



A meeting of NCDC was held on: Wednesday, 19th April 2023, at 7:30pm, remotely via Zoom

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

In Attendance – Charlotte Anderson, Iain Davidson

1. Apologies – None

2. Approval of Minute – Minutes of meeting on 8th March 2023 were approved by RMcG and were seconded by SM

Before conducting the business of the Agenda, election of a new Chair was required. MR nominated RMcG and this was seconded by WM. There being no other nominations, RMcG was duly appointed as Chair

3. Nortenergy Update:

Draft Loan Agreement – MR declared interest as director of Nortenergy. The board, having previously been sent a draft of the document accompanied by Treasurer's notes of observations, the directors were told by WM that the content basically embodied the agreement between himself and Raymond Mainland (RM) of Nortenergy. He noted that it may need to incorporate clarification regarding any possible future advance. Due to the anomalies created by the relationship between the two companies, it may be that Nortenergy would never be in a position to repay the loan and this may necessitate a further share issue. In any case, a 3rd year review was written into the Agreement. There followed some discussion regarding the problems caused by the subsidiary's tax position in relation to the timing required for donations to parent company. WM explained the basics of this for benefit of new directors. MR suggested taking a look at Shapinsay Wind Farm model to see how they dealt with similar situation. WM was to have further discussions with RM on this issue before finalising. Directors were happy with WM's interpretation of the draft and agreed to proceed on that basis.

General Update – MR reported that there had been concerns among Nortenergy management during the Winter regarding a possible drop-off in sales due to cost of living crisis but that trade had now picked up. They were currently looking into the staffing situation and hoped to replace HH in near future. The design of the prototype 5m x 12m polycrub was currently being assessed by CASE Shetland for accreditation and one was sited at Hensington Palace for trial. MR sees potential for use as Agricultural Sheds too.

Action: WM to discuss repayment details with RM

4. Growing Local Project – CA reported that she had taken over responsibility for funding application for next phase of project now that Mandy and Yoyo had both left the company.

The next step for her was to get an agreement from directors to bring together several projects including, growing, recycling, tackling cost of living crisis, etc. into one funding application. DB suggested that Shetland Gas Plant may be a potential source of funding while WM expressed concerns about possible delays caused by changing submission as momentum of existing project could be affected. Further discussion highlighted that various elements could continue in meantime, e.g. Produce Show, Plant swap boxes, etc. Directors agreed that CA should proceed with the revised plan

Action: CA to proceed with funding application

5. Financial update – WM reported that day to day expenditure was much as expected and that the Budget projections for 2023/24 were reasonable.

MR highlighted a need to be able to articulate what the funds held by NCDC were to be used for as, in her experience, many members of the community perceived the company to be sitting on a large sum of money but not doing anything with it. It was agreed that the upcoming Planning Day would address some of this. DB asked if there was a minimum amount that NCDC would not wish to go below in terms of funds held. RM stated that he would be reluctant to let them drop below £250K while MR reiterated that there needed to be a plan in place for the use of the money and that this needed to be demonstrable.

6. Hillswick shop update – It was reported that 4 directors of the Shop Board had committed to attend the Planning Day and that most, if not all, staff were keen to attend. The concept of a SWOT analysis was popular with staff. During subsequent discussion, it was noted that a new Chair for the Board was a priority and it was acknowledged that there may need to be an injection of capital into the shop. It was agreed that there would need to be some in-depth discussion at the Planning Day with regard to the shop and that some form of financial assistance would inevitably be required. MR noted that, despite the Shop Board having an enviable demographic in terms of age and gender, it was failing due to its inability to elect a Chair.

7. Weaving Shed update – ID reported that the current Artist-in-Residence was having a very positive experience and was engaging enthusiastically with the community. She was planning to become involved with the Redd Up and had been opening the Gallery regularly and inviting people along to try their hand at the solar-printing project she specialised in. She had also taken this to two of the schools and was keen to research such diverse subjects as tree-planting and the history of knitting in the area. The exhibition planned for July/August with local crafters was now in early discussions and the Airbnb was filling up for the summer season. The application for short-term lets licence was progressing slowly but ID hoped to move this on in next few weeks

Action: ID to progress licence application

8. Old Urafirth School Update – CA reported that she was due to meet Suzanne Malcolmson to discuss plans but was still trying to catch up with Fiona regarding the Housing Needs Analysis. SIC had been in touch to say that they were looking for significant progress to be made this year.

AW joined the meeting

9. Matters Arising –

Pop-up Craft Shop: CA was still unsure if Galley Shed would be able to host but Eshaness Hall should be available soon.

Website: CA had contacted NB Comms to discuss restructuring website. They could do it but it would be costly. CA had obtained a list of alternative web designers so would make enquiries

Action: CA to make enquiries

Stucca: A decision was needed on whether to sell Stucca site as is or to obtain outline planning permission first. Following discussion of pros and cons, majority were in favour of getting outline Planning Permission.

Action: ID/CA to begin process

Community Polycrub in Sullom: An active community Polycrub is sited on a croft at Sullom and the owner plans to sell the croft. He is happy to gift the land to NCDC if latter does the work of decrofting. All agreed to proceed with this

Action: ID/CA to begin process

10. AOCB

Admin Job: CA suggested that another Admin post was required to assist with the increasing workload but was unsure if a full-time or part-time person would be needed. Directors asked for a report to be put together with more detail for submission to next meeting

Action: ID/CA to create report

Funding Request: CA reported that a request for Academic Funding had been received from a community member about to study for a PhD. MR suggested signposting individual to Sullom Voe Terminal Participants' Tenth Anniversary Educational Trust

Action: CA to respond to request

SCOTO: CA requested permission to attend a tourism-related workshop in Glasgow, reporting that there was a £120 travel grant available to assist with costs. All agreed that she should attend.

Tourism App: MR asked for update on production of App as it should have been live this month. CA reported that recordings were ready to submit to Geotourist.

Planning Day: DB said that he was unlikely to be able to attend the Planning Day on 23rd April so noted his apologies in advance

12. Date of Next Meeting – 24th May

Meeting ended at 20:42