

MINUTES – DIRECTOR’S MEETING 24th FEBRUARY 2015

1. **Attendance.**

Present: Neil MacDonald, Finlay Maclellan, Neil Campbell (Secretary), Roddy MacDonald, Murdo Mackay (Chairman), Duncan Macpherson (Commercial Development Manager), Lisa MacDonald (Development Officer) and Linda Armstrong (Administrator).
Apologies: Rhoda MacDonald, Dougie Ferguson, Richard Maclellan, Norman Iain Mackay and Fiona Mackenzie.

2. **Approval of Minutes 13th January 2015**

The minutes were unanimously approved with amendment to Roddy MacDonald’s surname.

3. **Review of Action Points**

- **Prepare policy on absenteeism**

Murdo has made a start on the policy. It was decided that the Trust would take a similar view of absenteeism to the Crofting Commission, but that they would need to decide what criteria they would use to allocate vacant crofts. It was decided to base this on the house application profile.

- **TIG Loan**

Stuart Wilson has been in touch with Duncan as the loan given by TIG to purchase the estate is now due for repayment. It has been agreed that the loan will be repaid once the money has been received from HHP for the purchase of the house plots at the Rubha Romagaidh site.

4. **Updates**

Financial

A report for the West Harris Trust was shown, see appendix 1.

Commercial Development Managers Report

The Report was noted, see appendix 2. The following updates were given at the meeting:

Hydro

The following has been deleted and will not be made public until the consultation period is over.

Scarista Wind Turbine

On inspection of the repair to the cabinet at the turbine, Roddy Maclellan has said that he is not happy with the condition it has been left in. Harbon will resolve any issues during the turbine’s annual service.

Horgabost Wind Turbine

The following has been deleted and will not be made public until the consultation period is over.

Seilebost Turbine

SSE have asked that readings are not submitted whilst they set up a new database. No payment has been received since September. It is hoped that we will be given a date to submit a reading by the end of February.

Community Enterprise Centre

Directors were asked whether they were agreeable for the Trust to use some of their own money in the event that funders come up short for the construction of the community enterprise centre. It was agreed that the Trust would be willing to contribute up to a maximum of £40,000 to the project.

Development Officer Report

The report was noted, see appendix 3. The following updates were given at the meeting:

Community Share Issue

Directors were asked to email Lisa any suggestions of people who they think would be suitable as founder members of the company. It was suggested that a founder member could be independent of the Trust as long as they had an affinity with West Harris.

The directors approved Lisa's name choice of 'West Harris Energy Limited'.

Campervans

Directors were agreeable that Lisa could place an advert in the de tha dol for a handyman/out of hours emergency contact for the campervan spots.

Rabbit Control

Neil MacDonald gave a report of the rabbit control trial that was carried out in Luskentyre. In total 105 rabbits were caught using 8 ferrets during the day and a lamping exercise at night. James Bradley estimated that a fortnight would be needed to clear Luskentyre at £500/day. Neil MacDonald said that to reduce costs, the team could use his caravans in Luskentyre. It would be cheaper if other townships wanted to get involved in the exercise. It was suggested that Marion Finlayson at the council be contacted to ask if they would like the Luskentyre graveyard to be involved. Roddy suggested that the golf course would be interested in getting involved. A report is expected from James in the coming days.

5. AOCB

Declaration of Interests (see appendix 4)

Directors were asked whether they required any changes to be made to the declaration of interests register.

Resilient Community Fund

SSE have set up a fund that will provide grants of up to £20,000 to help make communities more resilient in the wake of winter storms. Directors discussed how such a grant could be spent in West Harris. It was suggested that a VHF radio in each township would be beneficial in an event where all communication method were lost, such as during the storm experienced in January. It was also suggested that a large generator for use in the community enterprise centre and/or smaller generators for use in each township would be useful in the event of another lengthy power cut.

Broadband

Roddy mentioned that he had read an article reporting that BT had underspent on the roll out of superfast broadband to rural areas to the tune of £92 million. It has been reported that the underspend will be ploughed back into the project to bring superfast broadband to a greater number of properties.

Harris Development – Craft Market

Linda Armstrong expressed an interest as an employee of HDL and left the meeting.

A letter has been received from Harris Development asking for a contribution towards the cost of setting up a Harris Craft Market. Directors decided that they required more information before making a decision.

Diary Dates for future meetings:

- March 17th
- April 14th
- May 19th
- June 16th
- August 18th
- September 15th
- October 13th
- November 17th
- December 15th