

D. A. R. E.
Minutes
A. G. M. - 2007
HELD AT

Whiddon Down Village Hall, Whiddon Down
On Monday 6th August 2007
at 7.30 PM.

1. Apologies

Glen Newson – Exeter City Council
Clare & Roger Ash Wheeler
Miss A Coles
Stuart Coleman
Jim Rosseinsky
Dave Kelf
Steve Cryer

Directors Present

Silvan Robinson – SR (Chairman)
Paul Baker – PB (Managing Director)
Richard Pymm – RP (Finance Director)
Jodie West – JW (Director)

2. To amend if necessary, and accept the minutes of the meeting of 2nd August 2006

No amendments were requested for the minutes dated 2nd August 2006. The minutes were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising from the above minutes which are not otherwise dealt with below.

No matters arose.

4. Chairman's Report given by Silvan Robinson

Silvan welcomed Jeff Ridley who has attended to give a presentation on climate change which is still causing a great deal of debate, so perhaps this is the most important part of the evening!

We have had another very active year in the DARE office. Turnover has rose from around £50,000 in 2006 to around £80,000 in 2007. We also now employ 5 part time staff.

It is still very difficult getting the right funding to support the challenges that lie ahead. We had the loss of CRI in March this year but seem to have survived it well. RE4D has now kicked in and is a major source of our activities. However, there are a few problems that go alongside it; 1) It is a 2 year programme so difficult when it comes to planning things, 2) Only effective in the objective 2 area, 3) The programme emphasises on results but we want to get the message across to people that they need to move ahead quickly and more events such as the East Devon Awareness Day are needed. So in essence RE4D is not ideal but it's what we have!

Work within the office has grown and the amount of enquires has increased. This in turn has produced a greater workload which is heavily reflected on Paul. Paul has said he needs to cut back although Silvan hasn't seen any evidence of it yet! We desperately need additional support and development power. A major task for next year is to employ someone to develop business ideas and to remove some of the strain from Paul.

There has been lots of staffing changes, which has been awkward. Dave Kelf is also relocating so we will lose his support soon and Silvan advised he doesn't want to go on indefinitely!

All in all a very good year though.

Member's Questions

No questions asked.

5. Finance Director's report given by Paul Baker

Paul Baker reported that he would be presenting this report since the 2006/2007 accounts had only been received in draft form that morning, and that Richard Pymm the Finance Director had not had the opportunity to look at them in any depth or discuss them with the Accountants.

A copy of the full audited accounts from Robert Humphreys of Okehampton is available by request from Paul Baker.

Copies of 'Notes to the Financial Statements' (pages 6 and 7) and 'detailed profit and loss accounts' (pages 8 and 9) were provided to all those present.

Page 8 : Attention was drawn to the fact that the turnover for the year had increased from £53,935 to £82,685, principally due to work undertaken under RE4D, with income other than the CRI, more than doubling, and that the Operating Profit had increased from £191 to £8039. The Accountant had estimated that £1430 would be due to be paid in Corporation Tax, which would bring the net profit for the year down to £6609, but this was being questioned.

Membership fees were down slightly, but with improved administration capacity, lapsed memberships were now being followed up more carefully.

Similarly Newsletter revenue had almost ceased, but advertising revenue was now being actively sought again, and the position is improving. It was noted that there wasn't any funding to produce the Newsletter, and that it had to be done 'between other jobs'.

Page 9: Paul explained that the increase in rent was a reflection of taking on the additional office during the year. A similar situation explained the Rates increase, though this was exacerbated by having to pay full business rates until both properties were re-rated and combined for small business rate relief, which had now been done.

Under the 'Project Monies' line it was noted that there were ongoing projects at the end of 2006 that had received up-front funding which appeared as unspent money although it was committed to specific work. At the end of 2007, those projects had been completed and the money spent .

