

Campton United Charities

Meeting of Trustees

Minutes – Meeting held Via Zoom

Monday 6th January 2025 3.30pm

1. Apologies for absence

- a. Apologies later received from Joe Longson (email communication issue). Those attending trustees David Baker, Charles Ash, Christopher Strong, Deborah Maggs & Simon Lamb. A team member from a local land agency, and introduced by C Strong also attended the first agenda item.

2. Development Options – Poor's Land

- a. As was agreed at the previous meeting, C Strong & J Longson had invited contacts at two local land agencies to visit and review potential development options for Poor's Land in Shefford.
- b. Trustees discussed the potential for development of the land asset in the medium to long term, with reference to the ongoing Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) "Call for Sites" process. The understanding being that a successful bid, for the site to be included for development, in the next CBC Local Plan, expected late 2028, would place the charity in a good position to sell the site for development. If this was achieved it would significantly improve the ability of the charity to provide best benefit from assets to the community and those in need locally.
- c. The attending agent encouraged trustees to pursue a submission to the "Call for Sites" process. There being some urgency given submissions close on the 20th of January 2025. This is an opportunity that should not be missed, given inclusion in the future Local Plan would improve the chances of a sale for development.
- d. The agent discussed how the agency could assist and manage both the "Call for Sites" and the process of developing a suitable plan for the site along with assigning a promoter to take the site forward and potentially find a developer to purchase the site.
- e. Also discussed were the potential costs, and how the costs & risks might be dealt with via commission fees payable only on the successful sale of the site with planning permission.

- f. At 1.75 acres some 17 dwellings might be considered. Another option might be 100% affordable homes but returns for the charity would be lower.
- g. The need to inform the Charity Commission (report) and initial discussions on tax and VAT liabilities took place.
- h. Promoter costs/charges for smaller sites may not be very different to those for larger sites; possibly as much as £100k.
- i. Similar schemes have been put forward by another land agency at a meeting some 18 months ago, and following the meeting J Longson provided the views and cost options from a third land agency, ensuring due diligence on the part of trustees.
- j. The charity is poorly placed to fund any of these activities, and despite commission charges removing financial risk for the charity the impact of such charges on the eventual benefit to the community is a concern to trustees, particularly at this early stage. There is a desire not to get locked into a 3rd party at this time.
- k. The land agency team member was thanked for attending and answering our questions and then left the meeting. He has since answered some follow up questions for which trustees are grateful.
- l. Trustees discussed options further under a standard agenda item.

3. Minutes of last meeting

- a. The minutes of the last meeting dated 24/07/24 were agreed as being a true representation of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair of Trustees, or the Secretary.

4. Matters Arising

- a. ACTION ONGOING – D Maggs to investigate the pro's and con's of approaching New Vista Homes re: potential interest in Poor's Land. D Maggs reported that with changes to the makeup of the local unitary authority New Vista Homes is no longer operating. It is of no further interest. COMPLETED.
- b. ACTION ONGOING – C Ash to consider the option of approaching BEST Academies re: potential interest in Poor's Land, given its proximity to one of their school sites. C Ash reported a view that BEST Academies would be better approached via any charity agreement with a Land Agency or Promoter in due course. COMPLETED.

- c. ACTION – D Baker & C Ash to write, sign & send 2023 annual disbursement. COMPLETED.
- d. ACTION – C Ash to update trustees re: approach from 1st Shefford Scouts Group re: acquisition of Poor's Field. C Ash indicated that he had made contact with the Group, indicating our medium to long term plans to sell for residential development. COMPLETED.
- e. ACTION – ALL to consider if CUC should put Poor's Land forward for the forthcoming CBC Call for Sites. AGENDA ITEM.
- f. ACTION – D Baker to obtain signatories and upload 2023 annual reports to Charity Commission website. COMPLETED.
- g. ACTION – D Baker to ask C Ash if any recent update has been provided by solicitors re: first registration application. AGENDA ITEM.
- h. ACTION – C Ash to contact tenant as a courtesy re: potential visit to Poor's Land by land agents. COMPLETED.
- i. ACTION – C Strong & J Longson to review the development potential of Poor's Land with land agencies (at no obligation). AGENDA ITEM.
- j. ACTION – C Ash to inform tenant re: the finding of Japanese Knotweed on adjacent highway verges & review site for the invasive plant. Not found on the site. COMPLETED.
- k. ACTION – D Maggs to circulate her report on New Vista Homes. COMPLETED.

5. 2023 Annual Report & Accounts

- a. The 2023 Annual Report & Accounts have been uploaded to the Charity Commission.
- b. **ACTION D Baker to start work on the draft 2024 reports, for review & agreement at the next meeting of trustees.**
- c. **ACTION C Ash to provide D Baker with any recent bank statements & CCLA statements.**

6. Disbursement/s 2024

- a. Current bank balance is £325.88
- b. Trustees agreed to donate £200 to the Need Project.
- c. **ACTION D Baker & C Ash to send a cheque to the Need Project for the sum of £200 on behalf of the charity, with a covering letter.**

7. "Poor's Land" - Discussion

- a. C Ash had no recent update from our solicitors re: progress of the first registration submission to HM Land Registry. **ACTION C Ash to follow up with solicitor.**
- b. Trustees discussed, at length, the outcomes of approaching the various land agencies, both recently and over the last two years. Also, they were keen to review any outcomes of interactions with the agent approached by J Longson.
- c. A short follow up meeting was arranged to have best chance of having all information to hand.
- d. Agreed outcome was that the charity should focus at this time on a submission of Poor's Land into the CBC "Call for Sites" process. We could then take more time to review our options, including funding options, should the site pass the first stage of consideration by CBC.
- e. Funding of a third-party led submission to "Call for Sites" was considered an issue given the limited funds help by the charity, and the high cost of commission-based options for this approach.
- f. Likely commission charges for a retained promoter are unknown, **ACTION – C Strong to ask agency for information relating to likely promoter commission costs.**
- g. Alternative funding options were discussed and discounted.
- h. A ballpark figure for all commission costs including "Call for Sites" submission, land agent and promotor might be up to 25% of final sale price (with planning permission), plus expenses and VAT.
- i. **ACTION – D Baker to email Charity Commission re: any information they might require re: land sale and, also if costs for the charity might be VAT exempt or could VAT be reclaimed?**
- j. Trustees agreed that the charity should handle the "Call for Sites" submission and any initial interactions with CBC independently with trustees D Maggs & D Baker to complete the submission online and submit ahead of the 20th January deadline.
- k. **ACTION – D Maggs & D Baker to complete the online submission forms.**
- l. Trustees agreed that once completed the forms should be submitted.
- m. Initial costs would be limited to the production of a plan identifying the land at a cost of £21.

8. Correspondence

- a. Email from a previously approached land agency encouraging trustees to submit Poor's Land to Call for Sites.
- b. **ACTION D Baker to reply thanking the agency for their continued interest. Trustees continue to review all options.**
- c. Letter from Barclays Bank thanking trustees for confirming our details.

9. AOB

- a. None

Minutes signed by Chairman or Secretary of Trustees

Date