



Glastonbury Town Deal Board
Minutes of the Extra Board Meeting held on 19th September 2024
14.00 – 16.00 hours by Teams

In Attendance:

Dr Lynne Sedgmore, CBE	Chair
Michael White	Vice Chair, Glastonbury Town Council
Jon Cousins	Community Representative
Jacqueline Cross	Community Representative with NHS background
Sarah Dyke	Member of Parliament
Cllr Liz Leyshon	Somerset Council, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources and Performance
Paul Manning	Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce
Kama Mckenzie	Community Representative
Ian Tucker	Business Representative
Richard Winterbottom	Business Representative
Cllr Mike Rigby	Somerset Council, Lead Member for Economy, Planning and Assets
John Revill	Strode College
Cllr Lokabandhu	Mayor of Glastonbury
Paul Knight	Business Representative

Apologies:

Emily Bunn	Community Representative
Lara Bell	Somerset Council
Samantha Cullen	Business Representative

Support Staff and Observers:

Lara Bell	Somerset Council
Jackie Gill	Somerset Council
Conor Ogilvie-Davidson	Glastonbury Town Council
Jane Sharp	Somerset Council

Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions
<p>1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</p>	<p>Lynne welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded them it was being recorded.</p> <p>She welcomed Cllr Mike Rigby, who is replacing Cllr Ros Wyke as lead member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets. Mike introduced himself.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Cllr Ros Wyke, on behalf of the Board, for all her hard work on the Town Deal.</p> <p>Congratulations to Emily Bunn on the birth of her baby.</p> <p>The Chair asked for any new declarations of interest and there were none.</p>	
<p>2. Update on The Life Factory Project</p>	<p>Jane gave an update on The Life Factory position.</p> <p>Background:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant funding agreement for the Life Factory project signed in March 2023 and is between the Red Brick Building (RBB) and Mendip District Council (MDC). • Grant claims and Delivery Phase started April 2023. • SC paused grant claims at end December 2023. • RBB Board paused the project soon after. • Grant claims are still on pause. • Between January-April 2024, Somerset Council (SC) worked on a rescue plan with the RBB Board. • RBB now has a new bookkeeper who has reworked their accounts back to April 2023 and a new Project Manager who is reviewing progress and project spend against the quality and value of works done. • The Food & Regenerative Farming Centre project is operating as usual and there are no issues. It is separate project with its own bank account. <p>SC brought in South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) to carry out an Audit, this started mid-June 2024 and should finish end of October 2024. It will assess if there were sound governance and financial controls in place for The Life Factory Project. A draft report is expected in October, with the final report by due by end October.</p> <p>Reworking the accounts has been a huge piece of work for RBB's new bookkeeper and taken about 3 months to complete. It has been necessary to understand what has been spent on the RBB's two Town Deal projects and its core business activities.</p>	

Jane has been reconciling the reworked accounts against the project's grant claims.

To recap, The Life Factory Project was awarded £2.9M from the Town Deal. By end of 2023, they had drawn down 74% of their grant, this being just over £2M.

In May 2024, SC paid a small claim for necessary scaffolding and brickwork and wages for two apprentices.

RBB instructed their structural engineer to look at the works done to Building C to ensure they were satisfactory. SC had instructed its own structural engineer to have an independent view. The final reports are still to be received. Initial findings are that the work done is sound and that some gable ends require work before a roof can go on. Ideally, the roof should go on before winter.

Building B which rents out accommodation and houses the event space had to be closed due to unforeseen structural issues (foundations and walls). Tenants have had to move out. A few small events had been taking place in the Old Tannery restaurant which is in Building A.

TML has been working on the foundations of Building B and the wall between Buildings B & C to make it structurally safe and this is 70% complete. SC has agreed part of the grant can pay for this work. The RBB had raised sponsorship to rebuild the columns.

Building A is still operating, Building B should reopen in the near future and Building C will be taken as far as it can with the remaining funds.

SC has advised RBB to investigate when Business rates will apply in order to manage future costs.

The RBB was asked to produce a summary document stating the governance changes, and the position now, it will be circulated to the GTD Board.

A business plan for the whole site is being worked on.

The SWAP Report will give recommendations.

Points highlighted:

- Liz Leyshon thanked everyone involved. She thanked Jane for keeping comprehensive records involving checking over 1800 financial transactions. And she thanked Paul Knight for looking at the Beckery Construction Company saying his comments had been sent to the auditors.
- It was noted that huge amounts of time had been

**RBB
Summary
Document to
be circulated
to the Board**

given to the project by Jane and Liz.

- Liz had been concerned when the roof was removed before last winter and without any planning permission in place.
- Additional money would needed to be released to get the wall finished between Buildings B & C.
- Lynne said significant support had been given to the GTD Board from the Town Deal to improve its governance capability and upskilling.

Questions:

Paul Knight asked how the 10 month delay to the project impacted the grant money being spent before March 26.

- Jane replied that the grant can be spent by 2026. She added that planning permission had yet to be obtained as the Section 106 still needed to be agreed and signed, this could be done in 2024.

John Revill asked what the implications were of not meeting the project outcomes

- Jane replied discussions are needed with MHCLG.

Conor asked how the project situation got to this stage and why claims were not stopped sooner.

