

MINUTES – DIRECTOR’S MEETING 19th MAY 2015

1. **Attendance.**

Present: Dougie Ferguson, Neil Campbell (Secretary), Rhoda Macdonald, Finlay MacLennan, Neil Macdonald, Murdo Mackay (Chairman) Duncan Macpherson (commercial development manager) and Linda Armstrong (administrator).

Apologies: Norman Iain Mackay, Roddy Macdonald, Fiona Mackenzie, Richard MacLennan and Lisa MacDonald (development officer).

2. **Approval of Minutes 14th April 2015.**

The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. **Review of Action Points**

- **Loan to West Harris Renewables Limited**

The West Harris Trust has loaned WHRL £2000.

- **This item has been removed for confidentiality but will be restored when the consultation period is over.**

- **Absenteeism Policy**

The Crofting Commissions Residency Duty Policy was shown, see appendix 1. Murdo advised that the Trust should adopt a similar policy to the commission. He will work further on this.

- **Loan from CnES**

The draft agreement was shown, see appendix 2. The Comhairle has indicated that they are prepared to offer a loan at ½% above base rate. It is a condition of the agreement that should the Trust wish to take out a loan with anyone else the Comhairle must first be consulted. The loan is for a period of 16 months but an extension can be negotiated if required. The agreement asks that a separate bank account is opened for the project but the directors agreed to ask that this clause be dropped. **The directors agreed in principle to go ahead with the loan.**

4. **Updates**

Financial

A report for the West Harris Trust was shown, see appendix 3.

Community Enterprise Centre Cash flow;

The Robertson Trust – £20,000 received

CnES - £50,000 expected later in May

The Scottish Government – £120,000 expected later in May

Coastal Communities Fund/The Big Lottery – will pay out against un-paid invoices

Commercial Development Manager’s Report

The Report was noted, see appendix 4. The following updates were given at the meeting:

Hydro

The following item has been removed for confidentiality but will be restored when confidentiality is no longer required.

Scarista Wind Turbine

Following the successful accreditation of the turbine, SSE have guaranteed that back dated FIT payments will be made within 3 months. The WHRL account will need to maintain a balance of at least £10,000 which will cover 3 months of repayments to SIS.

Horgabost Wind Turbine

Finlay MacLennan expressed an interest as a crofter of Seilebost and Horgabost and therefore did not take part in this discussion.

A photo montage was shown, see appendix 5.

Directors were informed that a new planning application will be submitted in the next week or so for an alternative 100kw wind turbine. The Xant is taller than the Harbon but has a narrower tower which will be supported by guy ropes.

Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme Application

Duncan and David Campbell (Albatern) have submitted an application to the Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme.

The Trust's role if the project is successful is to manage the project and conduct community consultations, discussing and making people aware of potential wave devices in the Sound of Taransay and gathering feedback.

5. AOCB

New Development Sites

CnES have requested that local groups inform them of any planned future development sites.

These could be housing or commercial developments or any issues with infrastructure, broadband etc. Ideas received from directors;

- 5 Seilebost field – housing
- Above new road – potential wind turbine site
- Robert Fraser's original report – housing sites
- Luskentyre beach – additional carpark with electrical hook ups

Directors were asked to forward any further ideas to Duncan.

Date for AGM

Tuesday 23rd June 2015.

GCA Health Check

The report was shown, see appendix 6.

All groups in receipt of large grants from the Big Lottery Fund are eligible for a Health Check which looks at the governance and finance of the group. The Trust was visited by Social Investment Business On 19/03/15 and was given a clean bill of health.

8 Horgabost

Letter from Hugh Maclean and Margarita Williams shown, see appendix 7.

The Crofting Commission has asked the Trust to give their opinion on the matter. The directors agreed that their preference would be 1. the site is used for economic activities, or 2. housing with permanent residency.

Note – The letter sent by Hugh and Margarita incorrectly states that ‘the croft landlords have no objection to unrestricted residential use’.

Lewis and Harris Auction Mart

Murdo Mackay, Neil Macdonald and Finlay Maclellan all expressed an interest as users of the Lewis and Harris Auction Mart and therefore did not take part in this discussion.

A letter has been received for the Lewis and Harris Auction Mart requesting a donation towards the cost of a new set of scales. Directors agreed that they would make a donation of £150.

North Harris Free Church

Duncan Macpherson expressed an interest as an office bearer of the church and therefore did not take part in this discussion.

A request has been received from the North Harris Free Church requesting the use of the Seilebost School toilets to support a BBQ on the 27/06/15. The directors agreed that they were happy to allow this.

Sir E Scott School Activities Week

Neil Campbell and Murdo Mackay expressed an interest as parents of children attending the school and therefore did not take part in this discussion.

A request has been received from SES for sponsorship of their annual activities week at which all secondary school children are given the opportunity to try a variety of activities. The directors agreed that they would make a donation of £100.

Horgabost Campsite Planning

Finlay Maclellan declared an interest as a crofter in Seilebost/Horgabost and therefore did not take part in this discussion.

It was brought to the attention of directors that an amendment to planning had been made with regard to residential caravans at Horgabost Campsite. The request is to allow residential caravans to stay at the site for the duration of the summer. The directors noted the application.

Pontoon

Airfloat had been asked to come to Harris to oversee repairs made to the pontoon. The directors were unhappy with the price which he had quoted to do this and asked that Duncan contact him and request that the price be reduced.

Kenny Carrier began dismantling the sections today (19/05/15). At first glance it would appear that there are more damaged sections than first thought.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Diary Dates for future meetings:

- June 16th
- August 18th
- September 15th
- October 13th
- November 17th
- December 15th