

Minutes of Directors' Board Meeting**Date: Tuesday 30 May 2023, 7pm**

Present: Ben Walton (BW – Acting Chair), Iain Scott (IS), Sheila Green (SG), Ben Walton (BW), Iain Macleod (IM), Robin Irvine (RI), Alison Sinclair (AS), Julie Edwards (JE); in attendance: CE Laura Hamlet (LH), LDOs Julia Campbell (JC), Ann Marie Firth-Bernard; HO Seoras Burnett (SB – zoom), Michelle Henley (MH – SWT), Anne Campbell (AAC – SWT), Steve Husband (SH – Seaweed Project)

Apologies: Richard Williams (RW)

Declarations of interest: with the wind turbine operational, formal interests have been declared by Ben Walton and Julia Campbell who are share-holders of Achiltibuie Common Grazings. Julie Edwards works as administrator for the Coigach Community Hall. Julia Campbell is also on the Board of Communities Housing Trust, has an interest in the Acheninver path and is co-chair of the Coigach Community Hall Committee. Ann Marie Firth-Bernard is on the Board of Highland Community Broadband. Several directors are pier users. Robin Irvine is a director of Summer Isles Enterprises.

- 1. Welcome:** BW welcomed all to the meeting.
- 2. Update from SWT**

MH reported on SWT activity locally.

- AC has a new contract as Crofting Officer to deliver training courses.
- SWT is undergoing a habitats' appraisal of the estate, looking at livestock grazing opportunities for hillparks, conservation grazing and how this could complement conservation within woodlands, peatland restoration etc. Questioned how the community could work with SWT on this. The development of the deer management group will enable opportunities for local people – stalking and monitoring plus decision-making for the future of the estate. DS1 course coming up on 16th – 17th June – further courses hopefully to follow.
- Hefted herd of 50-60 stags on Achlochan. SWT wish to do something proactive before there is an incident (Lymes/croft damage/traffic accident etc). Plan on using a contracted stalker to cull, and for future deer control.
- MH and AC to work on community consultation of people who live locally to Achlochan.
- Beth (Reserves Project Officer) has been working with volunteers on Achlochan and the Postie's Path.
- Osaig Wood Renovation – SWT working to take forward a roughly 110 hectares of woodland restoration around Loch Lurgainn. Currently there is a lack of diversity in the woodland and deer are preventing regeneration. SWT

working with the Woodlands Trust, who are applying for a grant through the Grazings' Committee.

- Peatland Restoration – Nature Scot are undertaking a protected species survey. Steve Husband is representing the Grazings' Committee. SWT have asked NS to provide a mentorship scheme through the contractors. Area to be restored to be roughly 100 hectares.
- SWT also working with Coigach Heritage on the Lorg sculpture project.

3. Seaweed Project

SH was invited along to talk to us about the possibilities for seaweed farming/foraging in the area. Assynt Development Trust and Scourie Development Company had commissioned the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) in Oban to look into seaweed farming. Kinlochbervie Community Company are also involved and Durness, Tongue, Melness and Farr North have also all expressed an interest. SH asked if CCDC would be interested and there was general positive support from the board.

4. Housing Report (SB)

Hydroponicum Site

Have had meetings with CHT re. next steps and have had a draft tender document from architect-led consultant teams. Will come back to the board with details of the tender that will go out when finalised.

Smokehouse

Demolition on hold re. bats – will be rescheduled once bats are rehomed.
Bat surveyor to return to complete dusk survey.

Other Potential Sites

ACTION: Board to review SB's suggestions and prioritise.

General

Schoolhouse: Home Energy Scotland had reviewed EPC and raised original ratings and stated that, with changes (such as a new heating system), the building will be compliant with standards required by 2025. **ACTION:** JC to ask CHT to speak to tenants re. EPC surveys.

Local Place Plans: suggestion that we work with the Community Council. **ACTION:** AMFB email CCC as first step.

5. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

Minutes proposed SG
seconded AS

6. Finances

Draft budgets approved for subsidiary companies.

