



A meeting of NCDC was held on: Monday, 28th March 2022, at 7:30pm, virtually, via Zoom

Present –Bob McGeady (RM - Chair), Margaret Roberts (MgR), Alistair Williamson, Bill Manson

In Attendance – Charlotte Slater, Iain Davidson, Mark Ratter (MkR), Mandy Hunter, Esmée Buchet-Deak (Yoyo), Harry Haslam

1. Apologies – James Titcomb, Laura Jamieson

2. Approval of Minute – Minutes of meeting on 31st January were approved by AW and seconded by RM. It was again forgotten that the October minutes had been held over due to a technical hitch. These will remain unapproved until board next meet.

3. Financial update – 2021/22 budget pretty much to target other than greater than expected donation from Nortenergy which has put NCDC in a healthy financial position.

BM explained new format with fixed and variable incomes separated and summarised. £250K estimated as donation from Nortenergy in coming financial year. Expected staffing costs have made provision for a small increase if board agree.

The figure for accountancy fees in 2021/22 was considerably higher than anticipated so BM to speak with A9 to find out reasons and if this is likely to continue in 2022/23.

The big unknown was Project Costs/Grant Spending as it would depend on the projects undertaken. While Growing Local costs are fairly predictable, any new projects would not be, hence addition of next Agenda item.

BM commended budget to the Board.

RM asked if Share Capital had been paid to Nortenergy yet and was told that it had. Also asked if a contingency should be incorporated into budget for inflation. It was agreed to add in £5K. RM also asked if an investment fund had been looked at and was told that this was currently being investigated but options found so far were poor. There was some discussion regarding an expenditure limit for NCDC staff and BM reported that this would be put before the board at next meeting.

Action – ID to add line in budget for contingency. BM/CS/ID to continue to investigate investment options. BM to speak with A9 re costs

4. Grant Spending/Project Expenditure Costs – BM had some ideas for assisting tourism business in Northmavine but it was in very early stages and he was not ready to share them yet. But was keen to hear what other ideas there were.

RM reported on the Zoom meeting with HIE/Scottish Land Fund re. funding for Urafirih School project. Unfortunately, no funding for survey but encouraging signals given for assistance with the project if it went ahead. AW updated the meeting on the first part of the survey and reported that it seemed to be in better condition than first suspected.

5. Hillswick shop update – ID reported that, he had received figures for year to date which showed that February was around the break-even point while year to date figures suggested a reasonable Net Profit could be expected at year end.
RM asked about IT glitch. This had caused temporary loss of the whole year's figures but most were recovered leaving March invoicing and stock-taking data to be re-done.

6. Nortenergy update

MgR reported that Hub in Nantwich was now up and running and update from AGM still stood.

HH added that orders were steadily growing and work was about to begin in seeking a Hub in Cumbria for the North of England area.

7. Growing Local Project - MkR introduced his joint successors, Mandy and Yoyo. Yoyo started work last week and Mandy was due to begin tomorrow. Work so far had concentrated on the logistics of the job share.

Most of the planned Workshops now have confirmed dates and venues.

On the Audio Trail app, MkR/MH/EB-D are to meet with Rachel Gambro of SFAD on Wednesday to progress this. MgR said she may be available for this meeting too.

There was some discussion around the Directors being provided with a project outline prior to the development of the app to show its content. MkR and EBD informed that this would become clearer following the meeting with Rachel Gambo on Wednesday. MkR also sent the BoD a document outlining the coded themes along with a list of potential interviewees. The small Polycrub is now in place at Nort Trow Garden and further volunteers are being sought. The work placement will start in mid-April

One of the perceived benefits of a Growers' Group was to facilitate bulk buying and this had been tried with a recent bulk purchase of compost, of which 80% was already taken up

Action – MkR/ EBD/ MH to update BoD on proposed app content

8. Matters Arising – CS had spoken with Neil Risk about benefits of selling Stucca land with outline Planning Permission. His advice was that it could provide a bigger return and he pointed her in the direction of 2 possible surveyors. It was generally felt by board members that the information could be provided without need for a site visit.

Action – CS to contact surveyors

9. AOCB – BM requested that all present should submit ideas for projects prior to next meeting.

HH was asked if he still wished to become a director and he agreed so MgR proposed and AW seconded this

MgR expressed her thanks to MkR for all the hard work he had put in to the Growing Local project to take it to its current stage and wished him well in his future endeavours. These sentiments were echoed by the other members of the board

Action – All present to submit project ideas prior to next meeting

10. Date of Next Meeting – 2nd May 2022

Meeting ended 20:19

