UDCLT Governance Structure & Charitable Status

The Upper Dales Community Land Trust (UDCLT) was incorporated as a limited company on 9th November 2017 by Stephen Stubbs and County Councillor John Blackie. Sadly, in 2019, John Blackie died, but he left a legacy in the organisation to continue to do the work that he set out, namely to enable the development of affordable housing in the Upper Dales. The 'Upper Dales' consists of the three larger northern dales (Wensleydale, Swaledale and Arkengarthdale), as well as a number of smaller ones. Much of this area is part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the rest is currently part of Richmondshire District Council.

- The UDCLT consists of five directors (including the Chair and Secretary) all of whom are volunteers - they do not receive any payment for their work with the Trust.
- The organisation has a governing document called the 'Articles of Association' (this is available on our website ***https://www.udclt.co.uk/resources--key-documents.html***) which guide us in how to conduct business and organise the work of the Trust. We have to adhere to that in terms of our purpose, the powers we have (for example to buy property and raise funds), and the arrangements for the board of trustees. This includes how many people can be involved in an official capacity, how to conduct meetings, who does what e.g. chairing or noting meetings or looking after the funds, the annual meeting, and how many people have to be present to make a decision (that is, the 'quorum').
- As a limited company, the Trust has to report to Companies House (a National body that oversees limited companies) each year, presenting our financial accounts and issuing a statement confirming who is currently a director. This has to be completed by law. A limited company is legal entity in its own right, not just a collection of individuals. It can conduct business as an organisation.

During 2020/21 the Trust applied to become a charity. This provides a number of benefits, such as being able to buy land/buildings from another charity at a cost which is likely to be below the commercial price, paying less tax and being regulated by the Charity Commission. Being a charity provides greater reliability and protection for people giving money that it will be spent wisely and in line with the purpose of the organisation. Being a charity also leads to more responsibility for those involved as they now become trustees as well as directors, and are answerable to both Companies House and the Charity Commission each year, reporting to each from a slightly different angle.

- Trustees may not benefit from undertaking their trustees duties. They should not be paid directly, but nor should they gain an advantage. For example, if they knew a contract was coming up and so had longer to prepare a bid for it.
- Each meeting, trustees have make a Declaration of Interest - that they have no conflicting interests such as a company they own is wanting to do paid work for the Trust. They have to tell everybody that this is the case and it is likely that they will not be present when a decision is made. This is because a trustee needs to be neutral and not be seen to benefiting themselves, or their friends and family, by being on the board.
- Each year the Trust must produce a report and accounts outlining the work they have done that year and how that has contributed to their purpose. This includes an outline of where their income has come from and how they have spent it.

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