



A meeting of NCDC was held on: Wednesday, 6th September 2023, at 7:30pm, at NCDC Office, Ollaberry Hall.

Present – Bob McGeady (RM - Chair), Stephen Moore, Bill Manson (WM), Margaret Roberts, Alistair Williamson, David Brown

In Attendance – Charlotte Anderson and Iain Davidson

1. Apologies – None

2. Approval of Minute – Minutes of meeting on 5th July 2023 were approved by AW and were seconded by RM

3. Nortenergy Update - MR reported that things were running smoothly at present and the main focus was on getting the draft loan agreement settled in order to finalise the annual accounts. The “Peerie Mootie Polly” (2m x 2.5m) was up and operating in the Bruckland compound with positive feedback from visiting members of the community. ID informed the directors that moves were being made to separate the Sage accounts software held by NCDC and Nortenergy. This would be cheaper and more effective for both companies

4. Growing Local – CA reported that the planning application for the 12m x 5m Polycrub at the junction, was progressing but that the funding application to Green Energy Trust was turned down and she was currently looking for alternative sources. The Bruckland Festival was progressing well and the plans were in place for the Produce Show at North Roe & Lochend Hall on Sunday, 10th. MR reported that she had received interest from someone keen to take up a horticultural post, if this became available.

5. Financial update – WM reported that all was in order with the finances and he had no issues which needed to be addressed

6. Hillswick shop update – Chair requested that this item be left until later for full and frank discussions. All agreed.

7. Weaving Shed update – ID reported that an artist was currently in residence and had settled in well, using the Weaving Shed as a retreat and opening the Gallery to the public twice a week. There had been minimal need for us to become involved with her visit but there was a good relationship in place. When she leaves towards the end of the month, the tapestry people will be exhibiting and holding workshops (which are already sold out) during Shetland Wool Week. There are also Airbnb guests booked in from wool week through until mid-October when it will be blocked off for a friend of Geoff’s. Geoff is also planning a Sales Weekend (with a Charity element) for late October.

8. Old Urafirth School Update – RM reported that the HNA draft was now complete and he found it to be an impressive and well-written document. It was also noted that this had been discussed at that week's Community Council meeting and the scepticism of the SIC's Chief Housing Officer during her meeting with Luke had been discussed. Cllr. E MacDonald had suggested that a meeting be held between NCDC Directors, Councillors and Housing Officials to ensure that they were all considering the matter from the same perspective and RM had agreed, once the final draft was received and studied by NCDC. It was also noted that both SLF and HIE now insisted on real living wage being paid to all employees (including those of subsidiaries) as a precursor to any future funding applications. CA reported that Luke wanted to meet with directors very soon to discuss next steps. It was agreed that this should be arranged for next week.

Action: CA to set up meeting between Luke and NCDC Directors

9. Matters Arising –

Eshanness Lighthouse/Johnnie Notions Bod – Directors agreed that they did not want to take on the lighthouse but a decision on JNB could be made when they found out if it was exempt from new insulation regulations.

Action: CA to make enquiries

Stucca: Planning application is progressing

South by Ronas: CA still in talks with owner

Community Polycrub in Sullom: Decrofting is progressing

Admin Job: 12+ packs sent out to date and 2 completed applications received so far

Bruckfest: Ollaberry Youth Club to hold Redd Up on 07/09 and 10 cars were to be collected during the week. Climate information and E-Bike try-outs at Hillswick Hall on Friday and Produce Show at North Roe on Sunday

Swinister Trees – No update

10. Hillswick Shop Update – JAC had submitted a financial update to the meeting to assist discussion.

RM noted the following points: Stock levels are poor (it was pointed out by CA that this was partly due to poor service from suppliers who were simply not delivering a substantial amount of goods ordered. This was a problem for other businesses too).

Many of the figures, such as costs, were skewed by the current low level of staffing and were not considered sustainable.

There was a risk of splitting the community, whatever decisions the board made regarding the future of, and support for, the shop.

The discussion opened up to all members of the board and suggestions included, shared responsibilities with Ollaberry Shop. There was also mention of the need to assess the impact on Hillswick if the shop were to shut. Not just on local custom but also the impact on tourism to the area, potential new residents and the school, which had been under its own threat of closure fairly recently.

Others felt a public meeting was urgently needed and that turnout to this could help in assessing outcomes.

There were further suggestions that they should just close the shop and offer to help facilitate alternatives.

Following all the discussion and taking the various opinions/suggestions on board, it was decided to meet with Hillswick Shop Board members to relay their thoughts; then publish a set of FAQs regarding the situation with the shop on NCDC's social media and then to organise a public meeting at which attendees could be asked to create their own lists of "options" for the shop.

Actions: RM/SM to meet with Shop Board; CA to draft FAQs; MR to check the draft with a friend who is experienced in these matters

11. AOCB –

DB - Youth Committee?

CA responded that there had been no further action on this as there was little interest from school pupils approached.

Action: DB to speak with Loren Manson to try to push it on

MR – CAP (Climate Action Plan)?

CA responded that this had been sent to all Board members for approval and that this had been granted.

12. Date of Next Meeting – 26th October 2023

Meeting ended at 20:25