Calder Valley Community Land Trust Ltd

Draft minutes, AGM 2018

Held on Saturday April 28, 11am in Hebden Bridge Town Hall

*(draft minutes subject to approval at 2019 AGM)*

Members present: Simon Brearley (chair), Janet Battye, Eddie Beesley, Andrew Bibby, Lynda Bruce, Gwendoline Goddard, Finn Jensen, Karin Lowson, Graham Mynott, David Nugent, Sarah Rowe, Nigel Sagar, Jane Scullion, Jenny Slaughter, Maggie Smallwood, Jane Summers, Catherine Willis, Helen Woods. Non-members present: Hugh Rolo, Ken Bruce

Apologies: Richard Henderson, Ian Vickridge, Adrian Ashton, Joyce Catterick, Robin Dixon, Peter Ehrhardt, Diana Monahan, Paul Monahan, Judith Appleton, Christine Bampton-Smith, Mark Scott, Marc Collett, John Dawson

1. Chair’s welcome. Simon Brearley welcomed those present to the fourth AGM of the society.

2. The minutes of the 2017 AGM were approved, as circulated.

3. There were no matters arising.

4. Secretary’s report

Andrew Bibby reported on a year which he said marked a significant step-change in the society’s development. Planning permission had been obtained for the Walsden development and a planning application would go in very shortly for the Hebden Bridge development.

The society had 88 members, and was likely to see a considerable increase by the time of the 2019 AGM because of the proposed forthcoming community share issue. Trustees had met twelve times during 2017 and had also held an ‘awayday’ strategy meeting. Three trustee task groups were operating.

Although the society did not have staff, thanks to Big Potential funding consultancy advice had been able to be obtained from John Dawson (Locality) and Marc Collett (Burns Collett). Andrew thanked them for their help. He also paid tribute to the contribution of Ian Vickridge, who had been a trustee since the early days of the CLT but, because of commitments in Hong Kong, was not standing for re-election at this AGM.

The trustees were actively looking for ways to maintain momentum when the Big Potential funding ran out in late summer.

Various organisations had approached the society during the year to discuss community ownership of important local assets. There was a possibility of Hebden Bridge signal box being gifted to the CLT following decommission in late 2018.

The trustees had taken the significant decision of applying to become a Registered Provider (RP) of social housing, a complex application process which was currently under way. The Walsden project was temporarily halted pending RP status, and the ability to draw down Homes England grant funding.

The secretary referred to the forthcoming community share issue, which he said was important both for helping raise ‘patient’ investment capital for the High Street development but also for building the base of the CLT locally, by increasing membership. He said there would be a big marketing drive behind the issue, with a series of public meetings beginning on June 4th. The website was about to be relaunched.

Andrew concluded by announcing that, subject to legal arrangements, the CLT had been awarded matched funding of £100,000 for the community shares issue, from the Power to Change Community Shares Booster Programme. This meant that when £100,000 in investments was reached, effectively £200,000 would be invested.

5. Hebden Bridge development report

David Nugent reported on developments during the year with regard to the ambitious project to build over twenty new affordable homes on High St in Hebden Bridge. Grant funding had been won from the DCLG/Locality fund for initial survey and architectural work. This had been supplemented by a loan and matched grant from CAF Venturesome and Power to Change.

Following the surveys, three separate public consultation events had been held the previous week. It was anticipated the project would progress to planning permission shortly.

6. Treasurer’s report

Karin Lowson spoke to the annual accounts, which had been prepared and independently examined by West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service. The 2017 accounts showed a considerable increase in financial activity compared with 2016. The vast bulk of the society’s income, 96% in 2017, was in the form of restricted grants, awarded for particular work. The grants had come from Big Potential (£64,387), Quaker Housing Trust (£20,000) and DCLG/Locality (£19,298), together with a small flood resilience grant for the Fielden Hall.

Karin explained that the accounts had been produced to the charities’ SORP accounting standard.

She highlighted key information from the society’s balance sheet, which included fixed assets (Fielden Hall and Walsden land, together with capitalised architects’ fees).

The accounts were formally approved by the AGM.

7. Auditor

Karin Lowson explained that the society’s income during 2018 was likely to be over the threshold requiring a full audit, and RP status would also require the accounts to be audited. West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service was not licensed to undertake audits. Andrew Bibby proposed that the society use the services of the Manchester-based accountants Third Sector Accountancy, who had specialist experience in relation to community benefit societies and RPs. The appointment of Third Sector Accountancy was approved by the AGM.

8. Election of trustees.

Simon Brearley reported that four nominations had been received: Andrew Bibby, Lynda Bruce, Karin Lowson and Maggie Smallwood. He asked the meeting if members were happy to undertake the vote by public show of hands, and this was approved. He asked the meeting if members were happy for all four candidates to be voted on together, and this was approved. The nominations were then put to the meeting, and Andrew, Lynda, Karin and Maggie were duly elected or re-elected.

9. Issues and discussion.

A wide-ranging discussion followed. Finn Jensen enquired whether the society would be required to become VAT registered, but Andrew Bibby replied that advice taken suggested this would not be appropriate; building costs for new residential developments were zero-rated. Finn suggested that the society could consider a second share issue in the future, following this year’s first issue. He urged the society to ensure the new homes being built made full use of renewable energy.

Janet Battye asked whether the society was adequately liaising with the groups producing Neighbourhood Plans in Todmorden and Hebden Royd/parishes. She wondered whether the CLT might consider making a proposal to Calderdale regarding Ferney Lee school, Todmorden.

Catherine Willis asked if there was a risk from right to buy. Andrew Bibby replied that CLTs were currently exempt from right to buy legislation.

Hugh Rolo suggested that there might be a new funding scheme specifically for linking community-led housing with Neighbourhood Plans. He endorsed the idea of a second share issue.

Finn Jensen asked about the provisional pledge of £100,000 investment capital from the Community Foundation. Andrew Bibby replied that this remained on offer; it would be treated as a secured loan, rather than as part of the community share issue.

Simon Brearley closed the meeting at 12.19pm