

COXLEY COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

FULL REPORT OF GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 3rd March 2022 7pm

Coxley Memorial Hall

Present:

Chairman – Jenny Henderson;

Treasurer – Jim Reeves

Secretary – Caroline Cockman ;

Communications and Media – Anna Hind

Committee members – Rob Lindermanis, Richard Henderson

About 50 members of the public

New website : <https://coxleyholt.wixsite.com/website> Put this in, IN FULL – do not delete /website

All info referred to in the notes below is on the website.

Welcome and Introduction : Jenny Henderson, Chairman

Covid has slowed progress It has been impossible to hold meetings like this for over two years on account of Covid, but the committee has none the less been busy and achieved a lot. However progress was slow because CCLT has no money except grants it has to apply for, and that is a time consuming, laborious process.

It was great to see so many people present – over 50. All those attending were asked to sign in, with full contact details if not already known to CCLT. Anyone not present who wished to join the mailing list should go to the website (see above) and fill in the form.

A show of hands revealed that about a quarter of those present had moved into Coxley within the past two years.

This meeting was not after all going to be an Annual General Meeting as billed because we had not been able to follow the correct procedure for calling one – 14 days clear notice, with the Agenda to be followed, has to be given. Instead it was going to be an informal meeting to bring people up to date, answer questions and discuss options. This would be more useful in the circumstances, and the date for the AGM would be set shortly. However, the accounts had been audited, and would be approved at the AGM.

Location, size and shape of the field On the display boards were various maps and diagrams of the site, showing the flood zones, and where the proposed building might go. These will be on the web site as well. There were also a number of photographs on display of interesting buildings erected recently by local builders and craftsmen to give residents ideas about what our building might look like, if we go down that route, and also indicative costs. This meeting was emphatically not about taking decisions on that.

There were also some pamphlets about learning the skills for creating an ultra eco-friendly building – straw bale insulation and so on.

Communications Do people still want newsletters on paper delivered to them? Is it an effective way of communicating with people – show of hands indicated yes. JH arranges delivery of newsletters round the village – would very much like to stop a having to print and distribute paper (time consuming, inefficient, costly), but it seems it is still found very useful by some, even though others just bin it. More e-mail addresses would be the best way forward.

JH introduced those at the top table: three Founder Members and three committee members .

In accordance with the Rules of the Co-Operative and Benefit Society (see the website under More/ Important Documents) the Founder Members will continue as Directors until the AGM and may then stand for re-election.

Jenny Henderson : has lived at Harters Hill for 27 years, raised three children here, who sorely missed somewhere in the village where they could make and meet friends; was on the Parish Council for ten years; churchgoer. Organises deliveries of The Triangle and Holt newsletters -

Jim Reeves : has lived in Haymoor Lane for 25 years, took Bob Murrell's place as a Founder Member in August 2020, has been on the parish council (St Cuthbert Out) for 12 years plus, including three or more as Chairman which is a huge job; now Treasurer of CCLT. Using his experience as a Parish Councillor he and Bob Murrell did the bulk of the work entailed in getting the field reclassified: no longer Agricultural Land but Amenity Land, and they also did most of the negotiations with the donor, then the developer and Mendip about various terms of the Outline Planning Permission, including the Permissive Path.

Caroline Cockman : has lived in Mill Lane for 30 years, known to many as professional gardener, landscape designer, and wildlife expert . Has advised on all clearance work so far, and done a lot of it herself, cleared the derelict pig sty of all sorts of stuff left behind by previous owners; has identified all the trees and bushes and planted up the gap in the hedge with new plants. Also handles the lists of contacts.

Anna Hind : relatively new to the village, primary school head, recent addition to the committee, set up new website, social media and more.

Rob Lindermanis had helped Caroline with all the clearance of the pig sty, and both he and Richard Henderson had helped with clearance.

Treasurer's report : Jim Reeves

Background Jim summarised the story so far...see the website.

