

Minutes of the Horshader Community Development Trust AGM Tuesday March 12th 2019

Present:

From the HCDT Board

Flora MacLeod; Mary MacLean; Jimina MacLeod; Alisdair Wiseman; Domhnall MacLeod.

From HCDT Staff

Alan Murray (Development Officer); David Murdo Mackay (Gardener).

From CIB Services

Calum MacDonald.

HCDT Members

Donald Macleod; Andrew Macleod; Innes Macleod; Lesley Wiseman; Fiona Knape; William Jefferson; Fiona Jefferson; Dollanna MacLennan; Mark Bradley; Lindsay Bradley; Ian Mackay; Diana Hesketh; Gareth Watson; Nadine Ben-Ali; Sidi Ben-Ali; Roderick Macleod; Roddy Murray; Christina Morrison; Calum Macdonald; Donald J Murray; Chris Macleod; Kathleen Murray.

Non-Members

Calum Macleod (Norse Mill Society)

Apologies

Angela Macleod (by phone); Cathie MacDonald (by email); Etta Morrison (by email); Roddy Morrison (by email).

Venue: Community Room, Raebhat House.

Opening Remarks From The Chair

- Flora Macleod opened the meeting and explained the reason for the AGM, which is to update members and discuss what has been happening in the Trust over the last year. She confirmed that no members of the Board have a conflict of interest in any of the business being discussed. Although no apologies were announced, informal apologies were sent earlier by email and text, which are listed at the top of these minutes. There was one proxy registered, but not in attendance on the night.

Housekeeping

- Flora pointed out the emergency exits, toilets and encouraged attendees to help themselves to refreshments. Flora asked attendees to feel free to ask any questions throughout the meeting. Flora notified the attendees that Alan Murray (Development Officer) will be making an audio recording of the meeting and asked attendees if they were okay with this.

Previous AGM Minutes

- Flora informed the meeting that unfortunately they don't have the minutes from the previous AGM. She asked attendees if they have any questions arising from the previous AGM and there were none.

Annual Report 2019

- Flora conveyed that all members should have received their Annual Report and pointed out that it is in a new look/format.
- Flora mentioned that all the news in the Annual Report was equally good, but pointed out some highlights: Shawbost School Gardening Club with David Murdo, Iolaire Centenary

Commemorations, which she had attended and the Hebrides Alpha Project, which has benefitted a HCDT member, Iain Murray (Basher) and whose painting is on the front cover of the Annual Report. Flora mentioned HCDT hopes to have an exhibition of Iain's work sometime in the near future.

- Flora took the opportunity to thank all her fellow directors and HCDT staff for their work over a very busy and challenging year.
- Flora asked for a proposal for the Annual Report. This was proposed by Fiona Knappe and seconded by Gareth Watson.

Annual Accounts 2018

- Alisdair Wiseman informed the meeting that with the help of Calum Macdonald from CIB Services, he hoped to give a snapshot of the Trust financials as they currently stand.
- Alisdair conveyed the following regarding the Trust financials:
 - The total funds as of the end of 2018 stood at just over £1m, which is slightly more than they were at the same time a year prior, in 2017. This total is made up of two parts: unrestricted funds and restricted funds.
 - Unrestricted funds is almost £600k and consists of cash that the Trust can spend on almost anything they want, providing it is within the charitable aims of the Trust and laws that apply to charities. This is almost £20k more than the same time previous year.
 - The rest of the total funds are made up of restricted funds, which is money that is there for a particular purpose such as the Growing Project or funding from a source which requires that you have to spend that money in a particular way. Alisdair pointed out that comprehending restricted funds from a charity accounting perspective is difficult and will hand over to Calum from CIB later on for that. Restricted funds are a little over £400k making total funds of just over £1m but actual money in the bank is currently sitting at almost £600k.
 - As far as income is concerned, there is money from the turbine, which, during 2018, was less than usual. Alisdair mentioned the cause for this being the problems with the turbine, which Alan will update the community on later.
 - Unrestricted income is a little over £250k.
 - Expenditure, which is generally projects the Trust has funded (Community Development, Arts & Culture, Recreation, Education) came to just under £220k.
 - Restricted expenditure, which includes the Growing Project, had very specific conditions managing how money was spent on it. Rural Transport, which is the minibus, is also part of restricted expenditure.
 - Total income for the year was just short of £400k and total expenditure was £370k, giving a surplus over 2018 of just over £20k.
 - The Trust financials can be described as healthy and Alisdair emphasised that the Trust is in a privileged position; having the turbine means the Trust doesn't have to approach funders for everything. Alisdair mentioned it would be desirable in the near future to ramp up applying for funding to bring income into the area, outside of what the turbine is generating.
 - Looking forward to 2019 a conservative estimate is that an income of around £300k will come in to the Trust.
 - Budgets are in place for expenditure across all areas the Trust spends money on. As far as grants for projects and for other people to do their projects, the Trust would be looking to spend around £160k.
 - £143k is currently the cost of running the Trust, which is a fairly large number.
 - Alisdair said that ideally, going into the future, the Trust should always be run at a slight surplus so that using reserved funds is not required. He added that focus should shift to where the money is being spent and much more towards things in

