



A meeting of NCDC was held on: Wednesday, 25th June 2025, at 7:30pm, in the Ollaberry Hall

** The meeting scheduled for the 7th of May 2025 was postponed.*

Present: - Bob McGeady (Chair) Stephen Moore, Margaret Roberts, Alistair Williamson, Bill Manson

In Attendance: Michel Tordoir (Hillswick Shop), Charlotte Anderson & Karlyn Garrick

1. Apologies: Kelly Robertson, James Titcomb, Craig Johnson & David Brown.

2. Previous Minutes were approved by Alistair Williamson and seconded by Margaret Roberts

3. Hillswick Shop was brought forward.

Michel presented a detailed financial update, including:

a. Accounting & Balance Sheet Issues

- Discrepancies identified in prior balance sheets.
- Cash deposits not properly recorded; cash holdings are higher than reported.
- Corrections planned: untracked cash (~£2,000) will be reconciled through proper revenue recording.

b. Waste Reduction Achievements

- Overall waste significantly reduced by **85%**:
 - Butchery waste: from 150 to 20 units.
 - Fish waste: from 100 to 5.
 - Bakery: from 200 to 20.
 - Chilled goods (e.g. milk): near-zero wastage.
- Reduced price items now account for **1.07%** of turnover (down from 1.24%).

c. Margins & Turnover

- Margins increased by 5% across all barcoded items.
- Daily sales graph showed:
 - April: -4%
 - May: +15%
 - June: +7% (was +20% mid-month)
 - Overall Q1 growth: **+6%**

- Tourist activity has increased footfall, though not always high spending.

d. Craft Sales Margin

- Currently at 15% markup (actual return closer to 11-12%).
- Proposal to increase to **35% commission**, aligning with broader market standards.

e. Card Payment Switch

- Transition from Elavon to TakePayments: estimated **£1,000/year savings**.

f. 2024–2025 Forecast

- Revenue nearing £396,000–£400,000.
- Gross margin improving, now around 17% (up from 12–13%).
- Estimated net loss for last fiscal year revised from £17,000 to **£15,000**.

MT thanked the board for the loan the shop had received as this has meant that he can do the payments twice a month. The cash flow is increasing, and he hopes that the shop will be in a better place soon to generate cash flow but for the moment it is stable. He hopes to be able to produce figures of Q1 of this year at the next meeting. The board were in agreement that the shop was doing much better thanks to MT's hard work.

RM thanks MT for coming along to the meeting, MT left the meeting.

RM spoke of the email that was circulated to the board by CA from Jane at A9 saying that the money given to the shop should come under as a loan and not share capital. RM said he is still trying to speak to Jane at A9 about this. The documents regarding the Nortenergy loan can be adapted easily enough. However, RM suggests the shop loan should be 0% interest for 5 years, WM agreed and added that there should be an annual review. MR said that this would need to be checked with OSCR too.

4. Nortenergy Update – MR updated the board

- £84k net profit for the year
- Enquiries were up; number of sales were down.
- Delivery Cost Barrier - English customers expect free delivery; current costs deter sales.
- Future project opportunities discussed, including customer finance and product delivery models in Shetland and Inverness, with a view to finding businesses to supply and install Polycrubs as people don't want to arrange both.
- Working on 5m wide structural accreditation.
- Lot of potential Irish customers enquiring at the Highland Show, though Polycrub can't ship there because of Brexit but they are close to having the relevant EU papers for sales over there.
- They are looking at doing filming for Gardeners World, for the People's Videos section of the programme.

- Polycrub has been at the North Garden Show & the Royal Highland Show, they were running a 10% discount if orders were made within 3 months, approximately 100 people signed up for the discount, though these orders may not be fulfilled. There were a mixture of returning customers wanting to order their 2nd Polycrub, as well as returning visitors having seen the Polycrub at the show last year who were now in a place to order their first one. The shows have been beneficial in letting customers see the physical Polycrub itself rather than the ads.

RM told the board that he is still working on preparing a document for CA to send to DTAS to get some advice about the loan with nortenergy and what NCDC can and can't do with it as there were a few issues that Jane from A9 has raised.

5. Financial Update –

CA said the 2nd lot of Growing Local funding had come through from the National Lottery, MR added that we're still not fully funded for this project, so MR, CA & Kev Forth (Growing Local Gardener) were going to look at other funding options.

WM happy with budget sheet, there is £400,000 than can be used straight away with another £250,000 in a high interest account, he suggested another £200,000-£250,000 should be put into another high interest account like before.

ACTION: WM to look at high interest account and transfer funds

6. Bruckland – CA updated the board, that the card machine functional again. CA has made individual project budget sheets, there is a bigger cost for Bruckland this year having bought the containers off of Nortenergy.

Still trying to assess electricity usage, Bruckland itself doesn't use much energy, so it was unfair to put the bills down to Bruckland when it was for the whole area at Bruckland, including Polycrub. The heaters in the Polycrub use a lot of energy but this is down to the type of heater they are. CA is doing meter readings every month. CA had spoken to Peter at Community Energy Scotland about the three phase supply as she can only see 2 phases on the app. Peter from CES said that their technical team could try and figure it out.