<https://coxleyholt.wixsite.com/website/about> and

<https://coxleyholt.wixsite.com/website/post/our-background-up-to-december-2020>

Even if nothing else happens, the field now belongs to the village in perpetuity to be used however the community decide. That's a big achievement. The Survey (see website) will guide decisions but might need to be revisited to some extent if it is thought that aspirations now, post Covid and 6 years on, are likely to be very different from the results gathered then.

If the multi user path from Wells to Glastonbury path goes ahead (SCO and MDC are pushing for this), it is hoped it will connect via Mill Lane and the Recreation Ground over the river onto our site,

then through the field next door that belongs to The Blue School, across Burcott Lane and on, to near the Reclamation Centre where it could re-join the old railway track bed. That would bring more trade for the cafe and shop. Wessex Water are renewing the water main between Wells and Glastonbury at the moment and it is hoped that their work might assist in creating a M.U.P.

Truespeed have said they will connect the Holt for free and have made a one-off payment of £1,500 in Wayleave. This would clearly be very beneficial for a village hub.

Accounts There was a full set of accounts on the display boards, and a summary had been handed to everyone on arrival. Two grants have been received recently, one for capital expenditure such as hedge laying and fencing, the other for ongoing costs such as ground clearance and maintenance, insurance, internet licence, and the annual Co-Op subscription. The surplus of about £5k in the bank account at the moment is therefore mostly ring-fenced for those responsibilities.

Sums raised and spent so far –

see Summary accounts below and full accounts on the website.

Summary of CCLT Accounts June 2016 – February 2022

Income	Grants	14,251.00	
	Donations	1,682.34	
	Loans	1,933.00	
	Wayleave	<u>1,500.00</u>	
	Total income	17,366.34	plus cash held approx. £151
Outgoings	Hall hire	60.00	
	Architects' fees	5,075.50	incl MDC Planning Fee £1,629.50
	Solicitors' fees	1,923.00	
	Surveyor's fee	480.00	
	FCA fee	132.00	
	Co-Op fees	474.00	
	Insurance	436.00	
	Website	300.00	
	Other		
	CCS	653.50	
	First architect	200.00	
	Village Survey	1,840.50	
	Ecological study	<u>220.80</u>	
			<u>2,914.80</u>
	Total Outgoings		11,794.96
Balance at bank			5,571.38

Those who had lent CCLT money could have a copy of the relevant page showing their loan.

Questions

Q How/why had £5,075 been spent on architects' fees?

A Quite easily! The Planning Application required certain architects' drawings to accompany it, particularly of the shared entrance splay to meet Highways' stipulations, and the planning fee. Despite an appeal repeated several times, no-one in the community had volunteered their services, so the committee had no option but to pay for their services. The land could not be made over to the community until the Planning Permission had been granted. With no other land likely to become available to the community (for the princely sum of £1), there was a strong case to permit limited commercial development (known as Enabling Development) when there is a clear public benefit to be gained i.e. a community hub (as demonstrated by the Survey see <https://coxleyholt.wixsite.com/website/post/community-survey-and-results>)

Q What about the caravan site proposal?

A This was for a few Caravan Club pitches, which would bring in a little regular income, and regular trade for the shop and café, which would all help it become and remain viable. But it was not clear yet whether what we have to offer would actually tick the Caravan Club's boxes – there might be issues around green space shared with the public as opposed to it being available exclusively to the Club members. Also there are now a few other Caravan Club sites in Coxley. They may not want yet another.

Q What would the proposed Membership fee be used for?

A It would be extremely useful for expenditure for which we cannot get grants, such as the hire of this hall for meetings (£40 or £20 for the smaller Meeting Room at the back) and financing newsletters.

Q Why does a village organisation have to pay for hire of the hall?

A This question would be better referred to the Memorial Hall Committee. The parish council, as Custodian Trustee, has two representatives on that committee.

