A meeting of NCDC was held on: Wednesday, 22nd May 2024, at 7:30pm, in the Ollaberry Hall.

Present – Bob McGeady (RM - Chair), Stephen Moore, Margaret Roberts, John Alec Cromarty, Alistair Williamson

Apologies: Bill Manson, James Titcomb, Craig Johnson & David Brown

In Attendance – Charlotte Anderson & Karlyn Garrick

Previous minutes were approved by Stephen Moore and seconded by Margaret Roberts.

1. Nortenergy update – Margaret Roberts told the board that there are 49 orders in the pipeline waiting to go out for delivery. Polycrub is off to the Highland Show at the end of June which will hopefully boost sales again. The sales in England & Wales are picking up, it's a big market but a small percentage and different to the Scottish market. Carly Sutherland is meeting with A9 for the final session of creating management account, which means Polycrub will be able to do their own accounts. One Polycrub has sold already since the NCDC Peerie Poly has been delivered to the Brae Nursery.

2. Growing Local update – Charlotte Anderson said the contract has been signed and approved by funders, and now is a case of getting the work in place. MR had emailed a first draft of a job spec for the Growing Local position. RM reminded the board about more admin help for Charlotte in the NCDC office.

3. Financial update – CA had done a projected budget for the next financial year, and had spoken it over briefly with BM. Overall mainly on track, MR questioned the donation from Polycrub and doubted it would be as high as the projected figure, it had been reduced from last year.
   Action: CA to speak to Maree Hay about projected Polycrub figure

4. Hillswick Shop update – Stephen Moore gave a lengthy update:
   - he still doesn't have access to the bank, CA said he was a signatory but SM will have to get the online banking set up.
   - Staffing wise, an ex member of staff had been approached to come back to help get the paperwork back on track for the shop, however another employee has resigned. The ex member of staff is now coming back on a trial basis 2 days a week. Some of the opening hours were having to be reviewed depending on staff availability and volunteers were also helping out. A job advert has gone out this week, which CA said has resulted in one person interested so far. A managerial job spec is to be reviewed before it gets advertised, with a view to mainly working in the office to handle paperwork and managerial duties but will mean they need to help out in the shop as and when.
     Action: CA to respond to applicant to meet with SM and herself.
   - Security in the shop, SM stated that from a meeting with both the shop board and the staff, the staff have voiced their concerns on their own security in the shop. SM has ordered new CCTV which can be accessed online/through phones and tablets. Locks are to be fitted to the drawers at the till as this has been sitting with money in it. There has been reports that a banned customer has still be using the shop, so

another letter was getting sent out and staff informed on what to do if they enter the premises.

- Year end books – SM has been in touch with Jane at A9, one of the concerns was the VAT return because there had been a roll over on the system due to the late submission. This would be taken into consideration for next year.
- SM thanked Charlotte and that both he and the shop board recognised her help with the shop so far.
- Questions were raised from the shop staff if the current IT/EPOS system in the shop was user friendly enough. JAC raised the issue that there aren't many EPOS systems that worked with the fuel pumps. CA said that the staff haven't had proper training, JAC replied they've not had a need to use it, however, now is the time for training.
  Action: SM to research EPOS systems suited for fuel pumps

MR questioned the sustainability of the Hillswick shop, as it's been at crisis point for the last 9 months, and that should NCDC directors be looking at a plan, SM, RM and AW were in agreement. BM stated that we need to ask the question, so we can look at plans. The shop board had questioned the sustainability of the shop themselves, and what was the need to go from week to week in crisis point, reducing hours, due to struggling with staffing issues. The shop board suggested that they should review in 6 week's time as that would give time for the shop manager post to be advertised and coincide with an NCDC meeting. It was finalised that a decision would be made in 12 week's time. MR thank JAC for the years of work at the Hillswick shop and for SM taking it on.

