



A meeting of NCDC was held on: Wednesday, 30th November 2022, at 7:30pm, at the Ollaberry Hall

Present – Bob McGeady (RM - Chair), Margaret Roberts, Harry Haslam, John Alex Cromarty, Bill Manson (WM), Alistair Williamson, James Titcomb

In Attendance – Charlotte Anderson, Iain Davidson, Yoyo Buchet

1. Apologies – Mandy Hunter

2. Approval of Minute – Minutes of meeting on 7th September 2022 were approved by JAC and were seconded by MR

RM asked what was happening with the vouchers. CA said that the Christmas ones would be going out next week with a newsletter and it was decided the second round would go out the first week in January.

3. Nortenergy Update – MR informed the directors it was a quiet time of year and that the Nortenergy Board are keeping a close eye on the global financial situation. HH confirmed orders were down around 15-20% but not drastic for this time of year and that the enquiry to order ratio is still the same. He also said that there were a few orders coming through the English Hub after the delivery costs were reduced including from a school in Cardiff. The shed is still waiting for the completion certificate which will hopefully happen in December.

3.1 Nortenergy Loan – MR ran through the proposal that had been sent out to directors last week which is to help with cashflow issues caused by the timing of the donation to NCDC and the low point of sales. Nortenergy would like to borrow 3 months working capital and look at a long term payback. WM alternatively suggested paying back £50-100k with agreement to provide further funds if needed. Both HH and MR declared an interest but MR explained that without receiving at least £200k by the end of December, Nortenergy would be unable to make the £400k+ donation to NCDC. JAC stated that OSCR and HMRC are not likely to be keen on continual “paybacks”. He also questioned whether 3 months working capital was really required and that the proposal presented lacked enough in-depth detail. RM agreed with JAC on the amount of working capital and suggested WM meet with Raymond Mainland from Nortenergy to discuss. JAC proposed a loan of £200k at present due to the tight timelines but that WM and RM should still meet to agree a long-term solution. There was a general reluctance to stretch to a 25yr payback.

Action: MR to take proposal back to Nortenergy Board. WM to meet with RM

4. Growing Local Project – YB presented the current proposal for phase 2 of the project focusing on establishing a community growing space in Northmavine with 3 potential sites

and a short term goal of supplying the community fridge and long term aim to supply local shops while also mentoring growers. The three sites proposed were:

- The Old Urafirth School - Pros – Good achievable space
Cons – SIC may have issue with the expected vehicular traffic, not central
- Hillswick Junction - Pros – NCDC own the space and already have a presence there, central location
Cons – volunteer ownership issues – they may not feel like they “own” the space, poor soil, access issues, extensive groundworks needed
- Da Barn Pros – Established space with experienced staff on hand. Good soil
Cons – Not central, potential issues with the crofting commission.

YB also indicated that the staffing proposal for the continuation for the project would be a full time project worker and a full time horticulturalist. RM asked why there was a need for a full time horticulturalist. MR explained that the position would cover working at other sites in Northmavine that have been offered to the Growing Local Project. RM stated he wasn't happy making decisions based on a proposal first presented at a meeting. MR proposed that NCDC approve in principal that a phase 2 can be pursued and Mandy and Yoyo will continue to develop the proposal as well as look at funding. All directors were in agreement. YB also put forward that Tangwick Haa were interested in siting the Peerie Poly in the garden as part of their 2023 exhibition on building and construction. Directors were happy for this to go ahead.

Action: YB and MH continue to work on proposal and look at funding applications

5. Financial update – WM stated that the day-to-day finances were as normal. A budget sheet had been circulated to directors prior to the meeting. WM informed directors that the Financial Policy was last updated in the early 2000s but Charlotte and WM have been working to update it and will have it ready to sign off for the next meeting. WM proposed that staff have an unauthorised spending limit up to £1000. Directors agreed. JAC suggested signatories still be informed when payments are made. ID suggested a twice monthly update which was also agreed by Directors.

WM asked Directors to approve approaching RBS to discuss interest rates for NCDC accounts. Directors agreed.

