

West Harris Crofting Trust

Minutes 12th February 09, Seilebost School 7.30pm

BUSINESS

- 1) Apologies: Richard, Bobby
- 2) Attending: Neil, Murdo, Angus, Gordon, Finlay & Roddy
- 3) Minutes of the meeting of the 27th Jan were approved :

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Proposed Gordon seconded by Finlay

4) **Formal appointment of Directors Forms 288a**

Forms were given to Murdo for submission

5) **Director Vacancies co-opt?**

Murdo had not yet asked Mairi Macleod & Rhoda Macdonald was considering whether she could commit.

6) **Financial Update summary**

No change in finances but at a meeting earlier in the day Sandra Holmes HIE had said we were eligible for a development grant of up to £4,000

Gordon intimated Borge Lodge may be willing to pay a lump sum for sporting rights rather than an annual rent

7) **Scottish Government update**

Martin Johnson has advised that the District Valuer is sticking with a £59k valuation with clawback.

Murdo, Neil & Joan had met with SG Community Assets team earlier in the day & stressed our disappointment with the valuation. We asked for a reduction or if not possible agreed to ask for a contribution to our fees. Neil asked to write to Martin & copy to Alistair Allan MSP.

8) **Comhairle Funding Update**

Comhairle had approved funding yesterday, no figure stated but expected to be a minimum of £25k

9) **Lottery application update**

Development application still pending, Neil has prepared a draft plan for submission to HIE for the balance of the purchase price. Sandra has reviewed & asked for financials to be expanded & to strengthen environmental case.

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10) Further Fundraising

The second draft of the fundraising leaflet prepared by George Macleod was distributed, it was agreed to proceed to a third draft prior to seeking professional help to publish.

Draft letter to target individuals for help such as Donald Macdonald held over pending charitable status. Neil to complete OSCR application

Agreed to proceed with curry night 20th March, Gordon to finalise costs & speak to Bobby re music.

11) Affordable house sites where?

The planning officer had visited earlier in the day Murdo; Neil & Gordon had accompanied him on a West Side Tour to investigate possible sites for housing. Fourteen possible sites were identified although some of the sites identified in Horgabost/Seilebost may not be on common grazing; Finlay agreed to assist in looking into this.

Scarista Glebe	2
Scaristavore Common	1
Nisabost	3
Seilebost School	1
Seilebost (S. Dolans)	1
Luskentyre above old camp site	2
End Luskentyre	1
Luskentyre/Laxdale junction	3

12) New Crofts

Murdo to investigate the possibility of us offering payments to older tenants to give up crofts to new entrants.

13) Hydro Scheme update

Gordon agreed to complete license applications for all dam structures on the estate prior to the 31st March.

Agreed to become members of Community Energy Scotland

14): Conference Mind Your Own Business

Gordon possibly to attend.

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15) Advert Crofts/House Sites

This had appeared in the De Tha Dol, Gazzette & Free Press, to date 6 expressions of interest received. Letters/e-mails distributed.

16) George Campbell RSPB

George summarised the arrangements on the Balranald Estate & option for the West Side. This arrangement in Uist currently brings £23,000 a year into the townships & has operated for 40 years

10,000 visitors a year visit the RSPB reserve at Balranald.

He stated the West Side was potentially a good area for the RSPB, however there was very little arable land.

He offered the assistance of their staff to complete SRDP applications & for Alistair Macdonald their employee in Uist to come over & assess the potential.

Angus advised that he had bought a new tractor & would be available for contract work.

It was agreed that we should accept this invitation.

17) AOCB

Date of next meeting 2nd March

Neil Campbell
Secretary

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