy Framework, with associated goals in January 2024.

The Trustees NOTED that the sustainability strategy framework provides a tool for all areas of the Foundation to progress their social, environmental and financial performance.

The Trustees NOTED that the Sustainability Policy and Programme Manager will engage with the Executive Directors to align existing and agree new KPIs.

The Trustees NOTED that the Marketing and Communications team will be engaged to align the strategy with our brand.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – FINANCE

ES joined the meeting at 17:40

Budget 2024

- Inflation is down.
- Rent Collection is at 96%.
- Voids 12% overall.
- £2.6m to be spent on property maintenance.
- Asset disposals not materialised in 2023. Need brought forward cash or asset disposals to finance the budget, likely to be the latter.
- Expenditure increasing by 12%, income increasing by 6%.
- Operating surplus of £96k in 2023. Operating loss of £723, quite a material shift, but better than anticipated. £233k rise for voids and landlord retained units.

- Pay costs rise due to increase in staff resources (£259k). Total rise of £302k, includes inflationary pay rise (6%).
- Slow improvement on the venue's subsidy.
- Support costs increase £279k (9.1%).
- IT costs increase (£116k).
- External IT costs increase by £47k,
 - £14k increase in services.
 - £33k price rise (24%) over 2 years
- Plan for IT strategy in 2024. Revisit the in-house / outsource debate. Concerned inadequate software support. Krome support networks, but not applications.
- PPM for 2024 is c£2m. Work is concentrated for 2025 and beyond. Gradual decline over the past 6 years informs the sudden sharp increase. It is critical to do the work as [we] must maintain [our] investment assets or change the investment model. The flat-lined average was £2.6m which put pressure on the budget probability. Extra resources are likely to be in place for 9 months of 2024.
- Asset managers to carry out an overarching project management function on improvement projects in their assets.
- Charitable expenditure and income are both up.
- Net income from property investment is down, c2.2% yield.
- Operating budget is marginally better than the medium-term financial plan forecast.
- Overall rent income growth of c4.5%.
- Cost inflation is hitting us the hardest.
- Cash available in 2024 is £3.5m. Shortfall of £0.9m in cash against retaining minimum of £2.5m. This excludes any income from disposals.
- The data on stock condition is that it becomes part of our BAU, then it becomes a feature of budget setting, not a balancing figure and budget setting.
- [We are] not proposing anything that takes [us] below our liquidity policy.
- 2024 is a year of transition. The budget contains controls, linked to affordability.
- Many thanks to MP and ES for the budget.

The Trustees APPROVED the 2024 Budget for the Foundation and LGCT.

The Trustees NOTED the mechanisms that apply control to the Foundation's Budget.

The Trustees APPROVED a capital expenditure budget of £1,477k for the Foundation.

The Trustees APPROVED the recommendation from Remuneration Committee to maintain the Foundation's commitment to pay the Real Living Wage (RLW).

The Trustees APPROVED the recommendation from Remuneration Committee to award a cost-of-living award for all other roles.

Risk Register

Points to Note

- Risk register has been reviewed. Majority of scores stay the same.

Management Policy and R&IAC ToR

Points to note.

- Minor adjustments to the policy and terms of reference which have been through the R&IAC. The changes are to clarify the relationship between the R&IAC and the Board.
- There will be an updated procurement policy and a separate IT procurement policy, cross referenced.

The Trustees APPROVED the updated Corporate Risk Register including the section on Board Risk Appetite

The Trustees APPROVED the updated Risk Management Policy

The Trustees APPROVED the updated terms of reference (ToR) for the Risk and Internal Audit Committee

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES, CULTURE and HERITAGE

Points to Note

- The extended programme at the farm has begun. Numbers are not as good as we would hope but that should pick up with the Christmas market, which is sold out. The new farm manager has settled in well and is introducing more animals, a point made by the public.
- Cinema performance is still inconsistent. An updated report will be brought back to the Board in March.
- Successes in fund raising take the pressure off the team for next year. Also secured the cultural learning programme for another year.
- Conversation with the Grants Committee about the future governance of the community’s programme, which will come to the Board in 2024.
- Delivering a Letchworth story event to bring communities together.
- A meeting around mental health took place [today] and a cost-of-living meeting to take place, led by settle.
- Transport transferred to GHH, most of the volunteers have transferred with it.
- Alastair Stewart has met with governors to talk about sports clubs and forward actions.
- The new High Sherriff of Hertfordshire is very keen to support youth sport and it may help them to discuss it with her.
- Two new apprentices have been recruited. A new volunteering manager has been recruited.
- Discussions for the mental health group were had with local services for young people who decided who they would like to work with, such as NHS services, GP surgeries and those in schools who deal with young people. [We] need to bear in mind that organisations apply to us for grants to deliver their programmes. [We’re] trying to build a program with those that deal with the individuals directly themselves. Grants Committee have received numerous applications which triggered a review into mental health provision. It is hoped to take something to December grants committee of what [we are] at and what the plan is for Q1 2024.

