

Alley Association Steering Group
Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 19th September 2018 at Rock House.

1. Attendees:

Bob Thust, Practical Governance (BT) (Chair)
Jason McLaughlin, Heart of Hastings CLT
Jess Steele, White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures (JS)
John Brunton, White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures (JB)
Kimberley Ryder, Practical Governance (KR) (Admin)
Kristy Burn, Hastings Library (KB)
Lisa Finch, Project Art Works (LF)
Margaret Sheehy, MSL (MS)
Mel Jones, Love Hastings (MJ)
Sam Kinch, Heart of Hastings CLT (SK)
Sarah Smart, Hastings Library (SS)

Apologies:

John Bownas, Love Hastings
John Harper, Freeholder, Caves
John Hibberd, Hastings Urban Design Group
Ken Davis, Hastings Urban Design Group

2. Minutes of the last meeting

These were approved.

3. Proposed investments

Gate

JB is collating quotes for the gate and continuing consultation with relevant freeholders. Once the Alley Association has settled on a preferred design and supplier there will be a final round of consultation with freeholders and tenants and the wider Alley Association mailing list before the work commences to remove the current gate and replace it.

To recap, the key considerations:

- Electric gate with automatic closing and a button on the wall inside the Alley that allows people to get out (sufficiently far from the gate itself)
- Ability to hold the pedestrian entrance open at certain times
- Similar in style to current gate and in the same location i.e. main gate with a pedestrian entrance and in keeping with the area
- Ideally slightly wider opening for larger vehicles to get access to the Alley if required
- All tenants and freeholders to be issued with an electronic fob to gain access

It was noted that John Whittington from Hastings Borough Council thinks the council may be willing to match some funding for the proposed replacement of the gate, though how much will depend on the proposal and available funds. This to be followed up once the final proposals have been

developed.

The plan is to have this work completed before Christmas 2018 or early in 2019.

Pest Control & Waste

JB is currently collating quotes for pest control work, building on the review conducted in 2017. This will focus mainly on clearing the Alley regularly, which we have already been doing and has made a noticeable difference, and installing pigeon spikes in relevant areas.

Other factors that will continue to make a difference:

- Having secure access with the new gate at night (see item above)
- Plans to address the foliage on the cliffs (see next item below)
- BT shared with the group that John Harper (absent) – has agreed to sell the caves to White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures and part of the future plans is that this may create a bin storage area. If this goes ahead we can discuss with all freeholders and tenants how we collectively tackle the challenge of collection – having a store would make this considerably easier to find a solution.
- Keeping a cleaning budget for regular events going as we have up to now – potentially around £5k per year required to do this effectively but more detailed quotes are needed still.

Actions:

- ***JB to secure relevant quotes and bring them to the next meeting for approval before any further consultation needed – including, where relevant, ongoing cleaning costs at least 4 times a year***
- ***JB to report back on status of caves sale at the next meeting***
- ***MJ to share with BT any details of similar community bin collections in the area that we might be able to learn from and take to freeholders and tenants for discussion, including contacts to professional waste management teams who may be able to provide us with some ideas and quotes***
- ***BT also to contact Beth from Jericho Road Solutions about any other waste management leads that might be helpful***
- ***BT to report back on waste management options at the next meeting***

Tree Maintenance

BT noted that we have had previous advice of the need to cut down the tress to the trunk, clear vegetation and then maintain that annually. BT noted that he has scheduled a meeting with a recommended tree surgeon and should be able to arrange this work to be done before Christmas at an estimated costs of c. £3,000. It was agreed that as long as the quote came in within that total BT should go ahead and let the group know.

Actions:

- ***BT to agree quote, liaise with relevant freeholders and get work underway before Christmas***

Surfacing / Drains

BT noted that we should soon have more detailed updates to the drainage survey to better understand the flow of water. Once we have that we can add this to the drain survey and

topographical survey and draft tender documents in advance of final round of consultation with freeholders and tenants and then selecting a preferred supplier. BT noted that realistically this work would not start until January / February.

Actions:

- ***BT to get tender documents drafted and liaise with JB and SK for next round of consultation with freeholders and tenants***

Utilities

BT noted that running electricity and water to the event space in the Alley was relatively straightforward and might be made even easier should the caves come back into regular use. It was agreed to park this item and focus on other priorities for the moment.

Canopies

BT noted that the Alley Association has agreed to park any potential investment in canopies or other event fixings for the moment with the other priorities identified as more immediate concerns.

