



A meeting of NCDC was held on: Wednesday, 14th August 2024, at 7:30pm, in the Ollaberry Hall

Present – Bob McGeady, Stephen Moore, Margaret Roberts, Alistair Williamson,

1. **Apologies:** Bill Manson, David Brown, James Titcomb, Craig Johnson,
In Attendance – Charlotte Anderson & Karlyn Garrick
2. Previous minutes were approved by Stephen Moore and seconded by Margaret Roberts.
3. Nortenergy update – MR updated the board with a report from Maree Hay, management accounts show Polycrub profits of £140k for 23/24 and the stock in all the hubs are £163k. They are looking at using this in some sort of investment. April to July this year the sales are £100,000 ahead of last year, similar figures to 2022. Polycrub has been to the Highland Show, HebCelt and the Black Isle Show this summer, which has been expensive but worth it as it has resulted in immediate sales. Still targeting the market in England & Wales. There are advertisements in garden magazines, broad sheets and Welsh lifestyle magazines. Sales in England & Wales is increasing each year but much slower than Scotland. Polycrub are looking at attending 2 shows in England next year to promote the product, as the Scottish shows proved a physical representation of the product was successful. The average size is decreasing slightly, due to the fact you now need a building warrant for sizes above 4x7m. Still waiting for the structural accreditation for the 5m width Polycrub, CASE is extremely busy. A few community groups have bought the 5m Polycrub but are fully aware of the delay with accreditation. MH is in discussions with the team at For You Training and their [GroForYou](#) project. Their campus is located in Tain which is on the NC500 route – a great place for advertisement, they plan to buy several Polycrubs over 2 phases. There are 36 orders in the pipeline, 5 in Shetland & Orkney, 19 in Inverness, 7 in Lewis and 5 Natwich. A total of 123 sales for this year so far. MR updated the board that they would like to encrypt the Polycrub plans, due to the many copycats in the market. They are also looking into a Polycrubber Community group but this is still early days, as well as looking into the overseas market. Polycrub get a lot of interest from America & Canada but can't send them Polycrubs. MR is keen to establish a company on the mainland who can supply and install the Polycrubs as right now customers are receiving their kits and local tradesmen are assembling them which can lead to copycat structures. RM asked if the Polycrub plans could be sent via WeTransfer with a time limit, but this could still be downloaded, CA said you'd still need an encrypted PDF. The accountants send files with a password which would be something to look into. Polycrub are seeking help from Business Gateway on this.
ACTION: KG to send MH meeting minutes
4. Growing Local update – the gardener post has been filled. There were 2 applicants, and 1 more after the recruitment process had closed. After a discussion between CA & MR a job share was considered between 2 of the applicants. The board agreed this was the best approach for what both applicants could offer the project. The grant doesn't cover all of the wage for the gardener, but it was agreed to look at topping up the pot with funding from elsewhere such as the windfarm money.
ACTION: MR to speak to applicants to give them an update
5. Financial update – CA updated to say everything is on target but hasn't gotten a chance to speak with Bill Manson. The finances are looking healthy at the moment. A budget sheet had been circulated to directors prior to the meeting.
6. Hillswick Shop – SM was happy to share with the board that the manager post at the shop had now been filled. He is hopeful that things will settle down within the running of the shop. The new manager is due

to start on the 16th September. SM now has access to the banking, and logs in everyday to check the accounts. The figures are healthy within the shop, it is estimated around £1200 in sales each day. A member of staff has handed in their notice and their last day is the 6th of September. This unfortunately means that there will be no handover between this member of staff and the new manager. SM thanked the member of staff for coming back to the shop and achieving what they have done in the last few months. CA will also be on holiday when the new manager starts, however she has been working on a handbook for the shop. CA & MR suggested a member of staff from the Scalloway Meat Co. to come up and help familiarise the new manager with the computer system as SMC and Hillswick use the same software. It was also suggested that CA sit with the member of staff to understand their role fully and add it to the handbook. CA also suggested to contacting Emma Sandison who learnt a lot of the duties when she was on the board. It was noted that the member of staff will need to be replaced. Two staff members who work at the shop part time may come back in the winter months when their summer jobs have finished.