5. The Weaving Shed – Creative artist in residence is up later in the year, the weavers are back for Wool Week. CA is struggling to get painters in to paint the flat as it is needing a spruce up. Esme's exhibition is to open in the middle of June.

6. Old Urafirth School – an email was circulated to the directors from Neil Moir from the Scottish Government, the email stated that SIC Housing did not support our application so we can't get the funding. RM & AW were disheartened by the email.
   It was suggested from a conversation with Tom Morton and RM that NCDC approach the 3 local councillors to get involved with the project. Currently the SIC see no need for housing in Northmavine, however there is a need for housing. AW questioned how many applicants had put in for a house at Stucca, CA replied over 20. MR questioned whether 2 houses could be built, but RM said that wasn't feasible, MR also questioned a phased project but again, SIC still wouldn't be interested in it. MR asked if we could push for a zero cost asset transfer. RM said we had 2 options of getting local councillors involved to persuade the council to change their minds or NCDC stop the Old Urafirth School project, and pursue the land they already own at Stucca. Paul Harrington for SLF spoke with CA and suggest pursuing the land at Stucca, and complete expressions of interest within the community, JAC said that the community must be tired of all the consultations and expressions of interest requests as this has gone on long enough. Paul Harrington had told CA if RIHF isn't supporting NCDC, SLF won't support them either. MR suggested shared ownerships for self builds, and wondered if there was another model that would inspire the board, or NCDC approach businesses/individuals who would be interested in this. RM said there were still big projects coming up in Shetland in the future, and wondered if the companies involved with them would be interested in this. MR stated that this isn't feasible due the road conditions and the fact that they would prefer 1 pickup point to streamline journeys. CA had asked Neil Moir if NCDC would still get the feasibility money and he said that they might be able to consider it once NCDC had had a board meeting regarding the points that was in the email

and come back with a suggested route for purchase. Then they would look at it again if the application for feasibility would be invited. JAC proposed making a report with Hjaltland's figures in terms of interest they've had for houses in the last period, and put it back to the Scottish Government to show that there is and has been demand for houses in the area, and then they can go back to the SIC to query the issue and why the council won't support NCDC. MR said Maree Hay has kept all the Hjaltland figures, RM said he could get the figures too, he said the figures should be in the last housing needs survey. MR asked if Hjaltland would partner with NCDC, but this wouldn't be happening due to their big project at the Staney Hill in Lerwick. MR raised the point that why is NCDC purchasing the old school for £135,000 when they already own Stucca and should be focusing on that. It was decided that if the council can give NCDC the building for free, they would continue with their plan to upgrade the schoolhouse.

Action: CA & RM to email the council

9. Matters arising

- Johnnie Notions – Insurance came back for £100, short term licence is just over £200 for the 3 years, and the Amenity Trust isn't looking for a fee towards them
- CA queried what the custodian pay had been, which looks achievable for NCDC
- Stucca – see earlier re. Old Urafirth School
- Youth Board – Tom Morton donated an ebike to Bruckland. The bike itself is over £2000. Iain Davidson has been checking it over with bits to replace including a battery. CA proposed a silent auction to raise money for the Youth Board. CA is hoping to meet with the board again, she pointed out that a new scheme in the community council would like to see youth members on the community council.
- Swinister Trees – no update
- Business Ring – no update

10. AOCB

- Maree Hay has told CA that Sarah no longer wants to work at Bruckland on Sundays. MR asked if we had gotten any volunteers which we have not. CA asked if we should be putting out a post to say that we may not be able to continue if we don't get volunteers for the Sunday shift.
- RM had spoken to BM who had said he is having to reluctantly resign from the NCDC board, however it is not with immediate effect, he will wait until the position has been filled and help with anything he can. RM thanked him for his time on the board and all that he has done in the time he has been with the company. MR suggested a staff member could become a treasurer if the board were unable to get another director
  Action: CA to check this

Date of next meeting Wednesday 3rd July at 7:30pm

The meeting ended at 20:45