Action: ID to send spending updates twice a month to signatories. WM, ID and CA to set up meeting to discuss finance policy and RBS

6. Hillswick shop update – JAC reported that the Hillswick Shop are in a similar position as Nortenergy with working capital issues. He reported that trading was good but profitability was low due to the current cost of living crisis. There is still one or two staffing issues but hopefully this will be resolved. JAC commended LW for her continued development in the managers role. He stated the board are still without a chair and that the draft accounts should be signed off at the next meeting.

7. Weaving Shed update – ID informed the directors that there had been a guest in the studio flat at the start of November which was a bonus. There are two bookings for the flat in May and June 2023 and two artist in residences booked at the beginning of the season and the end of the season. Geoff has been away for a number of months but is due back at the beginning of December so ID will meet with him shortly. There is a bit of work needed in the flat. ID is also working on the form for the new short term license and has also been approached by Bruce and Jean Stephen for help too. CA put forwarded an idea to use the gallery as a craft shop next year for local crafters running from the Easter holidays to the

October holidays with artists offered a reduced commission rate if they volunteer to run the shop. ID added that he had mentioned the idea to Geoff who was very keen. CA stated that she had three artists keen to be involved so far. She added that she still needed to work out rent and commission prices.

Action: ID and CA to continue to develop craft shop idea

8. Old Urafirth School Update – CA reported that she had a phone meeting scheduled for Friday with a consultancy firm and ID had been in contact with the Community Housing Trust for a quote to do the Housing Needs Analysis which would then mean it can be put forward to the SLF application.

Action: CS to obtain quotes for HNA

9. Funding Applications – CA informed directors she is working on an application to the Community Led Funding from the National Lottery and the Winters Activities Fund from SIC. She said that she was exploring activity provision for secondary school bairns and a youth café had been suggested but that she wanted to speak to the young folk to find out what they really wanted. She had been in contact with the Brae High School who have said she can come into the school during a dinner hour and/ or they can pass out questionnaires to Northmavine bairns. RM said this would be a good opportunity to get a junior board set up and was happy to attend the school too. CA suggested getting registered with VAS for the Saltire Awards so anyone involved can count it towards their volunteering hours.

CA also added that she was looking at the

Action: CA to continue pursuing funding applications

10. Matters Arising

Handyman Job advert – No update, going to the Nortenergy Board.

11. AOCB

Community Fridge – CA informed Directors that the funding from Hubbub would be split into £3000 now and £1000 in 12 months' time. She had visited the Kirkwall fridge when down in Orkney and they had been very helpful sending through lots of information. CA said that it was hoped to site a Poly Opyl next to the portacabin inside the compound. After some discussion Directors agreed that the fridge would be open during Bruckland hours at the moment and then this could be extended once NCDC staff moved to the junction. CA also had some forms that needed to be signed and sent back.

Action: CA to send back forms to Hubbub

Bruckland Christmas Hours – It was agreed by Directors to close Bruckland over the Christmas period.

Tourism Meeting – CA informed directors she had attended a Tourism conference in Lerwick a couple of weeks ago and thought it would be beneficial to set up a meeting with all tourism providers in Northmavine in the New Year to have a collective front for tourism in Northmavine. She also added that there is an offer for a free travel blog through SCOTO at the moment that might be worth pursuing. WM added he had recently seen leaflets for Northmavine that were quite out of date. CA suggested looking at SCBF funding to create a new leaflet.

Action: CA to set up meeting and look at funding opportunities

Climate Champions – CA has been asked by VAS to become a Climate Champion through a free training programme from the Royal Geographical Society. Training is online next March.

Ollaberry and Collafirth Grazing Committee – NCDC have been approached to take on the admin duties for the O&C Grazing committee. Directors were happy for this to happen at the normal fee.

BeNort App – Yoyo said that the app content was nearly ready to send to Geotourist. The audio they have gathered needs to be edited. Yoyo said she was confident she would be able to do it but would need to buy software or they could get a professional to do it. They had been in contact with JJ Jamieson as recommended by Claire White but had not heard anything back. AW suggested using Sony which is available for a small fee and JT suggested Audacity which is free.

Action: Yoyo to speak with AW and JT on what software is best to use.

12. Date of Next Meeting – 14th December 2022