



A meeting of NCDC was held on: Wednesday, 17th April 2024, at 7:30pm, in the NCDC Office

Present – Bob McGeady (RM - Chair), Stephen Moore, Margaret Roberts, James Titcomb

In Attendance – Charlotte Anderson & Karlyn Garrick

1. Apologies – John Alex Cromarty, Alistair Williamson, Bill Manson, David Brown, Craig Johnson
2. Approval of Minutes – Minutes of meeting on 26th February 2024 were approved by SM and were seconded by MR
3. Shetland Amenity Trust – Kale Seed project weren't able to make the meeting, so we'll reschedule for another time. JT said they had sold a few packets this year at Da Barn already and CA suggested putting a link on the new NCDC website to Da Barn's website.
Action: CA to speak to Alex to get link set up on website.
4. Nortenergy update – MR said the accountants still need to finalise the numbers for the year end, but the base profit before they do that is £140,000. Carly Sutherland is learning how to do Management Accounts, so Nortenergy should be able to work out the distribution amount and save on accountant fees. Sales is similar to last year, though the Highlands and Islands market is slowing down, this is mainly due to companies elsewhere trying to copy the Polycrub structure. They have increased their number of trusted constructors and they are looking at ways to improve the customer journey. The market in England & Wales is continuing to grow slowly. They have a presence at the Highland Show this year which hopes to get some sales in. They are still selling to a number of community groups, there are 7 going to Yell and 5 going to Nesting. There is an interest in the new 5m wide range, but they have come to a standstill as they are waiting for CASE Shetland to give structural accreditation. They are hesitant to market this until the structural accreditation is through. They have sold 2 to a community group in Aberdeenshire but it has been strictly mentioned that as yet there is no structural accreditation for this size of polycrub. Polycrub is looking at improving the design such as the H section as this is prone to discolouring and traps algae, improve the lagging on the gable ends, and recycled plastic posts on the end sections. They've had a rapid growth and needing to look at sustaining the quantum leap they made during covid.
5. Growing Local update –
 - we've gotten 2/3 of the National Lottery funding we applied for, this is around £60k. It's less than what was asked for so have to rework sums. RM asked if this meant we could start looking at recruiting somebody to the post. Questions were raised whether the post would be part time or full time giving how much funding has been granted. CA mentioned looking at funding elsewhere for the workshop element, for example Scottish Sea Farms, Cooke Aquaculture, Highlands & Islands Climate Hub, SCBF. CA spoke to SGP and they said they could provide manpower to help construct raised beds made, tree planting etc. The Lottery fund said it would be better if the money could be spread over the 3 year, but it could be done in 2. MR said it would be more beneficial for us to run it over 3 years, as we've missed the start of the growing season for this year and we've not recruited as yet, and it would only give us next year if we were running it over 2 years.
Action: CA to look at funding elsewhere to top up remaining funding
CA to produce a job specification
 - Brae Nursery – Maree Hay had been contacted by the Brae Nursery as they are doing a growing project and are keen to get going. MH was wondering if the Peerie Poly at Tangwick could go to the

Nursery for the season as it's not being used at Tangwick this year. MR was hesitant as the Brae School does have 2 polycrubs on the school grounds – 1 for the primary and 1 for the secondary, however since talks of growing produce has started it has spurred on both departments to use their polycrubs. RM said he was happy for the nursery to have it but they had to pay for it to be delivered and put back to Bruckland when they were finished with it. SM suggested that a local haulage company may do it on a goodwill gesture. MR stated that some of the haulage companies here in Shetland have their own ideas of how to move the polycrubs which has resulted in them damaged in transit. It may be that MH has a truck heading south that could possibly fit the peerie poly along side that it could be dropped off some day at Brae. It was decided that the nursery could have the peerie poly this season at no expense to us, and that since MH had been approached first, it was to go back to her to organise the delivery.

