

MINUTES – DIRECTOR’S MEETING 15th SEPTEMBER 2015

1. Attendance.

Present: Murdo Mackay (Chairman), Dougie Ferguson, Neil Campbell (Secretary), Rhoda Macdonald, Roddy Macdonald, Norman Iain Mackay, Duncan MacPherson (Commercial Development Manager), Lisa MacDonald (Development Officer) and Linda Armstrong (Administrator)

Apologies: Finlay Maclennan, Richard Maclennan and Neil MacDonald

2. Approval of Minutes 18th August 2015

The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Review of Action Points

- Luskentyre Water Connection

Duncan to arrange a site meeting with Duncan Mackays to discuss the route the water main will take. It is preferred that it will run behind the plots as this is where the electricity will run.

Colin Chisolm has not yet set a date for fencing at the site. Murdo to follow up.

- Policy on absenteeism

The Crofting Commission’s policy was shown and it was agreed that a similar policy would be adopted with the addition of a section on succession and the importance of forward planning.

- Dyke Maintenance

A team of John Muir volunteers visited Harris during the week beginning 7th September. They spent two days in West Harris, during which they carried out repairs to a number of sections of dyke in the Scarista area. They indicated that they would be happy to return in the future and possibly commit a whole week to the area.

Funding was discussed and it was agreed that Duncan would investigate the funding of a professional dyker who could work with and advise a group of volunteers.

It was noted that future volunteers should wear high visibility vests and place cones along the roadside when working so close to the road.

4. Updates

Financial

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

HHP had agreed previously that payment for the plots at Rubha Romagaidh would be released when certain conditions were met, namely the installation of the septic tank. It is anticipated that this will be complete in the next couple of weeks with payment expected to follow shortly after.

Commercial Development Manager’s Report

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

Horgabost Wind Turbine

It was agreed to speak with Xant and ask that the percentage of profit paid to the Trust and the investors is based on gross profit.

Paire Niseabost Community Energy Project

It was agreed that in the event that a wave energy device is installed and connected to Paire Niseabost priority will go to the wind turbine and therefore the wave energy device would need to be constrained.

LCITP have suggested that they are happy to fund more work when the current phase comes to an end. This could possibly involve the design and costing of a district heating system. HHP will require further information of cost and design before they are able to make a decision on whether they will adopt the system.

HHP Shared Equity Housing

Following an advert placed in the De tha Dol asking those with an interest in shared equity housing to contact the Trust, 8 expressions of interest have been received, 5 of which are interested in shared equity and 3 in rented accommodation. Duncan to pass information to HHP.

Development Officer's Report

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

Flensburg Students

The person organising the visit to West Harris has been in touch as has been unable to identify any accommodation in the area that is within their budget. Directors were asked if they knew of any properties that might be suitable. Dougie suggested several in Seilebost and agreed to make contact with the owners. In the meantime it was suggested that Lisa contact Borve Mor Studios and ask whether an agreement could be come to.

5. AOCB

Broadband

The letter and email sent to HIE, Angus Brendan MacNeil MP and Alasdair Allan MSP was circulated to the directors, see appendix 4. It was agreed that Lisa would write a further letter expressing the director's disquiet and their decision to go to the press should no assurances be made that the west side will benefit from the broadband rollout.

Feed in Tariff

Duncan's paper on feed in tariff's was shown, see appendix 5.

A number of decisions were taken as a result of the paper.

It was agreed that Lisa would continue to investigate solar panels for the old Seilebost School building although concerns were raised about issues with retrofitting the panels to older buildings.

It was also agreed that the Trust would not proceed with planning for a 100kw wind turbine at the site of the hydro for the time being.

Radar

Arne Vogler, Lewis Castle College has been in touch to ask whether a location could be identified to temporarily position a radar system which would provide data that would complement that gathered from the wave rider buoy in the Sound of Taransay. Duncan suggested a number of possible sites, such as on top of the cabinet at the Scarista turbine, the CEC site and also the Cliff. **It was agreed that permission would be granted providing all necessary licences were in place.** Duncan to contact Maggie at Anderson Macarthur to clarify the Trust's position.

Rabbit Control

Steve Woodhall, manager at Borve Lodge has a friend coming to visit who is a professional ferreter and would be interested in carrying out some work on the estate during his visit. The directors were happy for him to carry out some work on the estate.

Murdo Mackay indicated that Luskentyre Grazings would be getting Landmark, the rabbit control company who visited earlier in the year to return to Luskentyre to continue the eradication of rabbits.

Seilebost School

As resident of the adjacent schoolhouse, Rhoda MacDonald left the meeting and did not take part in this discussion.

Lisa has received a number of concept drawings and pricing for the proposed hostel which were shown at the meeting. All of the schemes were priced at considerably more than expected due to the necessity to change the use of the building and therefore install a larger septic tank and all of the necessary safety features required in a building used for accommodation. No report has yet been received from Munro Gauld.

It was agreed that an advert would be placed in the De tha Dol asking anyone interested in leasing the building as work/office space to make contact.

Diary Dates for future meetings:

- October 27th
- November 17th
- December 15th