the Horshader area and people in the area, rather than funding a lot of projects elsewhere.

- Draft accounts for 2018: CIB have worked hard to complete a draft of the 2018 Accounts, but they are not currently in a position to be presented at the AGM to be accepted. Alisdair suggested that next year, if the AGM is held slightly later, finalised accounts maybe be available for approval at the AGM.
- Alisdair asked the audience if anybody has any questions. There were none.

- Calum Macdonald from CIB Services passed on the following information to the meeting:
 - Calum praised Alisdair for his summary of the Trust finances.
 - He agreed that the Trust is in a healthy financial position with the Trust bank balance approaching £600k as of December 2018.
 - He reinforced the point that the income from the turbine, which has been running for a few years, leaves the Trust in a strong position.
 - From CIB's point of view, HCDDT has a very strong set of accounts.
 - He clarified that Restricted Funds are past funding which has funded the purchase of Raebhat and various other projects the Trust has put in place. This can be called Capital Funding. Calum restated Alisdair's point that the Total Funds of just over £1m is not all sitting in cash in the bank. Almost £600k is in the bank and the rest is money that has come in over the years to fund the projects the Trust has undertaken; it is not money waiting to be spent, it has already been spent.
 - Calum stated that CIB were tasked with doing the Annual Accounts for HCDDT and according to the legislation and guidance that they are governed by, they have not found any issues with the HCDDT accounts.
- Jimina Macleod highlighted that Alan had worked to open several new bank accounts and that the Trust funds have now been spread out over these new accounts, as opposed to just one, which was previously the case. Alan confirmed this. Fiona Knappe asked if they were interest-bearing accounts. Alan confirmed that they are.
- Fiona Knappe asked once the Annual Accounts are ready, would HCDDT members be required to convene for an AGM to approve them. Calum Macdonald responded that initially the Board can approve them and that they can then be presented to the next AGM for approval.
- Flora asked if there were any more questions and thanked Calum Macdonald and CIB Services for the extraordinary job they have done over the last year. Flora recommended the Trust reappoint CIB Services as auditors. This was proposed and then seconded.

Appointment/Re-appointment of Directors

- Flora said that the Governing Document states that half of the standing directors retire, but they can stand again for re-election immediately. Mary Maclean and Jimina Macleod both agreed to stand down, but they would like to serve another 2-year term. Flora asked if anyone would like to propose Mary. Mary was proposed and seconded. Jimina was also proposed and seconded. Flora welcomed Mary and Jimina back.
- Flora informed the meeting that last year Alisdair Wiseman was elected as a director at the EGM, but was disqualified on the basis that he had not been a member for an entire year. Alisdair has served as an Associate Director and Secretary for the past year and is now eligible to be a director. Alisdair applied via the director application form, as a representative for the Dalbeg area and was seconded by Flora and Mary Maclean. Flora asked for a show of hands for Alisdair to be voted in as a director. Alan counted the vote twice as 24 votes. Alisdair has therefore been voted in as a director.
- Flora asked if there were any other applications to be a director and that there are spaces available. There were no further applications.

