Aberfeldy Big Local

**Minutes of Board Meeting held on Tuesday 14th September 2017 at Aberfeldy Community Centre**

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| *Board Members in Attendance*   1. Kim Nguyen (Chair) 2. Val de Vos 3. Stacey Kimbo 4. Jimmy Watters 5. Abdul Muk 6. Leila Lawal 7. Loretta Lamjda   *Also in attendance:*   * Edna Howard (local resident) * Toyafel (local resident) * Sian Penner (Local Trust representative) * Liam Harney (ABL engagement worker) | *Apologies received:*   * Matt Wall * Ahmed Hussain * Abi Gilbert |

|  |  | **Action** | **By Whom** | **By When** |
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| **1**  1.1  1.2  1.3  1.4  1.5 | **Employment in Aberfeldy**  Leila and Liam reported back on a Big Local event on strategies for boosting employment and enterprise in Big Local areas. Leila said the event was interesting and inspiring, with lots of innovative ideas and action happening in Big Local areas across the country. Lots of things were covered at the meeting, such as micro-enterprises, the range of employment types (full time, part time, students, self-employed etc.) and the role of social enterprises for helping people get more prepared for work- such as No Walls Gardens CIC in Northfleet Big Local, which trains people as gardeners, gets them access to training and helps them to get jobs in local construction and regeneration schemes.  Liam was particularly inspired by Dover Big Local, who have built a partnership of local organisations and authorities to create a new organisation called ‘Destination Dover’. Destination Dover employs someone full time to work with local businesses and tourist attractions to promote tourism in Dover, rather than tourists passing *through* it. Their aim is to make £3 million of tourists’ money to stick in the local economy each year. Liam said that Aberfeldy Village, and the Fashioning Poplar scheme will bring more people to Aberfeldy with money in their pockets to spend, and wondered what role ABL could play in making sure some of this money is spent locally to provide employment opportunities for the people who live here.  Leila suggested that the first thing we need to do is talk to local people about their experiences with (un)employment and perhaps then map out a community research project to work out what ABL should do to support people.  The group discussed this, covering a number of topics, including:   * Finding out what skills residents have that can help them into work or to create enterprises (Val) * Seeing if people are interested in getting into the many construction jobs that are springing up across E14, and what qualifications people need to access them, e.g. CCS cards (Abdul, Liam) * Thinking about how the Government’s apprenticeship levy can be used as leverage to secure apprenticeships for Aberfeldy by negotiating with employers (Sian) * Seeing what local centres offer in terms of employment support (e.g. Bromley By Bow Centre, Spotlight) * The possibility of partnering with local organisations, e.g. Poplar Harca’s employment team, to help Aberfeldy residents (Kim) * Talking to other organisations, like SPLASH and Sister Christine, about how they help people into work (Abdul) * Looking at the local statistics on employment- Sian has access to these * Different people have different barriers to getting a job- e.g. mum’s being denied a job because their child is seen as a liability (missing days cos of child’s illness etc.) (Val)   The board agreed to have a separate meeting to discuss these ideas and develop a plan for the new year for looking further into employment and enterprise- through community researchers (potentially). | Arrange meeting and develop ideas for community research | Liam | January board meeting |
| **2**  2.1  2.2 | **Away Days Scheduling**  Liam brought up the idea of having 2 or 3 ‘away days’ for the board to help further develop their plan, help with team building and set up the roles and responsibilities of the board going forwards. He asked when people wanted to have these away days: extending the scheduled board meetings to 6pm-10pm or doing a Saturday.  A vote was held and the majority chose to extend the board meeting. The first away day will be Tuesday 13th March, 6-10pm and will include food. After that, the board will decide when to hold the second away day, if it’s needed. | Liam to arrange venue for away day and organise a meal. |  |  |
| **3**  **3.1**  **3.2**  **3.3**  **3.4**  **3.5**  **3.6**  **3.7**  **3.8**  **3.9** | **Project Pitch by Andreas Lang from Public Works**  Andreas from Public Works pitched an idea for funding from the ABL partnership. Public Works are an organisation that specialise in community participation and creating public spaces with communities. They are based in Hackney but have been developing a community kitchen, tool shed and anaerobic digester in 3 shipping containers in Brion Place in the Teviot Estate.  The proposed project is to support the development of a new community growing and garden space in the existing community growing plots on Bromley Hall Road, next to where Poplar HARCA’s fashion hub is going to be built.  Poplar HARCA are securing their own funding for the fashion hub, but the garden is a separate initiative, being led by Public Works. Public Works have secured other sources of funding to redevelop the garden, including £40,000 from Veolia, a potential £25,000 from the Mayor of London (TBC), and £20,000 from Poplar HARCA. They are looking for money from Aberfeldy to support community engagement around the garden.  