

MINUTE OF WEST HARRIS TRUST AGM – 9TH JUNE 2014

1) Apologies

Murdo Mackay, Roddy MacLennan, Dolina MacLennan, John Munro, Morag Munro, Nan MacLennan and Ruaridh MacLennan.

2) Members Present

D.J Macdonald, Peter Godfrey, Dianna Moffat, Morag Macleod, Norman Macleod, Finlay MacLennan, Donald Macleman, Margaret Macleman, Margaret Macleod, Roddy A Macdonald, Douglas Ferguson, Morag Macdonald, Alasdair Wiseman, Lesley Wiseman, Richard MacLennan, Billy Fraser, Isobel Mackay, Fiona Toor, Steve Woodhall, Scott Bennett, DJ Macsween, Margaret Bennett, Flora Macleod, Catherine Morrison, Aman Toor, Lucy Toor, Bill Cross, David Miles, Janet Miles, Charles Macvicar, Neil Macdonald, Rhoda Macdonald, Kathleen Macleod, Rhoda Campbell, Neil Campbell, Jill Smith (Architect), Nick Thomson (Architect), Duncan Macpherson (Commercial Development Manager) and Linda Green (Administrator).

Aman Toor was asked to say a word of prayer.

3) Approval of 2012 Minutes

The minutes were unanimously approved.

Proposed – Rhoda Campbell

Seconded – Rhoda Macdonald

4) Chairman's Welcome & Report

Neil Campbell took the position of chairman as Murdo Mackay was unable to attend. A welcome and report from Murdo was read out, *see appendix 1*. Murdo's report reminded members that it was their community and that they had an opportunity to influence what is done on their behalf.

5) Commercial Development Managers Report (*see appendix 2*)

Duncan Macpherson gave an update on what has been a very busy year and one that has seen many projects come to fruition after years of planning.

Marine Access Project

Thanks to Angus Mackay for the use of his tractor when putting the pontoon back into the water. The associated shed at Horgabost has been erected but is still to have the electrics wired up, partitions installed and fences replaced.

Community Enterprise Centre

A funding package is now in place and it is hoped that construction will commence in autumn 2014.

Renewable Energy

The turbine at Scarista was ordered on the last day of 2013 and erected in March 2014. To date it has generated around 39000kwh, about £10,000!

A grid connection was secured for the proposed Seilebost hydro scheme but has as yet been unable to secure financing.

Planning permission was granted for a second 50kw wind turbine at the site for the Community Enterprise Centre. A possible method of funding the turbine would be to create a Community Benefit Company, meaning that all profits would benefit the community rather than a % being lost to a private investor.

Seilebost School

CnES has agreed to sell the school to the community for £10,000. A further consultation will be held in the future to determine a suitable long term use for the building.

2014 and beyond...

2014 will be another busy year with building work commencing on the Community Enterprise Centre and also 3 of the self-build plots. It is hoped that a funding package for the hydro scheme will finally be secured and there is also a possibility that funding may be available to fund a part time post which will be responsible for developing ideas for possible uses for Seilebost school.

Members were given the opportunity to ask any questions;

Will there be a limit on the number of moorings at the Horgabost pontoon?

- *Borve Lodge has permission for 2 moorings and historically Angus Mackay has 1. The Trust plans to install 3 moorings for the time being and review demand at a later date.*

How will the running costs of the Community Enterprise Centre be covered?

- *The Community Enterprise Centre is not your typical village hall in that it provides rental business units. It is hoped that income from these, the café/restaurant and 3 campervan stances will cover the running costs of the building. In addition, the building will be well insulated and hopefully have access to cheap electricity from a wind turbine which will keep running costs low. Within the funding package there is funding for a 3 year part time centre manager whose responsibility it will be to find tenants and also advertise the building as a wedding venue which will increase revenue.*

6) Fixing of Annual Membership Fee

Agreed no fee to be collected this year.

7) Annual Accounts

Summary accounts were shown, see appendix 3. Full sets of the accounts are available and can be distributed at request.

The accounts to December 2013 were presented by the Secretary and approved.

8) Election of Directors

Neil Campbell had stood down. He was re-elected, proposed by Rhoda Macdonald and seconded by Roddy Macdonald.

Douglas Ferguson was appointed half way through 2013 by the directors and was formally appointed at the AGM. Proposed – Roddy Macdonald and seconded – Neil Campbell.

The chair reminded members that 10 directors was the minimum number required and that the Trust was always looking for new directors if anyone was interested.

9) Election of Auditors

CIB Services were re-elected

10) AOCB

Questions/Comments

What is the Trust going to do about the condition of fencing?

- *Fencing on the estate is predominately a township matter as 99% of the Trust area is in crofting tenure. The landlord has no responsibility to maintain croft fences but as the Trust accumulates a surplus grants could be given to common grazings or individuals. Richard Maclennan, from Seilebost and Horgabost Common Grazings Committee said that fencing in Seilebost will continue using SRDP money.*

What is 'Rural Housing Body Status' and does it affect existing house sites?

- *Having 'Rural Housing Body Status' allows the Trust to put burdens upon house plots to benefit the community. Burdens have been placed on all affordable self-build plots sold by the Trust meaning that if the owner sells the Trust will get first refusal to buy and the house must be permanently lived in (not used as a holiday home). This does not affect any existing houses or any future house plots sold privately.*

Developments such as the shed and wind turbine at Scarista are ugly. Also, the turbine received a large number of complaints at planning stage yet still went ahead.

- *Yes, the shed is ugly but has been placed so that it is as visually unobtrusive as possible.*
- *Yes the turbine received a number of complaints but the planning department granted planning permission despite this. The Trust until now had received no negative comments from visitors or locals.*

Could the proposed wind turbine at Rubha Romagaidh be placed further inland to make it less visible?

- *The position of the turbine has already been confirmed as planning permission was granted earlier in 2013 (visuals were shown at a previous meeting). It will be positioned approximately 250m uphill from the centre. The problem with a turbine is that it has to be in a windy position and also close enough to the building to be linked in.*

Community Enterprise Centre – Architects Presentation

Jill Smith and Nick Thomson, architects from Rural Design gave a presentation of their work so far on the centre. Drawings for the building warrant will be submitted this week and is expected to take 2 months to process. Jill and Nick were available for a chat and a closer look at their work after the presentation.

Questions;

Why is the building angular rather than curving like the landscape?

- *The building is actually significantly less angular than the original drawings. Feedback received at an early community consultation meant that the roof pitch was dropped and more angles added to soften it.*