Q What is Clause 7 of the Rules, about CCLT's borrowing powers all about? (see website under More/Important Documents). (This had prompted a concerned comment on Coxley Village Life Facebook very shortly before the meeting)

A CCLT may well need to borrow money eventually, but this would be done through a tight legal process, called a Community Share Offer, with professional advice (for which funding will have to be raised) so there is no cause for concern, and certainly no possibility of CCLT just taking £10,000 from anyone's bank account!! Grant-making bodies we apply to may also require match funding from residents to demonstrate commitment.

Landscape and wildlife report : Caroline Cockman

Site clearance and management going forward

As soon as CCLT had taken possession of the site, Caroline and Rob had done a thorough inspection of every corner of the site including the nearly derelict pig sty, and found some items of value. All of these have been removed to safe storage and will be disposed of as and when possible to raise funds for the hub. All that remains is rubbish and the building is not safe to enter.

The field had last been used for agricultural purposes several years before, so there was much overgrown vegetation, plus wire and fallen timber (remnants of fruit cages etc., fencing) hidden in amongst it. That was cleared and paths mown through the grass to make it relatively safe for the

public to enter and enjoy the site on the Jumble Sale Trail event in 2020. Since then sheep had only occasionally been available to graze it, so the grass had grown up again. But the trees have been properly pruned so they should crop heavily this year, if the weather is favourable. .

Hedge work

The hedge has been laid, so there is now a huge pile of brash to be disposed of. Some of it could go into a “dead hedge” to provide wildlife habitat and a sight screen for Injebrek (the bungalow across the river). The rest it is hoped could go on the bonfire on the developers’ end of the field where all the fruit trees have been felled. Chipping it is not an option as it is full of bramble and some wire still. The brash also contains a lot of blackthorn which is poisonous if it punctures the skin. .

Caroline and Rob have planted fifty tiny plants (whips) to fill the gap in the hedge at the Mill Lane end. The developers of the southern end of the field (Jamie Vincent and Bill Jones) have kindly taken their huge machine over our end to remove the worst of the top growth, but there is plenty more to do. Regular mowing will be required for at least a season before it is an easier, more level place to explore. Unfortunately this means the field probably cannot be used for the upcoming Platinum Jubilee celebrations. However, the committee none the less look forward to inviting the community onto the field to enjoy it when it is reasonably straight and tidy.

Wildlife

There is much unusual wildlife on the site including otters, kingfishers, water rails, ducks and other wild birds, moles, occasionally deer, but no rabbits (thank goodness!) But they need their rough untidy patches, and to be left in peace. There will be fruit to pick in season (brambles and more) it might be possible to sell the apples (mostly ciders) to a local professional maker – it’s not economic to make our own and we can’t sell it without a licence, which would cost a lot.

Communications and social media : Anna Hind

Anna has created a new free web site www.coxlyholt@wixsite.com/website/ and filled it with full background history, various important documents, photographs and more. Have a look! She has also set up a facebook page - @coxleyholt So the old website no longer exists, which means that the e-mail addresses for the committee members no longer work. If you wish to communicate with a committee member, please go through the website and fill in the contact form you will find there. One of us will get back to you asap.

Membership : Jenny Henderson

Why do we need Members?

We have now reached the stage of needing to involve the residents in deciding what, if anything, to do now with the site; probably the design and procurement of a village drop in centre in accordance with the Survey results . A “hub” was the clear favourite from a huge majority of residents (full Survey results on the website). .

In order to avoid confusion with other local village hubs, particularly Wookey Hub, we have provisionally named the site Coxley Holt, to acknowledge the presence of otters in the river, and as a pun on the railway halt in Mill Lane. Coxley didn’t have a proper station; that was at Polsham.

We need paid up Members to take decisions and share responsibilities. The Founder Members and committee members proposed an annual subscription of £5 a head, to be reviewed annually, to give Membership and voting rights at meetings. This was accepted as a good starting point.