The idea behind the garden is to design it so that local people can get the best use from it, to use it to teach people about growing food and creating sustainable energy, and to encourage communal cooking in the community kitchen. The longer-term aim is to help develop a governance structure for the local community to take over the running and maintenance of the garden, possibly creating a new community organisation to do this.  The discussion opened up to questions from the board to Andreas:  Q: Why aren’t Poplar HARCA funding it? (Leila)  A: They are giving £20,000 to Public Works for design and to conduct a ground survey before the works (Andreas)  Q: I like the idea as recycling is so important, but I am worried that the tress there will be taken away, is this the case? (Val)  A: The trees will stay, apart from a few that will be removed because something is wrong with them (Andreas  Q: We’ve heard before that they are building a café there, does this plan include that? (Val)  A: There will be a café as part of the Fashioning Poplar development, but Public Works have been told that the community kitchen must not compete with it (Andreas)  Q: What about the people who already garden there? (Leila)  A: the idea is to have raised beds for people to continue to grow their food in, to replace the existing beds. There will also be an orchard on the site (Andreas)  Q: What if residents don’t want an orchard? How much scope is there for residents to design the garden? (Leila)  A: We want to talk to people first about what they want in the space- this is just an initial design. We need the money to start the conversation process (Andreas)  Q: What is the timeline for the project to start? And how much money are you looking for from ABL? (Sian)  A: We have a 12th of January deadline to provide Veolia with 3 quotes for the work to secure their money. If the contractors need the garden land to store their materials for Fashioning Poplar then we will have to wait until they are done before starting, but if they don’t then we can start the work in March, starting conversations in January. We are looking for roughly £5,000 for engagement and consultation, and then potentially around £10,000 for capital costs if other sources do not come through. After this, and depending on what people want from the space there may be costs for paying someone’s wages to run the space.  Q: Will Poplar HARCA receive rent on the land from Public Works? (Val)  A: No (Andreas)  Q: Is there an asset-transfer built into the contract between HARCA and Public Works? (Sian)  A: Not at the moment, as the contract has not been written, but this can be included (Andreas)  The board then discussed their thoughts on the pitch. Jimmy liked it as the land was being used for a garden, rather than more flats. Stacey liked the pitch too. Kim said she knows that public Works get good turn outs to their events, so should be good at engaging with the community. Sian asked the board what they would have thought about it if the project was not linked to Poplar HARCA’s fashion project. Leila said she’d have supported it, as did Val who likes that the garden is separate from HARCA. Jimmy praised them for coming to ABL having already raised a lot of money from elsewhere, i.e. £40,000 from Veolia. Leila was sceptical at first due to the HARCA link but thinks it is a good idea and wanted to know more about the resident involvement as the garden is designed and created. She liked Andreas and thinks he could be good to work with, and thinks the garden would be a great new community space, and help reduce social isolation.  Liam asked 2 questions, to play devil’s advocate:   1. Is this garden just going to become a hangout space for the new ‘fashionistas’ working in the fashion hub, rather than existing residents? 2. Given the long-term plans to give the garden to community control, what opportunities does this provide ABL for addressing issue like employment, i.e. by setting up a CIC?   Kim said that question 2 helps answer question 1- if the community have control over the space and are involved in managing it and creating it, then they *own* that space, which gives them a better chance of mixing with the newcomers to the fashion hub. Sian suggested that the points people are making highlights that the board see this opportunity as a potential vehicle for something else, and that if ABL are paying the £5,000 for consultation then they get to set the parameters of this and thus to shape the overall project.  Jimmy added that the garden might help set precedents for future developments in Aberfeldy, like the Tommy Flowers can do for getting a permanent pub in the area- the garden can be used to argue that all new developments need more green space, or community-controlled space. Sian added that she asked about the asset transfer in the contract as it would allow the garden to be given to community control as an asset for Aberfeldy. Big Local have a link with an organisation called Shared Assets to help us develop a strategy for this.  The board decided to invite Andreas to submit a formal application for the next board meeting | Liam to invite Andreas to submit a proposal for next board meeting. Assessment panel to be formed to assess it prior to the 12th to make recommendations to the board. |  |  |
