

Elsenham Parish Council

Minutes of New Community Centre Working Group Meeting, held in Old Franks at 7.30pm on Monday 18 December 2023.

Present:

Dr. G Mott (Chairman GM), Mr. R Gooding (RG), Mr. A Hathaway (AH),
Mr. B Ogilvie (BO), Mrs. E Terry (ET) and Mrs. L Johnson (Parish Clerk LJ).

Members of the Public:

Mr A Lamb (AL) from Alan Lamb Associates, Project Manager.

1) Apologies for absence.

Mrs. B Donald (BD), Mr. P Jarvis (PJ), Mr. B Burlton,

2) Absent without apologies:

Ms. A Mowbray (AM).

3) Declaration of Interests. None.

4) To approve the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2023 were agreed and signed by GM.

5) Discussion with Alan Lamb on a possible role in the project.

AL gave a summary of his work and how he could possibly help EPC on this project. AL had worked on 32 projects of a similar nature (as per the circulated schedule) and assisted with many more. Many of the projects have been carried out with funding from the Football Foundation. AL had worked alongside many local Football Associations, which had also involved working alongside Sport England and the English Cricket Board.

On the projects AL had completed, he acted as Principal Designer using known and trusted architectural technicians to produce all design and technical drawings under his direction. AL then carried out all tendering and was Contract Administrator for the works on site and in some cases, also advised the Client on how to set up suitable management procedures for running the facilities when completed.

AL is a qualified Chartered Building Surveyor and a Chartered Project Management Surveyor (FRICS). AL is approaching retirement so is reducing his workload, but he would be interested in assisting EPC with this project with the emphasis on getting the project properly set up and then maybe assisting on a consultancy basis with any help EPC require moving forward.

There are three points AL said he could help with.

1. Questions from architects.

LJ had already received questions, that she had not been able to answer, relating to the tender documents on the Government Finders Website, AL said he expected more questions would be asked nearer the cut off time, 23 January 2024. AL could answer the questions on behalf of EPC.

2. Plans

AL said he could help with the process of assessing the plans. He knows what to look for in plans, what will work and what will not.

3. Long Term plan

AL could help with the long-term master plan, what must be done and when to do it.

AH asked about AL experience with community centres, going down the list he had provided there was only one Community Centre, which was Duxford.

AL said apart from the projects on the list he had worked on community spaces and kitchens in over 50 hotels, conference rooms in country clubs and many sports facilities.

GM asked if AL could help with producing a business plan.

AL said he possibly could, he had experience in producing plans. However, AL thought it was always best for the client to write the business plan, as they knew the area and what they hope to achieve, he would then go through it and make suggestions for improvement.

AL said for EPC to engage him for just 'Questions from architects' would be a fee of £500. For this AL would stay in the background but be there to answer any questions raised by the architects or any other help that was required. AL engagement would cease at the end of January, once all the tenders had been received.

6) Transfer of land (David Wilson Homes).

DWH had agreed to pay the transfer fees. The last email from Nockolds was on 21 November 2023 saying they were still waiting on some replies to enquiries before they could finalise the transfer for the Hall land.

LJ to chase at the beginning of January 2024.

7) Funding.

BB to give a report on Public Works Loans (PWL).

BB was not present. AL gave a summary on public works loans.

PWL are there to bridge the gap between Section 106 funding and finishing the project. EPC would draw down what was required when it was needed. Once money was drawn down EPC would then have to start paying it back. Interest is only paid on the funds that are drawn down not the whole amount of the loan. The loan is paid back through an increase in the precept over 10, 20 or 30 years.

GM asked if the PWL could be paid off earlier, as EPC may have to take out a PWL to bridge gaps while waiting for Section 106 monies to be paid.

AL said he was not sure but could see no reason why not.

Grant funding application with EYFC to Sport England and the Football Foundation.

AL said that Sport England would only give grants for community projects if other sports were being catered for, not just football.

Essex Football Foundation would possibly give a grant of up to £250,000 to install changing rooms and facilities for the EYFC. However, this would require a legal agreement that EYFC could play on the Elsenham playing fields for a set number of years.

Winning Strategies for the funding game.

GM had attended an online NALC course 'Winning Strategies for the funding game' on the 15 December. The course did not cover funding for projects like a new community hall. The funding was for heritage projects and helping underprivileged people. The course organisers did however promise to send out a list of possible funding avenues. GM to chase if the list is not received.

8) Report on the site visit to Manuden – 14 December 2023.

LJ to send a thank you to Chris Bailey, manager of the hall for taking time to show BD, AH and GM around the building.

Some mistakes were made at Manuden Hall. The main hall is at a height to accommodate badminton, which is now not used with any frequency. There is a built-in stage, again, which is not used frequently. The meeting room has no windows and therefore the Club Room, which was intended for sports teams, is often used for meetings as it is lighter and more welcoming.

AH and GM agreed that it had been important to see both Duxford and Manuden Community Centres.

ET left the meeting.

9) To agree the architects to be notified of the advertisement on the Government website.

The deadline for responses is Tuesday 23 January 2024. This is a week before the next Community Centre working group meeting. It was agreed to wait until that meeting to finalize how members are going to deal with appraising the tenders.

A large factor on how this could proceed will be on the number of tenders submitted. GM has agreed to be the moderator, AH, RG, AM, and BB had agreed to be appraiser. BO said he was happy not to participate, due to work commitments. LJ to ask ET, PJ and BD if they would like to be appraisers.

10) Next steps.

- Appoint architects.
- Costing programme (helped by architects). See also 'Work Stages and Costs'.
- Public Exhibition - produced by architects.
- Outline Planning Permission.
- Referendum - after Public Exhibition and Consultation, small booklet in the Elsenham News.
- Business Plan - incomplete version available.
- Public Works (or other) loan - needs Business Plan and Referendum.
- Detailed Planning Permission.
- Go out to tender for contract.

AL said he agreed with the order of the steps, but he would take out 'Outline Planning Permission. In AL opinion this was not necessary it just held the project up by 6 – 8 weeks and cost extra money; RG agreed.

AL left the meeting.

11) Discussion concerning possible role for AL.

It was agreed unanimously to recommend to the Planning Committee that EPC engage AL, at a cost of £500, to answer any questions raised by architects regarding the tender documents on the Government Finders Website.

The employment of AL would end on 23 January 2024, the deadline for submitting the tenders.

Any further engagement of AL would then be discussed.

12) Next meeting.

Monday 15 January 2024, 7.30 pm, and the third Monday in the month thereafter.

13) A.O.B.

There was no further business.

The meeting finished at 10.00pm.