



A meeting of NCDC was held on: Wednesday, 9th October 2024, at 7:30pm, in the, NCDC Office of the Ollaberry Hall

Present – Bob McGeady, Stephen Moore, Alistair Williamson, Bill Manson, David Brown, Craig Johnson

1. **Apologies:** Margaret Roberts, John Alex Cromarty
In Attendance – Charlotte Anderson & Karlyn Garrick
2. Previous minutes were approved by Stephen Moore and seconded by Alistair Williamson
3. Nortenergy update – NE update from Maree Hay: The projected distribution figure for the 23/24 financial year is around £150k. A final figure is not yet known as the accounts are still in draft. The NE bank account currently sits at around £300k. We would expect this amount to reduce as we reach the end of the calendar year. Historically, expenses are greater than income in Q3, and the beginning of Q4, before picking up again in Feb/March. Cash flow projections show NE ending the financial year with approx. £150k in the bank, if £150k distribution is paid over. Turnover is slightly down at the halfway point of this financial year, but profits are up.

Nortenergy met recently and discussed the distribution figures and process, it was noted that a planned meeting with NCDC, NE and A9 had not taken place. NE met with A9 some time ago to discuss distribution between trading arms and the parent. M Roberts asked that the points from that meeting be sent to NCDC again, for discussion at their meeting board meeting. See below:

Distribution donation

- A parent company should always ensure that the trading company has enough funds to trade.
- When the entire distribution amount is paid by the trading arm to the parent, the parent is depleting the trading arm of healthy cashflow, leaving it impossible for the company to grow, without investment.
- The parent charity can choose the level of distribution/donation - it doesn't have to be all of the taxable profit.
- If the parent charity didn't make the subsidiary pay over enough of a distribution to reduce taxable profits to nil, then the subsidiary/trading company would pay tax on the part that hadn't been paid over.
- Whilst the trading arm can request an equity investment from the parent, it should be for a good reason and must be seen to be a worthwhile investment. Eg. Growth, or investment in machinery etc. Investment without good reason could easily be seen as tax evasion.
- It was noted that NCDC is now receiving an additional £16000 annually in loan interest (although this does reduce NE profit and tax). NCDC previously discussed turning part of the £200k loan into equity investment but an outcome was not reached.

RM is keen to get the meeting scheduled, he acknowledged that Nortenergy is doing well with having £150k in the bank at the end of the year. WM would like to see plans from their distribution hubs, he would like to see a cash flow projection for each hub to show profit and loss. CA said that MH was looking for an update on the proposed rent on the 2 cabins at Bruckland – the former Polycrub office and the volunteer point. They are looking for £300 a month. RM suggested getting the cabins valued and just buying the cabins outright. WM asked if CA had any update in quotes for doing improvements to the office cabin at Bruckland, but there is no update in this. The NCDC office move is on hold just now until

the phones are moved over to Teams. NCDC and Nortenergy share a microsoft account at the moment but there are no phone numbers left. Andy Steven is up this month so CA will speak to him about splitting the accounts. RM suggested that we'll need to speak with MH about signage for the area at Bruckland for when NCDC do move out there.

ACTION: CA to arrange meeting with A9, NCDC & Nortenergy
CA to arrange a meeting with Andy Steven about the Teams Package
CA to speak to MH about signage

Growing Local update – Luke Beaumont & Kevin Forth are settling in fine, and have been up helping out up at the Nort Trow gardens, strimming at Nancy Johnson's plot, as well as looking at the other growing sites and making up plans for them. Sodexo had been in touch with Charlotte earlier in the Summer about composting their food waste from their 3 sites based at Sullom Voe, Sellaness & Shetland Gas Plant for our compost machine. However, MR had said that she is keen for us work with the schools first with their Fair Food Policy.

[Craig Johnson joined the meeting]

CA said that we have received a donation of £250 from ToTal that Elaina Leach had nominated us for our composting project. The machine now has power thanks to Jim Duncan Feather though he has suggested installing vents in the container. MR has been emailing the company which made the compost machine 'Big Hanna', with Kev Forth to continue conversations with them, he is also going to meet with Vic Thomas who worked at Shetland Home Co (formerly Cope LTD). MR has asked for Kev & Luke to provide a project plan going forward. This should be ready by the next board meeting.

ACTION: CA to contact SIC Climate Team

4. Financial update – WM after a quick glance at the budget sheet there is nothing standing out, and all looks fine. NCDC have received payment from Nortenergy for their loan repayment this week, WM proposed turning half of the £200,000 loan in to shares, and the rest into a 10 year loan where Nortenergy pay NCDC £10,000 back every year, with less interest each year, or Nortenergy could pay bigger amounts to reduce it quicker if they wished. It would extinguish the loan after 10 years. RM isn't against WM's proposal, but he would like to bring this up at the meeting with NCDC, A9 & Nortenergy. The board was in agreement that NCDC needs to become less reliant on Nortenergy profits.

ACTION: As per action above – CA to arrange meeting with NCDC, A9 & Nortenergy

5. Hillswick Shop – Stephen Moore was happy to give a positive update for the Hillswick Shop. He said the new shop manager – Michel Tordoir was settling in fine with the shop and getting things up to date with the payments that were several months in arrears. He's been looking at how to prioritise how they pay off the outstanding invoices to suppliers. There's also a new member of staff who is now doing 20 hours a week, SM hopes there will be less short notice staff shortages limiting the hours the shop is open for. SM said MT's 3 month probation period which should tie in with the next NCDC meeting. SM stated that he was still currently doing all the payments for invoices and suggested that this should be part of MT responsibilities. WM and RM agreed with RM saying that MT should send a weekly report of payments and bank balance to shop board. CA and SM both spoke of the difficulties they have been experiencing with the Co-op bank. CA said that Una Blyth has been looking at alternative banks that the Hillswick Shop could switch to. RM is hopeful that MT will look into becoming part of other franchises like Nisa or Spar, which could offer some benefits. CA said that the SIC is keen for the Hillswick Shop to apply for the Shop Scheme, the board agreed that this should go ahead.

