

Minutes of the 41st meeting of the Board of the Aire Rivers Trust on 21/02/2018 at the Kirkgate Centre, Shipley

In Attendance:

G Roberts (Chair)
J Whaley (Secretary)
K Sunderland
B Lerner
D Brazendale
W Robinson
D Vine

Apologies were received from B Edwards, M Penny, R Kipling (EA) and R Hellowell (Observer)

Prior to the formal agenda the Board welcomed Nick Milsom and Simon Watts as the first two employees of ART. Nick and Simon outlined their previous experience and members looked forward to working with them to enhance ART's role and to their future attendance at Board meetings

1. Minutes of the meeting of 29/11/2017

The minutes were agreed as a fair record of proceedings. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

2. Chair's Report

DNAire

GR confirmed that the main item of interest was the appointment of Simon Watts who was now in post.

GR's report outlined the key areas for which ART was responsible in the development phase and expressed the hope that all Trustees would be willing to help with some of the work.

GR advised that HLF would provide a mentor to support ART and reminded members that £708k matched funding had to be identified – EA, YW, Leeds CC, Leeds FAS and the various "Landfill Environment Funds" being possible sources.

Natural Flood Management (NFM)

GR focussed on the tree planting aspect of NFM and the announcement of The Northern Forest, YWS' proposal to plant 1million trees, Leeds City Region's desire to plant a tree for every resident in the region and other projects that would significantly impact parts of the landscape in due course. There was serious doubt about the capacity available to implement the

project. ART needed to decide about its participation and the level of that participation either as a key player or simply as an adjunct to its existing stewardship aspirations.

ACCP

GR advised members that YWT's contract was coming to an end. Rachel Kipling and Jeff Keenlyside were actively managing the work.

Water Environment Grant (WEG)

GR introduced a new grant scheme replacing EA's previous grant funding regimes from which ART had benefitted.

WEG would operate under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) with perhaps £9m available from the EU with the purpose of delivering water environment improvements to benefit the rural community and economy. Applications for projects (possibly above £100k) were required by May 2018 with decisions in August 2018. Projects could last several years but would need to start within the current financial year.

GR advised that some work had already been done with Rachel Kipling on a possible project (Mid-Aire Tributaries). Other schemes might also be considered.

The problem of payment at least 3 months in arrears would again have to be resolved for ART to be involved and strict administrative requirements would have to be expected.

3. Friends of Bradford's Becks

BL confirmed that the Planning Application re Leaventhorpe Lane recently emailed to members had been submitted.

Funding for Bradford CC work in the Canal Road area was to be enhanced. This would be the potential source of any funding ART might access to take forward the renaturalisation project in the area referred to in the previous minutes.

BL advised members of litter picks on 04/03/2018 and 28/04/2018

4. Bradford Stewardship

BL gave a brief update on areas of work in hand and looked forward to Nick's future input.

5. Invasive Species

DV updated the Board on PlantTracker and INNS.

6. Environment Agency Report

GR updated members on RK's behalf on various issues that were relevant to ART

7. Finance

JW spoke to his finance report circulated previously by email and made reference to the status of the various fund balances which were now calculated directly through the new accounting system.

JW asked the Board for authority to modernise the Bank Account operation particularly in relation to online payments. BL outlined a system which would allow such payments and still incorporate the equivalent of the second signature requirement currently in operation. JW agreed to look into such arrangements with ART's banker - Barclays and refer back to the Board as appropriate.

8. Employment Issues

JW advised the Board of the operation of a payroll through Bradford Payroll and the necessary steps already taken to provide the new employees with Contracts of Employment compatible with the various directives. An Employment Handbook had been created to tie in with the above and JW suggested that the substantial document be installed on the private section of the ART website. GR agreed to look into the necessary website work. Other administrative documents re expenses, leave etc. were under preparation.

9. Website

Nothing to report.

10. ART Priorities

Following the item on the previous agenda GR introduced an edited and updated Vision document which was discussed by the Board. That document would be ART's formal statement of Aims, Goals and Actions subject to any further editing appropriate.

11. Trustee Recruitment

The Board agreed that an approach be made to Anne Healey to join the Board. The matter of a skills audit and a more formal recruitment process was deferred to a future meeting.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is on Wednesday 11th April 2018. Venue TBA.

The dates for other meetings in 2018 (venue TBA) are:

Wednesday - 30th May

Wednesday - 25th July

Wednesday - 19th September

Wednesday - 14th November