

**Summary of decisions reached at  
Exeter Ecocommunity Project meeting  
10<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

**Exeter Eco-community project**



**Present:** Chris (Chair), Cally, Diana, Andrew (minutes), Sue, Mitch

**Observers:** Wendy, Aduaye, Charlotte

**Playing:** Iona, Hal, Farah, Lily

**Observers:**

Observers to the meeting were welcomed. It was pointed out that they were welcome to contribute to the meeting and ask questions but not be involved in decision making at this stage. Chris (Chair) also asked if they could leave before the final item on membership; it was felt that this would be best discussed just among existing members.

**Financial model and business plan:**

Diana presented a revised financial model and business plan. She said that the one sheet business plan summary should be all that a bank would need along with a sheet of directors' details and the figures and constitution.

She explained how the scorecard works and all members need to consider the component parts of the model: Now/Soon/Later: organisational development, social and environmental outcomes, finance model, and business model/activities.

**AGREED: before next meeting members should consider what aspects and ideas they feel should fill the component parts of the business model. Ideas should be SMART!**

**Issues to be considered:**

Membership – annual fee or one off? Perhaps a high annual membership fee could ensure that lease prices are kept below the stamp duty threshold?

Possibility of broader membership (beyond those living in the community) as a network of individuals or even organisations supporting/funding the community?

Need to investigate FSA restrictions regarding loan stock (Diana)

Perhaps we could consider rent to buy option.

Need to ensure the workshop rental rate is not too high.

**AGREED: everyone should read through the financial/business model with a view to agreeing it by August. Before then the model should be revisited each meeting to discuss queries, make comments etc.**

**AGREED: each member/family should send details of their financial assets/capital available for investment to Diana so that she can use actual figures in the financial model.**

**Financial Report**

Bank account opening delayed due to a few additional requirements. Everyone signed the relevant parts.

**Estate Agent Brief**

General agreement about the brief, though suggested details regarding vision and principles be moved to the end as an Appendix, together with the Property assessment criteria list.

**AGREED: individual members should build up a relationship with a particular Estate Agent. We should also advertise in Permaculture magazine and Farmers Weekly. Sue to create an advert. TO agree a list of prospective agents at next meeting.**

**Skills Audit**

Cally presented a draft skills audit for consideration. It was decided that the best way to evaluate it was for each member to complete it and suggest amendments/make comments on it as they fill it in.

**AGREED: Each member would complete the form by the next meeting and bring along comments about suggested amendments/additions etc.**

### **Membership**

Sue's extensive piece of work formed the basis for discussion. Points raised included:

- Is the document too long/detailed?
- Chris suggested we all sign a statement expressing our agreement to adhere to all documentation, policies, values, principles etc agreed by the group. This would eliminate the need for an extensive membership document.
- Is there confusion between selection criteria and membership? There needs to be clarity about membership criteria, the process of becoming a member and the rights/responsibilities of members.
- The membership policy will also relate to the constitution and as such certain issues need to be considered including:
  - a. Who can be a member? Bodies, individuals?
  - b. Are there different categories of membership (we might want associate membership for supporters or guests – but this gives them limited rights?)
  - c. Do different members have different rights i.e.; voting and non voting members, put forward resolutions to general meetings
  - d. Eligibility criteria
  - e. How someone ceases to be a member
  - f. Limit on number of members
  - g. How are members admitted
  - h. Member subscription
- Need to draw a distinction between membership of the community once established and membership of the group as it currently is.

**AGREED: to continue discussions on membership policy and the urgency of creating a policy for new members joining now (by August). Sue to redraft next version**

### **AOB/other issues emerging during course of the meeting:**

#### **Community weekend**

Chris suggested the current members have a community weekend together sometime in the summer, e.g. camping or visiting a festival. The purpose would be to get to know each other a bit better in a setting other than formal meetings. Members invited to consider possibilities and let each other know of ideas.

#### **Measuring our ecological/eco footprint**

Andrew/Diana suggested that as a group we should take a baseline measure of our ecological/carbon footprint so we know whether by living in a community we are actually having a positive environmental impact. Suggested that we also become a Carbon Reduction Action Group (CRAG) but consider actions to reduce not just our carbon emissions but other environmental impacts. Andrew to research on possible models to use to begin this process and report back to next meeting.

#### **Vision**

It was noted that although the vision was discussed at the February meeting and suggestions made, no further work has been done on amending or adding to it. It was agreed that we need to revisit this at a future meeting. **ACTION: Diana to bring forward update draft.**