How do you become a Member?

Those present were invited to take an application form, fill it in and return it to the Membership Secretary, Caroline Cockman, or to apply online. CCLT does not have online banking, but can receive electronic payments to. See details on the forms and website (when posted). If paying online, be sure to add your surname as reference. No surname, or no form, no Membership!!

The form will also be put on the website.

What are the geographical limitations of Membership?

There was some discussion as to whether there should be a Membership area. The parish council boundary (i.e. West Ward of St Cuthbert Out PC) was suggested, but people from outside that area would not be prevented from using the facilities, nor from attending meetings and volunteering. It was thought there might be quite a lot of people who had once lived in Coxley, liked to maintain their links with it and might even want to help. so it would be a pity to exclude them. However, it would not be appropriate to open voting on important decisions to people who lived at a great distance, or had perhaps not even been to Coxley, as might easily happen (several unfortunate examples were quoted).

Q Where do we go from here? A : form some informal working parties

The Board of Directors will give the WPs their brief but they will have no decision-making powers and no budget. Their job is to find out a lot about our options and report back to the Board of Directors and Members, who will then call a meeting of Members and supporters; Members will make the decisions.

Short term aims for field usage

What local businesses can be found to set up their stalls on the field from time to time so that there is activity and a reason to visit, for example the pizza van, a fish and chip van, a pop-up café/teashop? Portaloos and/or compost toilets?

These would need to be self-contained vehicles, requiring no planning permission, nor installation costs, nor access to mains water, sewer, electricity or gas. They should have their own insurance and take away all their rubbish with them. CCLT might consider installing Portaloos – WP to find out cost.

Medium term aims

Look into costs and practicalities of shipping containers and/or Portakabin type buildings (new/second hand/hire/buy/ready converted or DIY). Planning Permission? Hard-standing? Cost of hooking up with all services? Cost of installation (by crane probably)? Probably three “buildings”: shop, café (possibly linked together); toilets (and showers if Caravan pitches go ahead).

Look at life span of such temporary installations and residual value after x years. Compare cost against permanent building. They could be either the permanent solution, or possibly a temporary one while a permanent building was designed, costed, funded and built.

Long term aims

What would our options be for a permanent building? What type of construction? What grants could be obtained for say a thoroughly eco-friendly type building using largely or solely sustainable materials and techniques, possibly involving the community in the actual building, as opposed to a concrete block and steel building ? Compare building costs, running costs, timescales for construction and availability of grants. Pictures of buildings erected by local firms Red Kite Design and Build, and Westwind, were on the display board and would be put on the website.

Fun and fund-raising

A fourth working party could come up with ideas for events that could be held soon, to bring the community together and raise some funds at the same time, so that we are not completely dependent on grants, loans and donations for everything we try to do.

Secretary also needed

It would be good to have a volunteer to keep the Registers of Members, and in time a Register of Shareholders, policy documents and all electronic records (GDPR)

Site clearance and maintenance team

This will be hard work, and may entail using your own machinery and tools. Not light gardening!

Questions;

There was a request for a list of community shops not too far away to compare and get ideas from.

Will there be parking? Yes and very likely a charging point for electric cars, bike racks and more.

Will there be a bridge across to the Recreation Ground? Yes we hope so. In discussion with the EA.

Can the Platinum Jubilee Party be held on the Holt field? Probably not – too uneven and hazardous still.

Will the shop and café be staffed by volunteers? That's a detail to be sorted out when we are nearer that stage. Very likely a professional manager over a team of volunteers. It could be a great place for Coxley teenagers to have their first job for example.

Volunteers are needed for all these groups. Please let the Directors/committee members know if you are interested, so work can begin. To be discussed at next meeting obviously.

Next meeting : venue to be confirmed Friday 29th April 7pm. (Confirmed – in church)

The meeting closed at 8.30