Hebridean Tree Ark Project

- David Murdo Mackay (Gardener) updated the community on the Hebridean Tree Ark project:
 - Viv Halcrow (Woodland Trust) has been supportive of the project.
 - Dr Mark Bradley previously did a Windbreak Report on the benefits of trees in the area.
 - Viv Halcrow has been involved in setting up a tree nursery in Lochinver and has sent a letter of support to HCDT for the Hebridean Tree Ark project. The Woodland Trust has planted around 63,000 trees between Barra and the Butt of Lewis in the last two years.
 - There is a big demand for trees, especially ones adapted to local conditions such as high winds and salt sea spray.
 - Horshader is in a good position to propagate and sell these trees. Enough trees were planted this past year to determine if the process works or not.
 - Seeds and cuttings have been gathered this autumn for future tree planting projects.
 - 800-1000 trees are now for sale. Next year the hope is to quadruple that number.
 - Horshader's tree nursery will be the only tree nursery on the island producing Hebridean trees native to the island.
 - The Woodland Trust is prepared to buy any trees that Horshader produces but doesn't manage to sell.
 - The trees can be used in crofts as shelterbelts for livestock, gardens as explained in Dr Mark Bradley's Windbreak Report.
 - The school may also be interested in the conservation aspect of the project, helping regenerate what is left of Lewis woodlands. Horshader trees will add to the number of local trees on the island. As it stands, the school children are very interested in all aspects of gardening and they will be involved with the growing of trees as well. The children had their first day at Horshader yesterday, planting tomatoes, sunflowers and early potatoes. The children are very keen on learning and they sometimes ask very difficult questions, which David Murdo does his best to answer.
 - David Murdo informed the meeting that all of the allotments have now been taken up in the Grinnivat and Dalmore Polycrubs, 22 families in total. This is really good as there are young people and old people mixing, sharing advice and there will be a buzz and colour to the place.

An Update On The Wind Turbine

- Alan Murray (Development Officer) gave the latest update on the wind turbine and the problems the Trust has been experiencing with Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) and the STATCOM:
 - With the help of MSP Alasdair Allan and Community Energy Scotland, it looks like there is finally an end to the turbine problem in sight.
 - The new STATCOM is now going through customs in Liverpool and is due to be shipped to Lewis and installed in the next couple of weeks. There has been a slight delay in the STATCOM passing through Customs & Security.
 - It is expected that the turbine will be back up and running at 100% from around the third week in March to the end of the month.
 - HCDT had a really difficult time with SSEN, but they have finally turned that around. Having the MSP's help has been a big factor in that; a Section 37 planning permit, which normally takes a couple months was pushed through Scottish Government in an unprecedentedly short amount of time.

- Some valuable lessons were learned from dealing with SSEN. It was thought that a problem like ours, given the impact it had on us financially, would be treated with high importance. This wasn't the case until our MSP got involved.
- The upside to our experience is that there is now a conscious effort on SSEN's part to improve customer relations and communications between them and community-owned wind turbines in the Outer Hebrides. Alan mentioned he has been invited to a conference held by Community Energy Scotland between SSEN and all of the Outer Hebrides wind turbine trusts on March 20th.
- Alan thanked members for listening to his update.
- Flora asked if there were any questions. Flora added that HCDDT have made insurance claims for lost revenue from the turbine and that the first claim has already been paid and the second claim is in progress – making an insurance claim has turned out to be a long and slow process.
- Iain Mackay asked what was wrong with the first STATCOM. Domhnall Macleod responded that it wasn't fit for purpose, adding that despite Horshader paying for it, SSEN own it.
- Flora mentioned that the turbine has been down the last couple of days. Alan responded that the turbine is currently down due to an anemometer problem, a physical problem on the turbine itself and that Enercon's team have been out to the turbine a couple of times already and they should have the problem fixed very soon. It is unrelated to the SSEN problem.

Governing Document

- Alisdair Wiseman briefed the community on the Governing Document:
 - This comprises of the Articles of Association, the Memorandum of Association and the Byelaws. These are legal documents and the language in them is difficult to understand – finding a particular item is also difficult; there are inconsistencies, etc.
 - A Governing Document Working Group comprised of Alisdair, Gareth Watson, Mary Maclean and Angela Macleod assembled in late 2018 to study these documents with a view to creating a new Governing Document which would be the opposite to the old one i.e. easy to understand, easy to find particular items, etc., consistent and comprehensive.
 - The new Governing Document now exists in draft form, but in order to implement these changes to the document, in about 6-8 weeks a Community Consultation is due to be held where these proposed changes can be discussed with the community. A notice will go out to the community beforehand about this consultation as well as the draft Governing Document itself so that the community is not seeing it for the first time at the consultation itself. Alisdair added that he doesn't know how the Board will make this interesting and exciting, but they will try to work something out. The changes will incorporate Best Practice, which is currently omitted e.g. register of members. There are other areas which require tightening up, for example, there is currently no maximum number of terms a director can serve consecutively. Limiting the number of consecutive terms a director can serve would be desirable. Alisdair closed his brief by adding that he hopes the new Governing Document will be easier to access, easier to follow, consistent and asked if there were any questions about it. There were no questions.