Looking at the Financial Statement Notes, it was pointed out that no Directors had drawn any money, even for expenses, although two Directors had undertaken paid project work during the year. Fixed Assets had increased considerably from £145 to £2336 after depreciation, reflecting the purchase of computer equipment in particular. There were no long-term debtors to report and the Debtors and Creditors noted were only normal end of month and year transactions.

The year's transactions meant that reserves had increased from £5418 by a further £6609 or £8039, depending on the Corporation Tax situation.

Paul explained that the profit which is generated is the result of project work being charged out at their full operating costs including overheads and management. This means that subscriptions, commercial consultancy and unclaimed management costs produce profits rather than having to finance office running costs. With the closure of the CRI, turnover will reduce by some £15,000 in 2007/2008, but additional RE4D work in its second year, an increasing demand for technical services, should go a long way towards compensating for the loss.

There was some discussion about funding for RE support services in general, concluding that no obvious core funding was available, service's having to be financially sustainable on their own account or demonstrably have to deliver significant strategic benefit to clients.

Members Question:

No questions asked.

Point's raised:

Silvan advised there has been problems in obtaining an Overdraft from Lloyds TSB .

6. Managing Directors Report- Given by Paul Baker

As you will have already learnt from the Financial Report, 2006/2007 has been a year of considerable expansion and consolidation although we certainly haven't achieved all that we set out to achieve – maybe if we had it would simply mean that we had set our sights too low.

DARE set out more than 7 years ago to respond to a perceived demand, and whilst the precise nature of the demand has evolved somewhat, it hasn't gone away, and our services have also evolved along with it.

I like to begin this summary of the past year's activities by acknowledging the importance of the whole team in what we have achieved, and this is also frequently a good indication of our expansion and evolution.

As suggested last year we added the adjoining office to our operating base during the year and upgraded our computer system so that now each employee has a dedicated laptop, linked wirelessly with the main server. More in line with what you would expect of a modern business. We now have 5 people who work for us, all part-time, plus Richard and I who occasionally undertake paid work to add to our otherwise largely voluntary contributions. Two of the team work entirely or virtually entirely on the RE4D project. That's Jim Rosseinsky, who joined us shortly before the last AGM, and Tom Furness, who helped us for a while a few years ago and has recently joined us on a more permanent basis to undertake business development work, replacing John Baker who did this work for us for much of the year. Although the CRI has ended, Stuart's technical knowledge remains as a huge asset, and the demand for technical assessments and support for some RE4D clients more than keeps him occupied.

Running the office itself remains DARE's engine house and here we are deeply dependent and indebted to me – I'm sorry I mean to Kirsty and to Shura Barnett (who joined us part way through the year and is proving invaluable). Shura's role will be even more critical when Kirsty leaves us temporarily on maternity leave which starts in November. The fact that Kirsty is referred to in the office by job titles that vary from Office Manager to Project Officer to Finance Officer and Chief Executive goes some way towards indicating how much we appreciate and rely on her.

Our latest addition to the workforce started today and is Angus who will be working for us for the next two months undertaking research for RE4D on wood fuel co-operatives and supply chains, before he completes his Renewable Energy degree.

On now to a round-up of the main activities of the year :-

The main on-going work has been as a partner in the delivery of Renewable Energy for Devon. After a slow start enquiries are now coming thick and fast, and with only 9 months to go time is being spent on trying to acquire continuation funding, no easy task and refocusing on ensuring that as many clients as possible complete their installations. What are the chances that during the next 12 months someone is actually prepared to properly fund RE expansion because of all the implications of not developing a sustainable energy supply and the cost of not having it as a weapon to

help tackle Climate Change? At present RE is funded simply because it is a good business opportunity, it could be anything. I won't go into the details of this initiative, which is probably well known to you all, but I'm happy to talk to anyone about it afterwards.