ACTION: CA to meet with Michel Tordoir about the Shop Scheme

6. Bruckland update – no update other than the rental price from Nortengery as discussed earlier.
7. Weaving Shed update – Esme Wilcock & Kelly Robertson visited the office on Monday morning, to discuss how the exhibition had gone this Summer. Though they want to keep their dates for next year they had some suggestions. There has also been some complaints from AirBnb guests. There have also been problems raised by creator in residence in the last couple of years.

Geoff is keen for the gallery to be a commercial gallery space however he wants to have a workspace within the gallery. KG mentioned that because there is no Bonhoga just now that the gallery could be a great space and could be used well. RM asked the question if NCDC should continue with the gallery and the AirBnb. CA said that if we do continue with it there needs to be a more formal agreement. CJ asked if the gallery was successful, CA said it could be and that a gallery space is important for Northmavine. CJ also asked if there was somewhere else in Northmavine that could be turned into a gallery/artist space. David Brown had suggested the Eshaness Lighthouse. The building was looked at before as accommodation, but NCDC had decided to not pursue it at the time. RM suggested speaking to the Amenity Trust about hiring the lighthouse as a space for a year or two. After a lengthy discussion the board agreed to explore this idea, as it could be an ideal space for a creator in residence scheme too. Geoff only wants 2 residencies a year but only in the winter because of the continuing rise in tourism in the summer months. CA said she would be meeting with Geoff's PA Andrea on Thursday and would raise the points discussed.

ACTION: CA to meet with Andrea

CA to speak to Hazel Sutherland, SAT

8. Old Urafirth School – no update, CA had a meeting with Onie from DTAS earlier on Wednesday, she's keen to help if she can. CJ asked if we could ask the local estate agent who is selling a house in Hillswick if there has been much interest in the property. CA said Onie had said that other groups have had a lot of success in buying houses for sale in their area and then renting them out. Those present were not sure if that would be a benefit as it wasn't creating new housing stock.
9. R100 – CA had circulated the report from MR to the rest of the board earlier in the week. CJ said there is no update on this. CJ queried the figures in MR's report. The board discussed the figures given in previous emails and spoke of available funding such as the windfarm money.

ACTION: CA to forward on email to CJ

CJ to read above email and revisit costs and figures.

10. Matters Arising –

- a. Johnnie Notions – Legionnaires test is done, fire risk assessment done, licence just needs sent in.
- b. Stucca – no update.
- c. Youth Board – it was suggested by Leslie Anderson (who is catering for the dinner dance) that the youth board come in to bake cupcakes on the Friday before the dinner dance as well as serving on the night, along with other young ones around Northmavine.
- d. Swinister Trees – no update
- e. Business Ring – CA meeting with TL Dallas about current NCDC insurance, so will mention this, along with speaking to Ryan Johnson & the NFU.
- f. NCDC 20th Birthday – this was going to be held in Hillswick but due to the size of the hall, for seating and getting folk served it may be quite tight, Ollaberry was suggested though their heating is still not working, North Roe was suggested too. It was decided to explore the North Roe Hall as the venue for the evening. However, there is a lot on in Northmavine, throughout November and we want to share out the events across the area. CJ asked if there were any buses going to be laid on,

with a suggestion of £5 donation from each person. CA asked if there were going to be any speeches, RM suggested that both he and Margaret would give a short speech.

ACTION: KG to get invites finished

CA to send around guestlist

KG to speak to North Roe Hall

KG to enquire about buses

11. AOCB

- a. Former employee, Iain Davison has been struggling with Nest who deal with the pensions for NCDC. He wanted to highlight the issues he's been having. Both NCDC & the Hillswick shop deal with Nest for pensions.
 - **RM said that NCDC would need to think about a review**
- b. Jane Ratter from the Ollaberry Shop had asked if NCDC would be doing the winter voucher scheme again this year.
 - **The Board agreed that this would be done again this year, RM wanted to make sure that the January vouchers are dated for use after the 14th January.**
- c. Sandness Development Company have approached NCDC looking for support to challenge the SIC's mothballing policy. CA had contacted the three parent council groups in Northmavine. Although SIC had proposed amalgamating the 3 schools in to 1 in 2014, and school closure is an underlying worry for the parent councils, it is not an obvious worry at the minute. RM asked whether it was more an issue for Community Council The discussion moved on to keeping school numbers up and DB suggested that housing shouldn't be focused in just one area, and that NCDC should be looking at housing in each area of Northmavine. CJ suggested looking at what houses are lying dormant in Northmavine that NCDC could potentially purchase to refurbish. CA said there is a department in the Scottish Government trying to get empty homes back into the market and there was some funding available. CA said that there was currently no Empty Housing Officer in Shetland.
 - CA to get back in touch
- d. DTAS Board member training, it was decided that the training day with DTAS will be the 24th of November, along with Soup & Sandwiches in the hall.
 - **CA/KG to book the hall**

12. Wage Review – discussed in private by board members.

Date of next meeting 27th November 2024 7:30pm in the Ollaberry Hall.

Meeting ended at 21:00