ACTION: CA to meet with staff member and to arrange meeting with new manager, and Emma Sandison

7. Weaving Shed update – CA had been called late one evening that the flat hadn't been cleaned for the new guests arriving. There was a bit of tension from the guests, but they were reimbursed for 2 nights of their stay. The cleaner was away and hadn't organised for the flat to be cleaned in her absence. Some guests have struggled to find the flat due to the directions that are currently online, CA has changed this in the hope that it is a bit clearer. Esmé and Kelly have decided to close their exhibition a week early. They have also agreed to paint the gallery once their items have come down and before Jeanette Obstoij's work goes back up. They are also going to paint the flat later in the winter. The creator in residence that was booked to come in October has had to cancel due to unforeseen circumstances, however there is a writer booked in for a couple of weeks instead.
8. Old Urafirth School – no update
9. R100 – MR updated the board that Craig Johnson & Drew Ratter have been in talks with BT Openreach for the last year about getting superfast broadband for the areas in Collafirth, Ollaberry and North Roe that don't have sufficient bandwidth just now. They have narrowed the cost down to about £30-40,000 for the whole lot. Similarly, Viking Energy have announced their priorities for the years ahead with better broadband and mobile phone connections being on their list too. DR's suggestion for NCDC to work with Openreach to find out where all the gaps are, look at the cost is and what is available in vouchers, potentially seek windfarm funding to complete it for the whole of Northmavine. MR thinks it would be a beneficial project for both NCDC and Northmavine itself. RM said that it due to Craig initiating the talk with Openreach, he suggested Craig to be the sponsor director for this project.

ACTION: MR to consolidate the email chain between Drew, Craig & Openreach and send to the rest of the board.

KG to email Craig to be sponsor director, and find out shift pattern to coincide with meetings

10. Matters Arising –
 - a. Johnnie Notions – CA said she had Ross Keith to do the Legionnaires test, and she had completed the fire risk assessment, now it's just a case of getting it licensed.
 - b. Stucca – no update.
 - c. Youth Board – CA will speak to them on Friday about getting a meeting set up. CA & MR thought that the Youth Board could organise the dinner dance for the NCDC 20th Birthday celebrations as they are keen for a dance to be their first project.
 - d. Swinister Trees – no update

- e. Business Ring – initial community meeting is next Monday.
- f. NCDC 20th Birthday – KG has had no replies from caterers, so it was suggested to go to the halls themselves to see if they would be able to provide a meal. Invite only to buffet/dinner then open to public for the dance. A date needs finalised, the Urafirth School has an anniversary during November too.

ACTION: KG to find out capacity of each hall for a seated dinner.

- g. Bruckland Open Day – 8th September. NCDC have received funding from Northern Highlands & Islands Climate Hub, as part of their climate festival in September. CA said that the day would be showcasing the Growing Local Project, the Community Fridge, Species on the Edge – RSPB are coming to make bug hotels, Lesley Spence from Kits for All, hopefully the new community vehicle will be here by then that we can show the public. The produce show will be in the Ollaberry Hall along with Sunday Teas. CA just needs to finish the schedules and get them printed to put in the shops.

11. AOCB

- a. Electric Vehicle – CA has found a vehicle down in Birmingham, that has only done 200 miles, and it has the larger battery, it's a Peugeot 6 seater, however they don't deliver the vehicle. RM asked if the current van would get sold. MR thought we would need to keep it for the meantime. NCDC needs to get a Section 19 licence which costs around £30, which also covered people hiring the vehicle. CA said if we became a member of Community Transport Scotland then they get a discount through an insurer for this.

The board decided to go ahead with purchasing this vehicle.

ACTION: CA to send round information pack from Orkney conference to board

- b. CA suggested putting up a shed in the Bruckland compound. The containers are leaking and items are getting ruined, the containers will continue to deteriorate. CA said it would also be beneficial for the Business Ring.

CA also suggested a big washing machine, to wash items for sale. It could also be used by the community for washing large items such as duvets etc.

ACTION: CA to look at potential options for a shed at Bruckland.

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

Date of next meeting will be circulated to directors.

Meeting ended at 20:33