6. Financial update – WM called earlier in the day to discuss and give his apologies, and he stated that we are where we should be, and nothing was of worry. MR reminded the board that we still have to recruit to fill Iain's post, as it wasn't factored in when Karlyn & Keith were hired in October last year. KG has gone up to 4 days a week, Iain was 3 and half days a week and Keith was 4 days a week. CA says that more help would be needed, and RM said to get the recruitment going again.
7. Hillswick Shop update – Stephen Moore updated the board to say that John Alec Cromarty has handed in his notice with immediate effect, SM thanked JAC on behalf of the shop board. Registrations will need to be changed. SM not heard back from A9, but CA says Jane had tested the stocktake and it was happy with everything. The paperwork still needs to be checked to make sure invoices are all accounted for and correct. CA and Robbie Bremner came up to look at the units in the shop and take measurements, he said he'd get a quote back in the next few days. A compressor outside is still more energy efficient. There has been no word from Jeff Gaskell about a business plan. CA had spoken to Community Enterprise and they were keen to help. RM asked about the staffing situation now that Colin Hughson wasn't going to be taking on the post at the shop. SM has approached Leigha Watt to work in the office and she was going to think about it. SM also said that Evelyn will have to work every weekend during the summer because two other members of staff will be back working at the Braewick Café. Iain Davidson has also said that now he has his licence back he could drive the van if Tim can't do it. CA said the system in the shop can do a lot more than we realise, she also tidied up the system to make price checking easier. It was also mentioned that Trading Standards have not been to the Hillswick shop and that they were due a visit. Robbie Bremner said things would have to be moved around in the shop to make way for the new units. The board thought this would be a good time to rearrange the shop for a better customer experience, the shop staff should be consulted on the layout and work together to find the best layout for the space. MR spoke about grant funding, and asked if the shop could get the Rural Shops grant, CA answered that she is waiting for the quote from Robbie Bremner before she could put in the funding application, the shop should also be eligible for the SCBF.
Action: CA to speak to Jeff Gaskell & Community Enterprise
8. Weaving Shed update – not much of an update. We're waiting for quotes for internal work to be carried out which has coincided with suggestions from the fire assessment got done earlier this year. George Magnus is coming to look at putting in some doors, and get some paintwork done as it's looking a bit tired. We've got a lot of bookings for throughout the summer. Helen Robertson from Sullom has been enquiring about an exhibition maybe next year and a friend of hers from south is interested in the Artist in Residence programme, we are due to meet with Helen in June. Susan Bowie no longer wants us to take on her Airbnb property this year.

9. Old Urafirth School – no update really, CA had an email from the Rural Highlands & Islands housing fund wanting to know what percentage break we want to put into the construction compared to getting funds from elsewhere which CA gave them but she hasn't heard back from them yet. We have to decide whether we're going to go through the Community Asset transfer or the negotiated route. The council has 6 months to respond for a community asset transfer but the negotiated route is much quicker. RM said we need the next stage funding to get the detailed plans done, once we get that we'll know where we are funding wise and can decide then.

Action: CA to phone Neil

10. Matters arising

- Johnnie Notions – short term licence would be £220 for a 3 year licence. Still waiting for word back from Margaret at the NFU if it would be an increase in our insurance. MR said we want to do, and see it be used. CA said we need to decide what we would pay Nancy as she was the custodian for the bod when the Amenity Trust was running it.
Action: CA to speak to Margaret at the NFU, and to speak to Hazel at the Amenity Trust
- Stucca – no further ahead with this,
Action: CA to speak to planning department.
- Youth Board – CA went to the Brae High School, there are 4 bairns coming along who are all Hillswick/Eshaness. They are keen to have a dance but shocked at the cost of the band so they are hoping to get a fundraiser going to raise money, they have ideas about a fair along with stalls etc. CA said they have lots and lots of ideas of what they want to do, and hope that this will get more bairns involved in the Youth Board. KG suggested if they had spoken with the Fiddle & Accordion as they are now doing an informal bairns hour for dancing with their Tuesday night practices. RM suggested that the youth board should discuss with the Fiddle & Accordion. CA said the bairns were keen to generate things to get money raised.
- Swinister Trees – CA spoke to Bobby Poleson, and she is going to go for a look someday to see where the worst parts are. David Brown said there would be salmon walkways that could be used. BP is keen to look into funding and that folk used the space. MR said that the access is the main issue, as it's not suitable for everybody.
Action: CA to look at Paths for All funding,
CA to go to Swinister to have a look at the path
CA to speak again with David Brown about walkways
- Business Ring – CA spoke with Hamish, they have 4 different business sources, Machinery, Sharing, Labour & Commodities, as well as training, which is the most significant at the moment. They run over 13000 training courses between all the business rings. The smallest they deal with is Orkney with 200 members, Shetland would be significantly lower, we could do similar things and less formal. CA wondered if we could look at a membership scheme which could be an add on to their Bruckland membership. It's not just for farmers – it can be for construction as well. Some of the business rings get cheaper heating oil. CA suggested organising a meeting for after the lambing time, and see what folk would want and what they would be willing to pay for. It could be as simple as a 'WhatsApp' group if someone was to be going to collect feed – others could order too. Hamish offered for CA to come and look at any business ring when she was visiting the mainland.
Action: CA to organise a meeting after a lambing time with locals

