



Northavine Community Development Company

Approved Minutes

A meeting of NCDC was held on Wednesday, 28th January 2026, in the Club Room of the Ollaberry Hall.

Present – Bob McGeady, Margaret Roberts, Alistair Williamson, Bill Manson, David Brown

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

Apologies – Kelly Robertson

- 1. Approval of previous minutes** – Bill Manson (WM) proposed the minutes and were seconded by Alistair Williamson
- 2. Hillswick shop** – Michel Tordoir updated the board as to the current position The gross margins have been increased as much as possible. This has been achieved by reducing costs within the card payments, water supply and accountancy fees as MT was doing this himself. He has also increased prices as much as he can but he feels that they are now at the maximum that can be achieved. The current customer figure coming to the shop just now is 59 per day however if this could be increased by 30 it would benefit the shop much more. The wages increase hasn't helped with the figures for this year as since a new member of staff has started The shop has lost 5 customers over the winter which has had a huge effect on the shop.

There was discussion as to the best way forward including alternative business models. It was decided that there should be a community consultation exercise to explain the position the shop was in and to gauge support for the continuation of the shop but not as a subsidiary of NCDC.

It was agreed that NCDC would fund the shop until the end of March but the [position would be reviewed in light of the public meeting. RM said it would be necessary to nominate 2 of the NCDC board members to join the shop board. It was agreed that RM & MR would join the shop board. There would be an EGM next week and a public meeting in the Hillswick Shop in the following weeks. RM said it whilst it would be the end of the road for NCDC with the shop NCDC could support either an individual or a community group taking on the shop. As owner of the building NCDC could offer it at a peppercorn rent which would help with running costs and profitability.

DB said the board wouldn't know the state of the shop if it had not been for MT. There was concern for suppliers if they haven't been paid, though MT said payments have been regular they now have a good relationship with the suppliers. The board thank MT for all he has done over the last year.

ACTION: CA to organise a shop board meeting Tuesday 3rd February and a public meeting at a date to be arranged.

- 3. Election of Vice Chair** – to be decided at next meeting.
- 4. Nortenergy Update** – MR gave an update: with recent trading showing strong momentum and several encouraging indicators across the year to date. Marketing activity has intensified, with staff developing new digital and AI-driven skills to improve visibility and targeted outreach, and early results are positive. Engagement with RHS sites is ongoing, alongside exploration of other high-footfall locations

in England and Wales, DB suggested Polycrub Lean to's which MR said has this has been discussed in the past, and that the team is also broadening the product narrative to highlight non-growing uses of Polycrubs. Applications have been submitted for the Great Yorkshire Show and the Royal Welsh Show, Polycrub is hoping to attend the Royal Highland Show as well as the North of Scotland Garden show which will be into its 2nd year. Polycrub are considering attending spring shows if the 1st quarter shows a lag again this year. The 5m wide model has been amended now been cleared by the structural engineer and will move into full marketing once plans are updated. There has been issues getting the recycled pipes out of the Western Isles which has resulted in Polycrub buying in new pipes. Interest from Ireland remains strong, though delivery costs continue to be a barrier, and options for a local hub are being explored.

5. **Local Place Plan & Development Plan** – CA has finished writing up a consultation online, Planning Aid Scotland have said they can offer staff time to go through all the results and write up the information. They have also offered to print leaflets for advertising etc. The Ollaberry Hall are going to have a Soup & Sweet in a couple of weeks so hopefully we could attend that. The mapping exercises will consist of 3 things – things you like, things you thing need improvement and things for the future. The plan is to link in with other halls for fish and chip nights etc.
6. **Growing Local update** – MR updated the board that Kev has now taken on the grower role full-time and is progressing well, with early sowings underway and a focus on succession planting to maintain steady supply into the shops. Work is advancing at the Stucca site, where raised beds and a small Polycrub are being developed with external funding to establish a community allotment. He is also exploring options for veg boxes or bags, with further planning due in March. John & Elaina Leach have been along to assist Kev in getting the compost machine Big Hannah up and running and funding applications submitted to support a wider feasibility study on circular use of green waste. Kev is preparing plots for the coming season and awaiting his PVG clearance before engaging with schools. Overall, activity is progressing steadily, with early-season groundwork, community engagement, and operational development all moving in the right direction.
7. **Financial update** – WM said that the figures were looking good. One of the projected increases within the staff wages will not be happening now as Stephen Moore has resigned from NCDC.
8. **Project proposals** – No update but CA is working on it.
9. **Old Urafirth School** – RM said he was happy how the NCDC Planning Day had gone earlier in the month. An indicative costs has been received from one contractor and further prices are awaited from 2 others.

CA & RM are attending meetings with Lynsey Hall, Emma Perring – Community Housing & Mark Rater, Paul Harrington from the Scottish Land Fund and Luke from Orkney in the coming weeks.

10. **Planning Day Update** – CA has written a report and a risk map and has uploaded it to the one drive and will also email it around. Those who attended the planning day all agreed it had been beneficial.

ACTION: KG to put risk map on the meeting agendas every quarter so the board can discuss.

11. **Matters Arising** –

- a. **R100**- no update
- b. **Dark Skies Festival** – CA has purchased light meter and has done the first lot of readings. CA has been given a few suggestions of funding pots to try to raise funds to get a planetarium up to Shetland, also looking at sponsorship from local businesses. CA also to contact Wild Skies in Unst and the Saxa Vord Space Station. CA is hoping that Kev Forth will do photography

sessions at night, Kelly Robertson for aurora painting workshops and story telling up at Johnnie Notions.

- c. **Bruckland Electrical Map** – no further ahead. This is because Stephen Moore had contacted GTS to undertake the work of mapping out the site, however GTS doesn't want to step on any toes locally so have backed away from the job. Jim Duncan & Duncan Feather are to do it instead.

ACTION: CA to contact Duncan Feather about electrical map

12. AOCB:

- a. WM asked about Johnnie Notions, CA said it seems to be successful so far with several bookings having been throughout last winter, including over the festive period, and bookings coming in most weeks for 2026.
- b. DB asked about the ebikes, CA would like to see an ebike network throughout Shetland, where they could drop their bike off anywhere that rents them out.
- c. DB asked about the community fridge, CA said the opening day was on Monday 2nd February, and will be open Mondays 2-7pm. There was money raised from the Brae Secondary 2B Cookbook sales last year which has been used to buy hygiene products for the community fridge.

Date of next meeting will be the AGM with a date tbc

Meeting ended at 21:00