The CRI came to an end at the close of the 2006/2007 financial year, despite lots of protests all round, and locally we took this to Ministerial level, and through our MP's. The impact of this closure is not of course seen in the accounts which are before you, and fortunately although the service is sorely missed there is no longer any free advice and support to communities other than through RE4D, it hasn't noticeably reduced our workloads, and Stuart has been kept as busy as usual with other advisory work. RE4D does seem to have had the effect of increasing the demand for technical consultation work, and we have introduced less technical assessments in the form of energy audits, but not the kind that are included in Home Information Packs. We are doing these for £90 plus travel, and this includes a site visit, so it is really good value. We continue to get regular requests for Hydro assessments, and during the year, with help from the Dartmoor National Park Richard established the Dartmoor Waterpower Group, which he continues to Chair and now has some 40 members.

Following on from the Winkleigh community event the previous year, we assisted with a similar but larger event which was very well attended in Tavistock, and in October we are organising an Energy Event in East Devon which will be open to the general public. A couple of days earlier we will be holding an event for our members at the Plymouth Marine Aquarium, with presentations on the Wave Hub, the Atlantic Array, the Acidification of oceans and using marine algae to sequester CO₂ and as a fuel.

Around the turn of the year we spent some time looking at developing a Devon RE Carbon Offset Scheme. This proved to be quite a challenge in a number of ways, and the concept is now under development by at least two groups, both of which we are involved with. It will be interesting to see what comes out of their efforts.

Two Directors are on the Steering Group of Devon Sustainable Energy Network, which is currently restructuring itself to take an active and co-ordinating role in reducing Devon's carbon emissions. RE has an increasing role to play in achieving emission reduction targets, and it is to be hoped that this strategic work creates strong further justification for the roll-out and expansion of RE4D.

Good news on two regular items for this report. The Newsletter continues successfully under the editorship of Kirsty, and at last we have a new and more useful website.

On the horizon, apart from the carbon offsetting, we are hoping to get the funding to do some pilot work with communities which will be quite exciting and could have a very large long-term impact, it is likely that we will be doing more work for Local Authorities, and we will be pursuing our ideas for farm and community scale AD and Biodiesel production. We are just starting now on two pieces of research and development work for RE4D which should identify new opportunities for RE. These will keep us fully occupied until the end of the year.

In spite of all this activity, what we haven't overcome is a general lack of resources. This restricts our progress and the development of new ideas. We are keen to explore the possibility of acquiring sponsorship and more professional consultancy work. I have to say that during the coming months I will not be able to continue to give DARE as much of my time as I have been doing for the last seven years. It is increasingly important for us now to move on to the next level and get ourselves into the position where we can afford full-time professional management.

A report of this kind can't possibly do justice to the time, effort and commitment that has been made to each of the activities that I have mentioned. I will close with sincere thanks on behalf of DARE and personally to fellow Directors and employees for all they have done and continue to do for the Company.

Member's Questions:

- 1) Andrew Lovering asked if one of the problems was if there were other organisations undertaking the same type of work as us?
Silvan replied: No, it wasn't and that it was simply a question of core funding.
- 2) Andrew Lovering asked if there were organisations in other counties taking over?
Paul replied: No, Devon and Cornwall are stronger than ever and receiving more funding now.

Points raised:

Silvan said that Paul is very modest and that in fact most of the thanks goes to Paul for all his time and hard work that he gives.

7. CRI Report

CRI has now ended.

8. Election of Directors

- i) Silvan welcomed Steve Cryer to the board. Steve was to be elected after being co-opted in 2006. Paul elected him as Director and Richard second this.
- ii) Richard Pymm was re-elected as Financial Director.
Silvan Robinson was re-elected as Chairman.
- iii) There are no current resignations, however, Dave Kelf will resign as and when he relocates.
- iiii) We will be requiring another Director at some point in the year. If you would like to apply for the role then please contact Paul Baker at the DARE office.

9. Any Other Business

None

10. Next Meeting

To be confirmed, but agreed that it is to be held in same place.