PAPERS TO NOTE

Grants Committee

Applicant	Award	Charitable Object
Letchworth Arcadians	£2,734	2, Recreation and Leisure
Letchworth Croquet Club	£1,250	2, Recreation and Leisure
Culture Wood CiC Ltd	£2,000	4, Health and Wellbeing
Herts Disability Sports Foundation	£0	Deferred
Herts Schools Outreach	£0	Deferred
Open Art Box	£2,648	4, Health and Wellbeing

Heritage Advice Service

Longmead	Rear extension and loft conversion	Approved
Parker Close	Single storey rear extension	Refused

Norton Way South	Single storey rear extension, dormer to rear, first floor side extension	Refused
Cross Street	Replacement windows, single storey rear/side extension	Approved
Gernon Walk	Rooflights	Refused
South View	Alterations to garage, new door and side fenestration, frontage alteration	Approved
Whitethorn Lane	Frontage alterations Conservatory to rear	Refused Approved
Woolston Avenue	First floor front extension	Refused
Haselfoot	PV panel veranda	Approved
Haselfoot	Single storey rear extension	Approved
Campers Avenue	External wall insulation	Deferred

Total Residential Applications and Pre-Application Submissions:

From:	01/09/23	Annual	Board	HAC	AMC	Independent
To:	30/09/23	Running				Inspector
		Total				
Residential Application	66	634	0	7	0	1
Pre-application Advice	9	115	-	-	-	-
Running	90	749	0	32	8	4
Totals						

Total Residential Applications – Annual Comparison:

	No. of Applications	Board/HAC	AMC	Independent Inspector
01/01/21-31/12/21	837	48	9	3
01/01/ 22-31/12/22	854	41	13	1

CEO's REPORT

Consumer Credit Points to Note

The Trustees AGREED in principle to remove the Foundation's power to offer consumer credit lending to new customers.

Trustee Skills Audit Points to Note

- The last Trustee skills audit was in 2019 and we now have a lot of new Trustees. The questions are same as previously. Cyber knowledge and AI will be added, and cyber security and digital data management will be separate points. The skills audit will enable us to identify those skill needed to add to the Board when HF recruits new general governors is 2024. The audit will not affect who is elected to the Board by the governors, but we can advise on the skills needed.

The Trustees APPROVED the Trustee Skills Audit

Grants Committee ToR Points to Note

- The Grants Committee ToR proposed expansion of the number of governors on the Grants committee to a total of five.

The Trustees APPROVED the revised TOR for the Grants Committee

**The Trustees APPROVED the appointment of two new governors to the Grants Committee.
The Trustees APPROVED the raising of the threshold to £25,000.**

Trustee Appointments Points to Note

- The recruitment will commence in January.

The Trustees APPROVED the Trustee appointment campaign.

Chairs Papers Points to Note

- Feedback has highlighted that not everyone is aware of Chairs papers. This will formalise the meeting. There is a provision for anyone to attend if they wish to. This provision was welcomed by the Board.

The Trustees APPROVED the ToR for Chair's papers.

Discussion Points

- Martyn's law needs to be within our risk assessments for managing terrorism attacks. There will be significant impact on the cultural sector as it affects venues with more than 100 people.
- The LEP is leading on regeneration growth in Hertfordshire.

Further Points to Notes

- The Trustee EDI survey had a 100% response rate. The Governor EDI survey had an 80% response rate. A combined report will be produced. There are some potential opportunities for diversity of future Trustees.

The Trustees NOTED the update.

Strategy Update Points to Note

- Strategy reworked following feedback from the Board meeting in October. (Minutes previously circulated)

The Trustees APPROVED Strategy 2028.

Strategic Aims Points to Note

- Refocused the active asset management and development.
- Included responding to changing needs and market opportunities and transitioning to a low carbon estate.
- Refocused objective three to talk clearly about our goal on improving wellbeing.
- Focused in on the financial aspect of tackling poverty as a charitable objective by developing and funding skills, advice and support programs.
- Measurability and KPI's added, which has informed the business plan.

Deliver Plan/Business Plan 2024 Points to Note

- Structured around the same strategic objectives.

The Trustees APPROVED the Business Plan

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 20:20

Signed 

Dated ...30th January 2024.....