Development Plan

- Jimina Macleod told members about the Development plan which was based on output from Community Consultations over the years, including the one last year:

- A large number of cards with all the projects and ideas that had been proposed over the years were used to form a Development Plan for the Trust.
- Projects were divided into small short-term projects, medium-sized projects to take place over a couple of years and a flagship project to be run sustainably for the community in the long term.
- The turbine has a finite life and the Trust would like something in place for the community when the turbine is finished.
- The smaller projects include: collection of scrap cars in the community (possibly extended to the whole of Shawbost for a minimal charge), grass cutting on the verges of the main roads (this was started last year), the hire of community machinery and equipment (bought by Horshader and rented to the community for a fee) and the upgrade of the Community Space next door (which turned into a bigger project than expected once the walls had begun to be stripped). The future of the Community Space will possibly require a Community Consultation to find out the community's views on how they would like that space used.
- Medium-sized projects, hopefully done over the next two years or so, include developing facilities at the three local beaches, providing coastal shelters along the coastal walks and community walkways.
- The flagship project, which is hoped to be underway within the next five years, would be a small care home with a couple of sheltered houses, serviced plots and a play park. This is going to take a huge amount of work and would require external funding.
- Flora asked attendees if there were any questions about the various projects.
- Fiona Knape commented that the five year plan is very aspirational and asked if anybody on The Board had attended the Community Conversations meeting held in Barvas, which talked about this type of plan and how the Comhairle can help take this kind of plan forward. Flora responded that nobody had. Fiona attended the Community Conversations meeting in Lochs. She added that the Comhairle's aspiration is that, given the reduction in their budget, is to inform communities of their budget for providing a particular service and then asking the community if they can do it cheaper and better themselves. Fiona mentioned that the Comhairle have, as far as she remembers, £7m to spend on affordable housing within three years. Fiona added that we are halfway through the three years and that there is a danger that the remainder of that fund would be lost. She also added that what the Comhairle ask in return for them providing the housing is that the communities provide the land, which is a big ask, requiring community discussion and it is often Common Grazing land that is required. There are rumours that neighbouring local communities are getting affordable housing built. Fiona mentioned that in the next 12 months, if the community can get together and collectively discuss whether the Common Grazings would be willing to give a parcel of land to a project like this. This would comply with Horshader's charitable aims, specifically Community Regeneration, listed in the HCDT 2019 Annual Report. Fiona added that it's great that HCDT awards student bursaries to students in the area, but if there isn't housing for the students to come back to, the money is spent and goes outside of area. Fiona emphasised that the above would need to be acted upon soon. She added that the Island Bill has been passed through parliament and that there is an argument that since that bill has been passed and Lewis has rural status now, the money was awarded prior to that and so an extension to the funding should be allowed. Fiona put forward the idea that by talking to neighbouring communities, collectively maybe all the local communities can have affordable housing built. In addition, she mentioned that the Comhairle are looking into creating hubs for employees to work in to save them having to travel to Stornoway to work. She suggested this as a possible use for the Community Space next door and that the Comhairle may award HCDT money to refurbish it. It can then be used, via rental, as a Comhairle workspace during the day and a Community Space at night.

Flora commented that this is a fantastic idea. Fiona also mentioned that the HCDT minibus service could be expanded as a public bus service with regards to Comhairle participatory budgeting and used the example of a community bus service in Uist. Fiona closed by saying how disappointed she was that no elected members from the Comhairle had visited Horshader to mention Community Conversations. Flora thanked Fiona for the interesting points she mentioned.

Alan Murray (Development Officer) Leaving

- Flora announced that Alan Murray is stepping down from the Development Officer post and that the Board are very sorry to be losing him. She added that he has done a lot of work over the past year and thanked him. Flora asked for a round of applause.
- Alisdair Wiseman proposed a thanks and a round of applause to Flora for being a fantastic Chair through a hugely difficult period in the life of the Trust.

Closing Remarks From The Chair

- Flora thanked those in attendance for coming and added that she hoped to see them soon and for the next meeting to discuss the Governing Document.

The Board of the Horshader Community Development Trust