



NCDC - AGM

Approved Minutes

Minute of the annual general meeting held on: **Monday 14th March 2022** at 7.00pm in Ollaberry hall

Present – Bob McGeady (Chair), Margaret Roberts, Bill Manson, Alistair Williamson, Stuart Balfour

In Attendance – Charlotte Slater, Mark Ratter, Iain Davidson plus list of attendees

1. Opening Welcome

B McGeady welcomed and thanked everyone coming.

2. Apologies – Laura Jamieson

3. Approval of Minute from last AGM, Monday 18th March 2019 – B Manson proposed, A Williamson seconded.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

Will deal with as we work through the agenda.

5. Overview of 2019/20

Chair provided a brief overview of the 2019/20 year, as that year's AGM was cancelled due to pandemic restrictions. In that year, the Bruckland SCRAN site opened to provide community skips for Northmavine residents as well as a centre to donate goods which could be re-used and/or re-purposed. It attracted around 70 – 80 members in its first year, with many others choosing a "pay as you throw" option. Nortbikes was also set up in this year with Hillswick Shop being chosen as the outlet. NCDC received funding to purchase 5 e-bikes, 3 folding and 2 shopper-type. The bikes were available for hire on a daily or weekly basis but delays in getting things in place meant little trade in that year. Tom Morton also updated the Northmavine guidebook and created an audio guide.

6. Overview of 2020/21

Chair provided a brief overview of the 2020/21 year, as that year's AGM was also cancelled due to pandemic restrictions. In that year, everyone faced difficult challenges. Bruckland closed for several months, as a non-essential business. The Nortbikes scheme took a further setback due to travel restrictions. There were many positives though, the Hillswick Shop introduced telephone ordering and deliveries to vulnerable members of the community. Polycrub business increased significantly as people began to reassess their lifestyles. The Green Energy project came to fruition with the introduction of Solar panels at the Hillswick Shop and Bruckland as well as an all-electric van to aid local businesses and a charge point for community use. In addition, NCDC aided those in need in the community with care packs issued and the Eat Well voucher scheme introduced among several initiatives. Cynthia Poleson took over from Tom Morton as the Project Worker and the Chair recorded his thanks to her for her efforts during this period.

7. Chair's Report

B McGeady began his report by stating how significant a year this had been for both NCDC and Nortenergy. The success of the latter has given NCDC a sound financial footing to begin new projects and the next couple of years would be both challenging and exciting. This year had also seen the launch of the Growing Local project and, although Mark Ratter, the Project Officer was soon to be moving on to fresh challenges, his great efforts in getting the project started and established were noted. Mark will be replaced by 2 new staff who are going to share the role and move the project on. There were other staff changes during this year also, with Cynthia Poleson moving on and being replaced by Charlotte Slater as Development Worker. This meant Charlotte had resigned as a director and that position had not yet been filled. The Urafirth School project is still being considered and a structural survey should take place soon.

8. Treasurers report

Bill Manson reported that last year had seen a substantial input from Nortenergy and NCDC could look forward to a steady income from this source, although not at the same level. While Hillswick Shop did not provide a large financial income, it was an important asset in serving the community. A budget had not yet been prepared for 2022/23 but this was to be worked on in the remainder of this month. The board would need to prioritise how the funds are utilised.

9. Report on Trading Subsidiaries – Nortenergy and Hillswick Shop

Nortenergy

Margaret Roberts reported that the Polycrub company had grown significantly since lockdown. Turnover trebled and much of this was achieved against a background of supply shortages and lack of staff. As a trading arm of NCDC, all profits generated were donated to NCDC for the benefit of the Northmavine community.

Turnover for year ending March 20/21 was £1.2 million, with almost £400k donated back to NCDC.

Nortenergy now employ five members of staff, and a shed to house Polycrub materials is well under construction. The shed will improve staff conditions and mean that Polycrub kits can be assembled in any weather.

There are distribution hubs outside Shetland in the Western Isles and Inverness and, later this month, a third hub will open in Cheshire. There are plans to create at least another four in England and Northern Ireland.

Polycrub range now includes the Polycrub Classic, Peerie Polly and Opyl and there are plans to add new products to the range. Over 1000 Polycrubs have been sold since the company began – that results in a lot of home-grown veg.

It also means a lot of redundant salmon pipe is diverted from landfill – over 75 miles at the last count.

Nortenergy are grateful to the salmon companies who work with them on this.

Gratitude was also expressed to local crofters who donate used sheep lick buckets. Hundreds of these were recycled – scrubbed out and used to send screws and ironmongery with each Polycrub kit.

Recycling and carbon reduction has always been at the heart of the Polycrub ethos, so Nortenergy were delighted to win a VIBES outstanding achievement award at the end of last year. The award was for good environmental practice.

Nortenergy's aim is for continued growth – not only in terms of increased turnover, but in the number of Polycrubbers growing their own, and profits being returned to NCDC to help grow Northmavine.

Hillswick Shop

Iain Davidson began by reiterating how the shop had risen to the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic and recorded his thanks to the staff for all their efforts in making sure the community continued to be served throughout lockdown. He noted that, while trade had subsequently increased, so had staffing and other costs. However, the shop was fortunate to receive some of the grant assistance available to businesses during this time and subsequently ended the 2020/21 year with a profit of around £6,500 which was donated back to NCDC. It was also reported that a restructuring of staff towards the end of 2021 had been a stressful period for all the staff and directors but was now bearing fruit with new people in place and staff re-motivated to help the shop thrive. Customers are noticing the changes with positive feedback received and staff continuing to come forward with fresh ideas. Shop directors are confident of ended the 2021/22 year with a small profit.

10. Appointment of Auditor

Bob McGeady noted A9 were the current Auditors and asked if Directors wished to reappoint them. Bill

Manson moved to do so and Margaret Roberts seconded. There were no objections.

11. Election of directors

Stuart Balfour announced his decision to step down as a director. He suggested Helen Robertson may be interested in becoming a director and Harry Haslam intimated that he was also interested. The Chair invited him to attend the next board meeting after which he could decide. All other directors remained

12. Growing Local Project

Mark Ratter presented an overview of the project to date. The initial project goals were to:

- Identify and support community members to overcome obstacles to growing fruit & veg
- Create and develop community growing spaces
- Increase community access to local produce
- Capture local, traditional knowledge of growing food

With regard to establishing community growing spaces plans were well under way to establishing a site in each of Northmavine's 5 communities. Following success of Makers' Market at Hillswick Hall last year, more growing-themed events were planned for this year. An app is also planned to highlight and celebrate crofting and growing in Northmavine. Information sharing and promotion is being developed through online resources and Growers' Groups and NCDC are now selling official Shetland Kale seeds.

Future aims for the project are:

- New GL Project Workers (Job Share)
- Small initiatives which can make a difference (Peerie Voar seed packs)
- Continue more access to growing; more access to local produce

The Chair noted his thanks to Mark for all his efforts in getting the project up and running.

13. Update to the Memorandum and Articles

Adoption of the proposed changes to the Mem. & Arts. was unanimously approved

14. AOCB

Date of next Board Meeting was agreed for 28th March 2022 at 19:30.

15. Closing remarks

The chair again thanked those present for attending and stated that he looked forward to the challenges of the coming year.

Meeting Ended.