

MINUTES – DIRECTOR’S MEETING 23rd October 2012

1. **Attendance.**

Apologies Finlay MacLennan and Fiona MacLennan

Present: Norman Mackay, Murdo Mackay (Chair), Richard MacLennan, Neil Campbell (Secretary), Rhoda Macdonald, Roddy Macdonald, Duncan MacPherson (Commercial Development Manager), Cait Wooll (Business Development Officer) and Linda Green (Administrator)

In Attendance: Robin Reid RSPB

2. **Approval of Minutes 18th September 2012**

Minutes unanimously approved with amendment to the date and to record Fiona MacLennan’s presence.

3. **Review of action plan**

- Foreshore: Duncan and Murdo met with Anderson Macarthur regarding the foreshore rights. An affidavit about the use of Luskentyre foreshore is ready to be signed by Murdo.
- 40mph speed limit: Neil contacted the Comhairle but has not yet had any response.
- Website: Cait met with Richard from Black House Creative to discuss revamping the website. His quote was unfeasible. The committee decided that we would continue with the old website whilst we produce a new website in-house with a small payment to Norman MacKay for his time. Cait and Linda will attend a DIY website course in November.

4. **Robin Reid RSPB**

Robin gave a short presentation on “Machair Life”, a project which is currently running in Uist. The aim of the project is to show that traditional crofting methods can be sustainable, and also addresses issues such as: ageing crofters, loss of skills and the socio economic cost.

Robin was interested in the possibility of extending the project into West Harris, in order to secure seed sources for the other areas if there were bad harvests.

Robin advised to contact the grazing committees of both Seilebost and Horgabost, and if sufficient interest will look at ways of supporting the project. www.machairlife.org

5. **Updates**

Financial - surplus of £4,723 for eight months. £17,000 in bank. Total funds accumulated since purchase of estate £27,136.

£30,000 due from the lottery in October.

75% of Seilebost turbine paid for.

6. **Development**

Development Managers Report

The managers' report was noted, see appendix 1.

The committee discussed the proposed 50KW wind turbine at Scarista. The turbine would be a third of the price and income of the hydro scheme. May be an alternative income if the hydro scheme does not take off. A grid connection has been applied for but directors decided to wait until after the community consultation before applying for planning permission.

Burdens on plot sales – Anderson and Macarthur hope to get documents to the Trust by next week.

Land Reform –Review existing land reform legislation and propose further reform. Submission regarding difficulty in obtaining land, thoughts to be submitted by 11th January 2013. Duncan asked to draft the trusts' suggestions for the directors to comment on.

Horgabost Site Update

Duncan showed the board Alan Dickson's initial plans for the Horgabost site. Planning were also shown the design and seemed quite impressed. However, they were not keen on the idea of terraced houses. The separate entrance to the private plots did not seem an issue. However, visibility at both entrances was questioned by the board. The position of the water mains was also identified as an issue as it is not possible to build over a main.

It was decided to go directly to a full planning application following feedback on the concept from the community and confirmation from the planning department that they would be happy with this approach.

Business Development Officer Report

Horgabost Campsite

Report finished - see appendix 2 – version suitable for funding applications.

A number of passing places and informal locations identified as possible campervan stances. The board decided to aim to charge for sites where possible and work with common grazings and crofters to deliver this. Signs to be designed to suggest paying through paypal on the Trust website. Only 3 caravans allowed on each croft without obtaining a license. Waste and rubbish disposal remains an issue.

Beach Festival

The board supported further development of an idea for a beach festival. Funding may be available from SNH – The Year of Natural Scotland 2013.

7. Community Engagement

Leaflet

Distributed over Lewis and Harris. Cait to distribute to east coast of Harris and further afield.

Facebook

Going well. Two requests for PDF version of Friends of West Harris form received.

De tha Dol

Will put an update in next week.

Research

Marquee research finalised and awaiting purchase. Also researched bonds to finance the turbine.

8. Housing

The potential purchaser of 10 Horgabost dug test pits on site. Clay was found up to 2m down which means that he will have to redesign his house plan.

A meeting is due to take place shortly at Luskentyre to discuss the cost of a water connection.

9. Estate Management

Sale of 7 Horgabost

The tenant has requested to purchase the croft. Terms of sale discussed: It was decided to reassess the rent to reflect inflation (30%), and the sale price will be 15 times this. The grazing share will not be part of the sale. If the tenant wishes to retain the grazing share the rent will be half of the rent at sale.

Anderson and Macarthur to be instructed on terms of sale.

10. AOCB

Business lease

A request had been received to lease land for a business opportunity near to the Horgabost development site. This was turned down due to concerns of potential impact on the proposed development.

Newsletter

Draft shown to committee. Amendments to be made and mailed to community by Friday 26th Oct.

Rent Notices

Decided to mail rent notices by Friday 26th Oct. Decided not to notify tenants of the rent increase until early next year in case of confusion as to how much to pay in November. It was decided to inform tenants in the rental request that receipt of payment would only be sent if requested due to cost.

Name of new settlement

The development at Rubha Romagaidh would in effect create a new settlement so it was decided that a name should be considered. It was decided to ask for suggestions at the community consultation.

Scarista House Plot

Anderson and Macarthur are currently drafting the burdens for the sale of the land. The committee decided that the deposit should be more than £1500 due to higher sale price and it was agreed that £10,000 would be appropriate.

It is unlikely that the build will start until 2014. The couple are keen to appoint an architect but are waiting until they know the detail of the burdens.

Diary Dates for Future Meetings:

Monday 12th November

Tuesday 13th November (community consultation)

Appendix 1

Appendix 2