

MINUTES – DIRECTOR’S MEETING 14th August 2012

1. Attendance.

Apologies Fiona MacLennan, Robert Mackay and Noni MacLennan
Attending: Murdo Mackay (Chair), Richard MacLennan, Neil Campbell (Secretary), Finlay MacLennan, Rhoda Macdonald, Roddy MacDonald, Norman Mackay, Duncan Macpherson Development Manager and Cait Wool Project Officer

The Chair welcomed Norman Mackay to his first directors meeting;

2. Approval of Minutes 19th June 2012.

Minutes unanimously approved

3. Matters arising.

a. Review of action plan.

-good progress on actions noted

4. Updates.

a) Financial- surplus of £13,264 for seven months, £39,451 in bank of which £26,000 is our own funds.

b) School Closure. It was agreed to write A Allan MSP for an update on the legal process (AP NEIL)

5. Development.

Gleann Dubhlinn hydro scheme

Neil and Duncan met with representatives from SSE and National grid at the energy conference in Lewis on Thursday 21st June. There was slight progress in that they stated that their respective organisations could make a decision about giving us a firm grid connection without having to go to OFGEM. However a paper has to be written first and managers in both SSE and NG have to agree. Another conference call is due at the end of August.

S Harris wind turbine

Coinneach has left HDL but funds are in place to take forward a 50kw turbine in West Harris.

Housing/office development

The site has now been resumed from crofting tenure. The feasibility study brief has been distributed to 7 architects with a request for tenders to be returned by 24th August. HIE funding is now confirmed and Big Lottery funding is confirmed in principle.

David Macleod has carried out a topographical survey of the site and this has been issued to tenderers.

Graduate Placement

Cait started on Monday 2nd July.

Woodland

Duncan looked at a potential woodland area at Laxdale cottage with Donald Macleod of the Forestry Commission and Joan Cumming of HDL, and then followed this up with a survey of the potential site looking at soil depth etc. The area that could be planted is little more than 1ha so would not appear to be worthwhile following up.

New WHT leaflet

A draft version was shared at the meeting and changes agreed.

Crofting

42 of 53 rents had been paid as of 15th June. 2 rents are outstanding from May 2011 and 3 from November 2011.

Plot sales

The housing allocations committee met on Monday 9th July and decided to offer 2 plots to a couple from Harris and a family from England. This left the plot at Scarista as the only 1 available. Due to there being no interest from young families in the plot because of its higher development costs the committee was willing in principle for that one to be sold at a higher price to people not normally meeting the allocation criteria and therefore decided to refer the issue to the full board. The board considered a paper prepared by the Commercial Development Manager outlining all options available to the Trust. It rejected the option of selling on the open market with no burdens attached but agreed to offer the plot for £50,000 to a couple who wish to live in Harris and are willing to accept a permanent residency burden attached to the title. This would be subject to the grazings committee agreeing to receive the original £10,000 share of the sale with all the remaining funds being invested in providing other housing opportunities.

A statutory house site has been sold to the sitting tenant of 18 Seilebost. Payments have also been received for plot sales at 1 Scaristavore and 10 Seilebost.

John Muir Trust

The Chief Executive Stuart Brooks will be coming for a visit on Wed 22nd August in order to discuss how to take our new agreement forward and to publicise our partnership.

Community Land Scotland

There will be a local Western Isles get together on Friday 14th September in Tarbert. Invitations will be issued shortly.

6. Project Officer Report

- The campsite survey is going well, wild campers are willing to pay but like their own space, and perhaps an option is several small sites.
- Agreed that Cait would look at updating website (AP Cait)

7. Community Engagement

- Blog article written to be added on Admin officer
- Update published in August De Tha Dol

8. Housing

9. Estate Management

- 4 Luskentyre The Trust reiterated their support for the new Crofting Commission policies on de-crofting house sites
- Agreed to use Bob Chaffer for vermin control and to investigate new areas for shooting
- Agreed to comment on assignation of 5 Borve croft stressing importance of implementation of proposals in croft plan and if possible to grant a temporary tenancy.
- Agreed to grant wayleave 11 Scaristavore £250 plus, admin £250
- Rental of £150 p.a. agreed for seismic monitoring station (AP Neil)
- 4 Scaristavore, Trust agreed to offer any help in obtaining the house site including if necessary a regulating order to the Land Court
- 6 Seilebost as there has been no response to our offer, Duncan to speak to tenant (AP Duncan)
- Noted our claim to the foreshore accepted for Scaristavore but not for Luskentyre, agreed to pursue this claim

10. AOCB

- Community Empowerment, Duncan to respond.
- Comhairle Consultation, Duncan to respond by 30th August
- Crofting Commission Consultation, Murdo to draft response

Diary dates for future meetings:

Tuesday 18th September 2012
Tuesday 23rd October 2012-
Tuesday 20th November 2012
Tuesday 18th December 2012