| **4**  4.1  4.2  4.3 | **Christmas Events**  The board are planning 2 events for Christmas this year: a Santa’s grotto/craft fair for children on Saturday 16th December, and a meal for older residents on Wednesday 20th.  The board agreed to a £2-2,500 budget for both events.  The planned timing for the Saturday event (1-4pm) is not possible due to another booking at the church hall- so Liam asked for ideas about what to do. Sian suggested doing a ‘Breakfast With Santa’ event for kids to come, eat, and make tree decorations. | Next planning meeting Wednesday 22nd November, 2pm, Liam to send reminders nearer the time |  |  |
| **5**  5.1  5.2 | **Spend Report**  A spend report was presented to the board, showing that ABL has spent £47,394.46 between April 2016 and November 2017. A total of £14,120 is available to fund projects. Liam asked whether the board want to carry on accepting applications for funding or not.  The board decided to remain open for applications until April 2018, where they hope to have a clearer idea of their priorities for commissioning particular projects and initiatives. |  |  |  |
| **7**  7.1  7.2  7.3  7.4  7.5  7.6  7.7  7.8  7.9  7.10  7.11  7.12 | **AOB**  Kim announced that she is stepping down as Chair of ABL due to other time commitments, but will remain on the board. Everyone thanked Kim for her great work as chair and is glad she is staying on as part of the group.  Sian informed the board that Babu Bhattercherjee and Hanif Osmani from Poplar HARCA had asked her if they can meet the partnership (residents only) to talk about their role in ABL. Sian asked whether the partnership wanted to do this.  Sian was asked why they wanted this meeting. She said that according to what Poplar HARCA had told her, they want a strong board of residents, want to support ABL, but don’t understand why they have stopped being invited to meetings.  Abdul said that the partnership needed more time to be themselves, without Poplar HARCA being there, and that they should invite HARCA to meetings if and when the partnership want their input. It was noted that the ABL partnership is now seeming to get stronger, with more action happening locally and more people becoming aware of ABL, and that when HARCA were involved previously, this was not the case.  Leila said that she’d like to meet HARCA to talk about the new community centre being built and the development of Aberfeldy Village. However, Poplar HARCA are not residents of Aberfeldy and so should not be on the board. All we need from them is feedback on the spending of our money in their role as Locally Trusted Organisation.  Kim said that Poplar HARCA have useful knowledge of the regeneration plans, and that we will need some form of relationship with them if we want to engage with this.  Jimmy argued that if residents see Poplar HARCA as a part of ABL then ABL will lose its integrity with local people, as a resident-led group. So, ABL needs to be standalone from Poplar HARCA to prevent people becoming suspicious of ABL and not trusting the partnership. Val agreed with Jimmy and added that the democratic nature of Poplar HARCA has gone to pot over time- once residents were able to have influence over the organisation through the estate boards and officers you could talk to. Now, the people in charge make the decisions without involving residents, and there is very little filtration of knowledge from the top to the estate boards. Val suggested the fact that HARCA have downgraded the Aberfeldy estate board to a ‘Gathering’ suggests that they don’t want Aberfeldy residents to have a say over the area.  However, Val also said that ABL does benefit from HARCA in the form of free access to its community centre for meetings and activities, and so the partnership needs to be pragmatic with its relationship with them.  Leila offered to meet HARCA as a representative of the board, and a non-HARCA resident.  Sian explained that Poplar HARCA are the Locally Trusted Organisation (LTO) for ABL. As LTO, their sole role is to hold and distribute the lottery money on behalf of the ABL partnership. They do not have decision-making power. However, they are also major developers and landlords in the area and we need to be aware of their multiple roles and not confuse them.  Abdul raised the point that at ABL meetings in the past, he felt that representatives from Poplar HARCA had been too dominant, blocking residents from having their say and controlling the meetings. This led him to think that Poplar HARCA were leading ABL. He also said that HARCA’s presence at meetings has the power to silence residents.  Sian asked the group for consent to email Poplar HARCA with a summary of this discussion:   * The ABL board do not want Poplar HARCA on the board as a partner member. * The ABL board do want feedback from Poplar HARCA as Locally Trusted Organisation * The ABL partnership do want a separate meeting with HARCA about the development happening in the area, including the new community centre planned.   The board agreed to this. | Partnership to appoint new Chair in the new year.  Sian to email Poplar HARCA with the board’s decision on their request to meet with residents. |  |  |

**Date of next meeting: Tue 12th December 2017**