- Jane replied that the root was incomplete claims - there were significant numbers of invoices missing or additional to the claim, for example. Drawdowns significantly escalated in November and December 2023, after which claims were paused.
- Liz added that the way Town Deal Claims are treated is different to most funders, i.e. most funders pay claims only against retrospective costs. For the Town Deal, most projects claim against a mix of spend and grant in advance to help projects with cashflow. As soon as Jane raised concerns about The Life Factory, the claims were paused.

Ian Tucker reminded everyone of the need for good governance and that the governance of some of the grassroots projects was very different than long established organisations. Some of the projects had needed to set up new or enhanced governance procedures to cope with the extra funding. All Town Deal projects needed to learn any lessons from the RBB situation. He agreed that the RBB project needed to be supported as much as is possible.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jane said the RBB have 2 Town Deal projects. The Farm Project team are doing a fantastic job. <p>Ian Tucker and Jon Cousins both asked if the full SWAP report will be shared with the Board or made public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Liz replied that SC as the Accountable Body would make that decision. The learning will be shared. <p>Jon Cousins said there was a Glastonbury Town Council Full Council Meeting soon and questions will be asked.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Liz replied that she will attend the Meeting. ○ Lynne as Chair offered to attend if needed. <p>Paul Knight asked what the consequence will be if the GTD Board does not agree to further grant or support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lynne replied the RBB project will not be able to continue. <p>The Chair then asked if the GTD Board would vote on allowing the RBB to continue spending with rigid controls.</p> <p>The Board agreed 'in principle' to allow the RBB to get to the conclusion of the project.</p>	
<p>3. Update on the Enabling Project</p> <p>Jane Sharp</p>	<p>Jane gave an update on latest position.</p> <p>The Coal Yard had been purchased by SC in July 2024.</p> <p>An illegal encampment had moved onto the Coal Yard within a few days of SC purchasing it.</p> <p>SC is taking enforcement action to remove the trespassers through the County Court route. This could take up to 6 months to complete, so would limit the length of time left to finish the project. Due process is being followed and welfare visits are taking place at the site.</p> <p>New planning permission is needed. Surveys need to take place on the site to understand it better - ground contaminants and asbestos are present.</p> <p>Discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Liz said she was very concerned about this project and was disappointed that the people who had moved onto the site seemed to know about the sale of the land before it was made public. ○ Lynne added that this project is important to the GTD and to complete it vacant possession of the 	

	<p>site would be needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paul Knight agreed with Lynne and stated that it would be best to avoid legal routes as they are expensive and lengthy. The Board needed to negotiate with the community, if we use legal routes the risk is that the project will run out of time. ○ Michael White said that he had previously talked to the community and explained the situation. The community do not want to leave, and they don't see GTD as being on their side. ○ Ian proposed that SC employ a project manager to move the project forward and get planning permission. ○ On Ian's proposal, Liz replied that it would be unlikely that an SC Officer would be appointed due to the financial emergency. ○ Lokabandhu felt the Coal Yard was the perfect place for the project and a way forward was needed. He was happy to talk to them. ○ Conor agreed with speaking to the community and telling them the project will not happen if they do not leave the site. He also agreed with Ian regarding the need to bring someone in to lead the project. <p>Lynne asked for volunteers to speak to the community on the site. Lokabandhu and Michael White agreed to talk to the community on the Coal yard.</p> <p>Liz agreed to go back to speak to Legal, Assets and Environmental Health at Somerset Council to identify any actions from them and feedback to the Board.</p> <p>Lynne asked if the Board needed to look for other sites for the project</p> <p>The Board agreed we should continue with the Coal Yard site.</p>	<p>Lokabandhu and Michael White to talk to the community on Coal Yard</p> <p>Liz to speak to Legal, Assets and Environmental Health at SC to identify any actions from them and feedback to the Board</p>
<p>3b. Land Purchasing Porchestall Drove</p>	<p>The Chair asked for any Conflicts of interest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jon Cousins declared he was a Director of ACE. ○ Jacqueline Cross declared she had close connections with the scrap yard owners. <p>Lynne said that Avalon Community Energy (ACE) would like to buy the land at Porchestall Drove from Somerset Council and asked for an endorsement from the Board.</p>	<p>ACE Statement to be circulated to the Board</p>

	<p>Jane explained that ACE had 2 choices, they could either to buy or lease land. The option to lease land would be more expensive than buying land and ACE would have no permanent asset. The SC land is suitable for planning permission and the National Grid application.</p> <p>Discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynne added that ACE had produced a statement. • Jon Cousins said a key issue for ACE would be buying the land without planning permission. ACE would like the endorsement of the Glastonbury Town Deal Board to buy the land. • Lokabandhu said he was in favour of selling the land to ACE. It is low quality land suited to solar power, and it would be an asset for the town. • Paul Manning said that if ACE didn't get planning permission, then it would be better staying in SC ownership. • Liz replied SC want to sell the land for a capital receipt and benefit the Town Deal. It would be sold with a covenant so it is only used for green energy or agriculture. <p>The decision of the Board was to give ACE the endorsement to buy the SC land.</p> <p>Liz asked the minutes to record her thanks to ACE for their clear concise letter.</p> <p>Jon confirmed ACE agreed to the letter being circulated.</p>	
<p>4. AOB</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p>5. Closing remarks</p>	<p>The Chair thanked everyone for their time.</p> <p>Michael White asked if a news release could be prepared for the Glastonbury Town Council Meeting in October.</p> <p>Meeting Closed at 5.10 pm</p>	