

2011

**Notes from the Coigach Community Development Company's AGM. 20<sup>th</sup> June 2011, Coigach Community Hall, 7pm – 8.30pm.**

Present: Directors: Iain Muir, Ann Macleod, Nick Clooney, Ian Macleod, Ben Walton, Phil Shaughnessey, Julia Campbell, Anne Macleod. Junior Representative: Joseph Peach.  
Local Development Officers: Linda Macleod, Peter Muir.

Plus 27 members of the Coigach Community

1. Introduction and Apologies:

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave apologies received. Apologies were received from: Steve Husband, Aileen Muir, Bill and Jean Wilder, Theresa Ross, Ali (Beag) Macleod.

2. Chairman's Report: Please see separate tab.

3. Treasurer's Report/financial statement (see below):

The treasurer (Ben Walton) talked through the financial statement, which showed the company to be in good financial health. Questions were invited and Ben was asked:

Q: Are there any implications of using monies received for the energy project for payroll costs?

A: No, it is purely a cashflow issue as HIE money can take some time to draw down.

Q: There is an impressive list of activities the CCDC are working on – how liable are Directors?

A: The CCDC are a company limited by guarantee, and Directors are legally required to act in a responsible manner in accordance with the Companies' Act.

Q: It is good to see the hall benefitting from rent from the CCDC, how much is this?

A: £10 per week.

4. Fixing of annual subscriptions:

The Chair proposed a confirmation of the membership fee remaining at £5, and there was no dissent to this.

5. Election of Directors:

The Chair explained that as all Directors have been in post for one year, three have to stand down annually in rotation and may stand for re-election. Ann Macleod, Nick Clooney and Steve Husband had all stood down and had been

nominated for re-election. With no other nominations for Directors, the Chair proposed a vote that all three of them be re-elected. Harry Hassall proposed this, and Bill Drake seconded. A show of hands was taken for and against, and there were no votes against.

6. AOCB:

There was no other current business.

7. Question and answer session:

Q: The Polbain Path – two members of the Polbain Crofter's group expressed their dismay regarding the Polbain Peat Track project being on hold. One made the point that the project was willingly handed to the CCDC by the

Crofters, and the CCDC did not take it over from the group. Another member of the CCDC present asked if the Coigach Community Council could take on the project. The Chair responded that this may be a possibility but that the gulf of misunderstanding between the CCDC and the landowner had to be addressed. It was agreed that it would be discussed with the Polbain Crofters group in the first instance.

Q: The Hydroponicum – what is the process? Nick Clooney (Vice Chair) gave a summary of the Community Right to Buy process and the relevant deadlines, including the valuation that has already taken place, the date the valuer will report back (7<sup>th</sup> July) and the fact that there will be a public ballot (by 1<sup>st</sup> August). It was asked if anyone else was interested in buying it, and NC replied that as we have a registered interest the Coigach community have first refusal, regardless of interest expressed by any other parties.

Those present at the AGM were urged to attend and publicise the public meeting to be held in the Hydroponicum on the 28<sup>th</sup> June to gather views and ideas.

It was asked what the buyers' asking price was, and what they had paid for it, and NC reported that it was £350K and £220K respectively.

It was pointed out by a member of the CCDC present that the site holds the earliest mortared building in the area, and the first two-storey building, and that this historic element should be retained. Regarding this, a member of the CCDC present asked if a formal invitation had been issued to the Coigach Heritage Group asking for their input on the 28<sup>th</sup>. The Chair said that an invitation had not specifically been issued, but that the hope was that they would attend along with other members of the community. A member of the heritage group who was present said that whilst he would be away he would try to encourage someone else from the group to attend.

A member of the CCDC present asked if the Geopark collection could be an option in the development of the site. The Chair reported that Achiltibuie has been included in a feasibility study looking at options of housing the collection, but that the roads study had indicated that each passing place would need to be able to accommodate two buses passing each other, the cost of which would be prohibitive.

Q: Affordable/community housing – a member of the CCDC present asked if it would be appropriate for local crofters to follow up the CCDC's letter to landowners and common grazings committees to contact their grazings clerks to discuss the possibility of common grazings in their area to be used for the purpose of housing. The Chair said that the CCDC had contacted all landowners and common grazings committees in Coigach as a first step, and that crofters' own follow up would be welcome.

Q: The Chair invited questions on the proposed hydro scheme, and reported that the desk study had been done and the figures generated applied to formulae. Estimates on output had been made (subject to assumptions). Both SWT and a member of the community have done separate desk top studies. The feasibility study will investigate the details and possibilities further. The cost of the infrastructure to run a hydro scheme is comparable to that of the wind turbine, but the output is likely to be considerably lower, so payments from hydro would be lower and payback time longer.

It was asked how long Feed In Tarrifs (FITs) were guaranteed for. Peter Muir (LDO) replied that they were guaranteed for 20 years if we signed up now, but that the figures are being reviewed all the time. The change in tariff for photovoltaic energy was highlighted by a member of the CCDC present and the Chair replied that this seemed to be a problem specific to photovoltaics, as they were being operated on a large scale and were benefitting companies rather than communities as had been originally intended. It was less likely that this would happen with hydro power as by their nature the number of schemes are limited by geography.

Q The Polbain Peat track – a member of the CCDC present asked for the difficulties with the path to be explained. A summary was given, that the Polbain crofter's group had received some Highland Council Ward Discretionary money, with which they employed Linda MacLeod to source funding. The Core Paths money to renovate the peat track was secured, by which time Linda was working for the CCDC. The CCDC asked the Polbain Crofter's group if it would be happy for the CCDC to keep working on the project on their behalf in order to avoid them having to find money to have someone working on sourcing funding, and the Crofters agreed. The local access officer, Phil Waite, was asked by Linda if the Core Paths money that had been approved could be used to employ a local contractor rather than the standard Highland Council contractor from outwith the area. PW agreed, on the basis that the CCDC would take on the working involved in contracting locally. The CCDC were happy to do this but the landowner is unhappy with CCDC involvement in the

project. Currently the options given to us by PW are 1) the CCDC continues with it 2) the footpath group take it on, or 3) it reverts back to a HC contractor.

Two of the Polbain Crofter's group asked if the Community Council could be asked to speak with the landowner and express their support of the CCDC carrying on. The Chair reported that this may be helpful.

A member of the CCDC present noted that the CCDC would have to be careful how we defined the term 'local' when inviting contractors, and was assured that the advertising process had been discussed with Phil Waite and he was happy for it to be advertised by posters around Coigach.

The meeting ended with Harry Hassall proposing a vote of thanks to the CCDC for "an impressive amount of work", which will surely prove invaluable in the years to come when public spending will continue to decline.

The Chair and Vice-Chair also proposed a vote of thanks to the LDOs, the Directors, the many members of the Coigach Community who have helped the CCDC over its first year, and to everyone who had attended the AGM.

### **Treasurer's Report/financial statement:**

Abstract of accounts Coigach  
Community Development Company 1.6.2010 –  
31.5.2011

#### Income

Balance Carried Forward	332.36	
HIE Community Account Management	10423.00	
Member Subscriptions	200.00	
Donations	1000.00	
Projects: <i>Community Energy</i>	6172.00	
		18127.36

#### Expenditure

Payroll costs	16308.72	
Expenses	506.77	
Rent (accrued)	330.00	
Administration	248.16	
Bank	64.00	
Insurance	174.95	
Projects: <i>Community Energy</i>	355.50	
Current account	139.26	
		18127.36