Solar export issues and battery installation considerations ongoing, though CA is struggling getting anything back from Nordri.

7. Growing Local – MR said that vegetables were now reaching the shop, and it was proof of concept for the GL project, that we can grow veg and sell it. WM asked about the wastage and that the shop should have a percentage for themselves. CA had received a call from a member of the community in Stucca, Hillswick, who has asked if he could buy a piece of land to place a Polycrub. There were suggestions across the board about getting the peerie poly back from the Brae Nursery, the resident said he was quite happy to share the Polycrub with his neighbours and will speak to them to gauge interest.

ACTION: CA to contact the Brae Nursery

7. Housing Project – RM spoke of the modular houses built by Dhanni Moar, RM met with

- **Danny Moore's Proposal:** Danny suggests building modular two-bedroom homes off-site and transporting them for installation. Estimated cost: **£70,000 including VAT**. The design avoids traditional floor slabs by using ground pads and tie-downs.
- **Regulatory Concerns:** Building regulations and EPC compliance are uncertain. Suzanne Malcolmson of Malcolmson's Architects, estimates **£3,000** to develop a compliant house type.
- **Alternative Design:** Suzanne proposes a high-standard modular design with air source heating, potentially costing **under £100,000**.
- **Timeline & Delivery:** Danny could deliver two homes in **five months** if commissioned together. Realistically, orders wouldn't be till **early next year**.
- **Planning Strategy:** Initial planning application would be for **four units**, with phased construction. A **master plan** is needed to show potential for up to **10 homes** on the site.
- **Old School Site Challenges:** Existing four-bed house needs **£100,000** in upgrades. Demolition of old school building would cost **£30–40k**.
- **Funding & Ownership:** Strategy includes requesting the site for free from the council or pursuing a **Community Asset Transfer**. Initial phase estimated at **£250–275k**.
- **Grant Opportunities:** Potential funding from **SCBF**, though once applied for you can't apply for another 12 months. Application for **£8,000** approved to cover master planning and house type development.
- **Future Partnerships:** Possibility of working with **Cooke Aquaculture** or replicating Hjaltland's housing model for long-term economic benefit.
- **Next Steps:** Proceed with planning, design, and council engagement while exploring funding options.

8. Tourism

- **Eshaness Lighthouse:** CA said that the EPC for lighthouse is rated G—unsure if suitable for craft retail or accommodation use. Many of the local businesses like the shop, Tangwick Haa, Breiwick Café all stock local crafts so there is doubt if there would be a market for this. CA said that another member of the board had suggested hostel accommodation, so she has been in touch with the amenity trust to get an EPC sent through. RM queried if you could get an exemption because it's a historic building. CA wasn't sure as this wasn't the case for Johnny Notions.

ACTION: CA to enquire about building exemptions

- **Johnnie Notions:** CA said the fire alarms just need installed in Johnnie Notions, they are battery operated. There's already been a few enquiries about staying in the bod. A decision on how much to charge per night was made which would be £10.

ACTION: CA to fit Fire Alarms

- **Information Boxes:** KG said the phone boxes now have outdoor display boards with maps inside them, along with tourist information and QR codes to the website. Perspex is with Art Machine in Lerwick waiting for new sticker with 'Northmavine' & 'Information' on them then they will be replaced. Lights to be ordered to replace current ones.

ACTION: KG to source lighting

- **Polycrub at Mavis Grind:** Polycrub to be sited at Mavis Grind with tourist information in it. Planning hiccups for Polycrub project; potential site fee of £125/year considered excessive.

ACTION: KG to send email to Cllr Andrew Hall to query this

- **Northmavine Way:** Craig Johnson had emailed around the board with his updates as he wouldn't be able to attend the meeting. He says he has made the maps live to the public to see what interest they get. The last discussions we had was a business case for some funding.

10. **R100** – Craig Johnson's email had said that we're waiting on the results of the latest bidding (end of Q3, start of Q4).

11. **Matters Arising:**

- Stucca: no update
- Youth Board: CA hoped to look at dates to meet when the schools go back to get their second workshop discussed.
- Business Ring: no update

12. **AOB (Any Other Business)**

- MR said she had been invited to attend the NORA Conference in Stornoway from the 13-15th July.
- Ivor Poleson had approached NCDC about the state of the road down the beach at Heylor, it's a popular spot for both visitors and locals. He wondered if NCDC would take it on and fund the repairs.

ACTION: CA to contact Tracey Anne Anderson at SIC to find out who owns the land and how much it will cost to repair it.

- CA brought up defibrillator maintenance, a lot of halls and community groups got funding to install them, though they need new batteries and pads etc which cost a lot of money. CA suggested NCDC having a pot of money designated for the defibs around Northmavine,
- Winter gathering (September) planned for Shetland/Orkney Development Trusts.
- David Brown had brought up at the last meeting about the amount of nets from the aquaculture industry that will be going into landfill, CA has been in touch with Interface

who have responded with an application form which they will then apply to all the universities in the UK to look into a research project.

The meeting ended at 9pm

Next meeting to be held on the 30th July at 7:30pm in the Ollaberry Hall.