11. AOCB

- RM asked where NCDC were at with the office move, CA is waiting for John Hughson and Raymond Johnson to come with quotes, MR had prompted Raymond Johnson about quotes,

earlier that day. CA suggested we just move, KG suggested that we can move to the other room in the office when work might get carried out. RM was concerned that once we move office, external work may stop, he was also concerned of what Polycrub's electricity bill was. He also said that if NCDC do move down to Bruckland we can then get on with the Community Fridge and the big polycrub. CA keen to keep the phone number for Polycrub. Polycrub's phones are all online anyway, but CA is keen to see if we can set up a 'transfer call system'. RM suggested a community building day, which worked for the Hillswick Shop.

- Community Cafe – North Roe & Ollaberry – KG spoke about the Community Winter Warmers in Hillswick & North Roe run by the SIC, the CLLD and mainly organised through Community Worker Lynsey Hall. The residents of North Roe who did come to the last winter warmer all said that the poster made the event look like it was a soup kitchen. LH took this on board and would feed it back to the team. The overall feeling from the residents of North Roe is that they would like to see something like this become a more regular thing as there isn't much happening in North Roe or in the hall itself. The idea would be to have something similar to the Ollaberry Lunch Club which is run by Charlotte, however this is seen as 'an old folks lunch club' though that isn't the intention, the intention was to get the community together to build friendships and a boost to social confidence. KG asked RM if this is something the North Roe Hall would take on as NCDC don't have the time to take another one, he said he would put it to the committee but like many events in many communities it's the same people who do the work. CA said about renaming the lunch club to a 'community café' and have a pay what you can approach, so if folk want to pay they can however if they don't then they don't need to. Lynsey Hall also mentioned funding that they could look into hiring a minibus/8 seater vehicle that places could be booked for getting picked up and dropped off for those that have no transport.
- CA said she had spoke to Pete Long from the Rural Energy Hub, they are hoping to finalise their memorandum of understanding this week and get started at the beginning of May. They have a budget of roughly £40k that we could get a vehicle. NCDC would have to purchase the vehicle themselves and then lease it to them for the project, if it was a new vehicle we would probably get 80% recovery or if it was 2nd hand it would be 100% recovery. MR recommended something with a bigger battery and wondered if we would need to look into something more multipurpose. The Rural Energy hub could fund another charger inside the compound at Bruckland which could leave the one outside the compound for public use. PL had also enquired if we would need marketing for the e-bikes, CA had suggested KG's idea of getting a video made of somebody getting off the public bus to then walk towards Bruckland to hire an e-bike and have a cycle around Northmavine, which PL was keen to see go ahead. The hub will be in Brae, with NCDC & North Yell being satellites which the hope of more communities getting involved throughout Shetland. Though there would be a financial risk to NCDC, RM & MR were keen for this to go ahead as long as there was an agreement in place and if we had the available cash. The project is due to finish on the 31st October 2025, everything that has been part of the project, the ownership would be signed over to us.
- NCDC van break down – no update, and no vans available in Shetland for hire.
Wage review – the minimum wage went up on the 1st of April, Tim & Scott are sitting below, MR agreed they will need to go up.

Action: CA to contact Bon Accord about wage review

- MR asked about SIC Consultant's Report, CA still hasn't received it. They are doing a report for different areas for Growing Local and how to set up their polycrub and various other things.

Action: CA to contact Opal & Osla to get an update on this



12. Date next meeting – 7:30 Wednesday 22nd May 7:30pm