General budget

It was noted that the £50k allocated from CCF for these works will not cover all necessary work but that we will continue to look for additional funds and, in the meantime, make progress on priority areas of the gate, pest control and then surfacing before the end of March 2019 (see also item 5 below on funding)

JS noted the difference between one off investment needed now and the ongoing maintenance jobs which will create annual obligations. The annual obligations like tree maintenance means a responsibility to the alley association (or someone) for funding it. There is a need to differentiate between things that are a choice and things that are a responsibility/liabilities to the group.

Actions:

- ***BT to present an updated budget with likely ongoing costs and one-off costs at the next Steering Group meeting***

4. Governance

During the last meeting, the association agreed to become Legal entity which would hold a bank account. BT noted that a bank account cannot be opened until the legal structure is sorted. The Alley Association would offer a membership in line with constitution, which would carry a vote in the AGM to select the steering group. BT has been looking at various legal structures and recommends a co-operative CIC limited by Guarantee, which has an asset lock and a one member one vote system, with members voting the steering group in once a year. This should take 3-4 weeks to set up. BT has spoken to Co-ops UK who can support in setting up, the cost of which would be around £750.

SK and JB have agreed to be initial directors to get this set-up so the group can start to progress and get a bank account. This represents an opportunity to reengage with all stakeholders with an interest in the Alley so we can ensure they can become members, have a vote and we have an open selection process for members of the Steering Group in line with our current constitution.

The idea of presenting on Alley Association plans to the wider community was discussed. Initially a presentation to the businesses Love Hastings was suggested, followed by a more open session for

wider community members. It was suggested this be combined with an update on the Observer Building which is currently up for sale and which WRNV Ltd are considering making an offer for.

Actions:

- ***BT to work with SK and JB to establish the CIC and then set up the bank account as soon as possible thereafter***
- ***All to re-read constitution and send any suggestions to BT***
- ***MJ to work with BT and JS to arrange a Love Hastings meeting re: Alley Association and Observer Building and report back at the next meeting***
- ***BT to discuss any further ideas on wider meeting at the next meeting***

5. Future funding

Some options for potential future funding were discussed:

Awards for All

MS-To apply for these grants a group would need a bank account, opened for at least 3 months. They invest in small community groups. We will consider this again once the Alley Association has been set up as a CIC with a bank account.

Landfill Trust

BT – the committee for this meet 3 times a year to discuss grants. Within their grant giving structure the Alley would be classed as a Community Building. Community Buildings are discussed by the grant givers twice a year. Next discussion in July. Should the alley want to pursue this they would need to submit interest before Christmas. Project total can cost no more than £200k including VAT, trust would give 75k, alley 75k.

Actions:

- ***BT to put funding back on the agenda for discussion once the CIC has been registered and a bank account opened***

6. Events

The Alley Association had approved four events, but only three were confirmed. They appear to have gone well and clean-up before and after managed, all supplied figures on attendances.

MS is looking to hold a storytelling event around 29-30 March and it has been agreed that Alley Association funding can be registered as match funding in bids to support that event. This would involve the community – performance, exhibition, installation using local artists Radiator Arts

The idea of an alley 'launch' event after the completion of the gate, pest control and surfacing works was proposed by JS - suggests the launch/first event should be a taster for everyone around the alley to experience and understand they all own it, are part of it, can contribute.

MS's idea would be great once all stakeholders are on board but the first event should encourage the community to come together with a focus purely on the Alley.

It was agreed that we should seek to continue to use the protocols developed by the Alley Association for any events that come through the Association and try to encourage others that hold events to adopt the same protocols or help draft new ones. It was noted that this process is about mitigating risk – we can't eliminate risk and we have to request that event holders have their own insurances and licences as we can't take responsibility for those even if we endorse the event.

BT gave an update on recent discussion with council re licensing. It might be possible for the Alley Association to get an event licence over the Alley but it was felt that this would require broader support from all freeholders and businesses and is something that should be looked at in more details in the future rather than now.

Actions:

- ***BT to discuss with JB the potential for Alley launch event at the end of works***

7. Addressing Challenges to the spirit of the constitution

The key challenge at the moment relates to access to the alley and buildings and the need to ensure this is maintained, particularly for disabled users.

Actions:

- ***SK and JB to discuss this with Penny from HAVE (Hastings Access to Venues & Events) initially and report back to the group at the next meeting***

8. AOB, including any actions from the last meeting not already covered

MS noted that Rose Cottage is up for sale. Group to keep an eye on situation.

MS and JS noted that they are mentioning the work of the Alley Association in funding bids and need to feel they have the backing of the Alley Association to discuss the Alley if they approach any funders. No objections from those present.

9. Date of the Next Meeting

Next two meetings scheduled as follows:

Tuesday 13th November 2018 @ 12-2pm at Rock House

Monday 14th January 2019 @ 12-2pm at Rock House