IS requested that the CCDC board adopt CCDC's draft budget. Board approved.

Budget summary as follows:

CCDC Trading

- Little or nothing happening here. Assumed BMH distribution in June 2023...but this may turn out to be aspirational.
- Audit costs have gone up, so slightly less profit than presented to the Board previously

CCDC

- Budget Includes for 2 no .5FTE LDO's and our new MD
- Audit is being accrued to £19,800
- No Budget for Charitable giving
- The total overhead cost is £123k, up from £70k we spent last year. This a mix of the new MD and increased costs to allow us to do more training, conferences and improve the way we work.

Coigach Community CIC

- Budget is very similar to the budget discussed the last CIC Board meeting.
- Community Donation is down a little a £335k, due adding in £10k for consultancy on the long term, £7k on Blade maintenance and some minor tidy-ups.
- Production set at 1,850,000 kWh
- Export rate up at 20.077p kWh, up from 9.825p kWh last year
- FiT rate went up 13,8% to 16.84p kWh
- Revenue increases drive a big increase in Insurance costs, up 60% to £33k.
- Additional maintenance cost of £7k in may to repair blades, another £7k allowed in November.

Accounts summaries by Company:

CCDC Trading

- As there is little going on in this company, I see no point in circulating them until something happens

CCDC

- Overheads are £969 underspent against the budget of £8,367
- Charitable giving to individuals was £1,260 to 13 individuals, of which £1,020 to 12 individuals was for Energy grants.
- A claim of £150 was made to HMRC for the income tax on the £600 donation in November 2022. £37.50 has been received to date.
- LDO salary reviews were not notified to the Payroll guy in time, so costs have been accrued in the accounts to reflect a correction next month.
- Audit Fees were £1,650 in the month to accrue up to the level notified by the Auditors.
- Professional Fees in the month were all for the housing officer £320.
- Although the Charity Bank Account has £283k in it at the end of April 2023, once we take off £29k for the smokehouse demolition and £115k to buy the Hydroponicum we have £139k available to us.
- No significant changes from the budget in the forecast to the financial year end.

Coigach Community CIC

- April Production was 28% behind budget at 107,013 kWh , 41,387 kWh behind budget, costing us £15,278 in lost revenue.
- Profit in the month of £15k, £15k behind budget.

- The moving annual total tipped up by 4,363 kWh to 1,778,644 kWh.
- Anticipated Community donation in March 2024 dropped by the £15k shortfall against budget in the month to £320k.
- Budget for May 2023 is 129,100 kWh.
- Actual production for May 2022 was 166,789 kWh.
- Production in the first half of May is 48,754 kWh.

7. Management Report

ACTION: Board to feed back re. Working Groups Structure document for next meeting.

ACTION: Board to look at Procurement Policy levels for next meeting. Document approved in principle.

ACTION: Board to feed back re. Projects Charter document for next meeting.

ACTION: LH to set up SCVO's HR add-on.

ACTION: LH to get in touch with Jenny Berry (OSCR) re. job title.

ACTION: Board to feed back to LH re. Scheme of Delegation document by end w/c 12 June 2023.

Positive response to Google Suite. **ACTION:** LH to set up business account.

The board approved LH as bank account signatory.

8. LDO Monthly Reports

JC: Discussion re. Non-constituted Group grant application form. **ACTION:** JC to add to form asking for more details on objectives of non-constituted group and whether or not group membership is open to the whole community.

AMFB: Board agreed that a budget of £350 could be offered to the Coigach and Assynt Collective for original artwork for the album. **ACTION:** AMFB to contact the musicians. **ACTION:** AMFB to look into costings for CD pressing.

ACTION: AMFB to draw up a proposal for one walk/talk event for next meeting.

ACTION: AMFB to draw up a proposal for Home Energy Scotland + others event.

9. AOCB

Items for next month's agenda:

- Old Dornie new slip + Tanera
- Energy Grant Review

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS – all at

7pm

3 July 2023

31 July 2023

28 August 2023

25 September 2023

30 October 2023

AGM 13 November 2023

30 October 2023

December TBA