

Minutes of the HCDT Board Meeting on 23 February 2022

Present: Carole Miller, Fiona Jefferson, Innes Harrison, John Gordon, Euan MacLeod (Development Manager)

Venue: Raebhat House, North Shawbost, HS2 9BD

- The board met with Keith Emmerson to discuss his project proposal of establishing a community initiative that offers useful services – like repairing electrical goods and Portable Appliance Testing – with a focus on social inclusion and providing new skills and work opportunities for locals. The board were supportive of the idea in principle and asked Keith, supported by Euan, to create a full proposal for the March board meeting.
- **Matters arising from minutes of previous meeting**
 - IT Upgrade: all office laptops and PCs have been upgraded and installed. 2 Smart TVs for the community space, and use during meetings, have been ordered. The directors all have sufficient IT to use.
 - The minutes will be written up and sent back to the board as soon as possible after meetings, the aim being to send on to members within one week.
 - A date for the 2021 christmas meal has now been agreed.
 - Further to correspondence regarding the new requirement to have integrated smoke and heat alarms installed in each household, an offer of assistance to the local community was included in the February newsletter. **Please contact the office if you need any support in purchasing or installing integrated smoke and heat alarms.**
 - Regarding the digital project to provide member of the community with internet enabled laptops and tablets, no letters have been sent to Vodafone and BT, looking for support for the project, as requested by the board at the January board meeting. The board were disappointed at the lack of progress and reiterated that this must be actioned as soon as possible.
 - The planning day for directors has not yet been planned. The board discussed the need to hold the meeting to review the trust development plan, after the last update took place in July 2021.
 - The board decided to open the Oil Bulk Buying Scheme out to associate members based in North and New Shawbost.
 - The Calmac Community fund award, towards the costs of Blasta Lunch Club, has been publically announced and planning for the first event has begun. The first event will be held in March.
- **Communications:**
 - Membership applications by Pat and Alex Stewart were approved.
 - Marion Mackay asked whether a member of the board would represent HCD on the Westside Community Council, covering Arnol to Dalbeg. The Community Council hasn't met since 2019. The board declined to put forward a representative to stand on the CC at this moment.
 - Mike Andrews (one of the renters of the HCD looms) asked if a rent to buy scheme could be set up with a long-term view of having the ownership of the loom transferred to the renting weaver after an agreed amount of rent had been paid. The board discussed the idea but agreed not to investigate the proposal further.
- **Funding Applications:**
 - * Objectives for 2022 and beyond will be set at the planning meeting (date in early 2022 tbc).
 - * The application for an extension of the Support and Connect project from Mar 22-Mar 23 was successful. This will bring in £35k over that period.

- * A grant of £4,000 was secured from STV Children's Appeal. A similar project was run in 2021, with the funds being used to make grants directly to local families with children under 18.
 - * The board stated that no funding for any new project can be approved by staff. All requests for funding or other support must be approved by the board.
 - * The board discussed the application by An Eathar Coastal Rowing Club. No decision was reached. Representative of An Eathar will be invited to the March board meeting.
- **Staff Matters:**
- * After holding an informal interview with one candidate for the Head Gardener post, the board agreed not to offer the candidate the position.
 - * Tree Ark Assistants Laura and Nick will be offered additional hours, having settled in well.
 - * Frank Stark, former HCD employee and currently of Stark's Ark Tree Nursery, will be approached regarding formal mentoring of the Tree Ark staff.
 - * The Board decided to interview one of the applicants for the Office Manager vacancy as soon as possible. A letter will be sent to the second applicant informing them that their application was unsuccessful.
 - * Carole offered to take on the Office Manager role on a temporary basis until a suitable candidate is appointed. Carole and Euan will discuss this further.
 - * The Slàn san Dachaigh post will be readvertised with Gaelic abilities as a desirable criteria. A decision will be made on when to re-advertise at the March meeting.
- **Finance Update:**
- * The monthly management accounts for November have now been prepared, with the December accounts expected soon. At the end of November, a healthy net profit was reported, which is welcome after the difficulties of 2020/21 caused by Covid and the sub-sea cable failure. The trust remains in a strong financial position.
- **Business Update:**
- * The Tree Ark nursery is progressing well. Trees have been sold as part of projects in Shawbost and Harris.
 - * As part of the UK CRF project, 3 proposals from consultancies were approved by the board. Atlantic 58 (formerly Western Isles Marine and Environmental) will produce a feasibility study for the community woodland project. Mabbet will produce a Decarbonisation Plan for HCD. Community Energy Scotland will facilitate parts of the Cumhachd Coimhearsnachd/Community Power project – a series of events aiming to strengthen the islands community energy sector.
 - * There are a few potential sites identified for the UK CRF Tree Plantation project. A tentative proposal was sent to South Shawbost Grazings Committee in time for their meeting on Friday 18 February. Detailed feedback from the meeting has not yet been received, but reports suggest the proposal to conduct further research into one potential site was supported
 - * The turbine has been back in full operation since January. Updates on the insurance claim will be provided in due course.
 - * The membership list has been reviewed and updated fully.
 - * There have been no entries into the new logo competition. The board discussed commissioning an artist if no suitable designs are received by the competition deadline.
 - * The board discussed the vehicles owned by Horshader: the minibus, the van, and the electric bike. The board asked Euan to check if insurance allows vehicles to be parked overnight on a regular basis at locations other than Raebhat House.
 - * The HR audit, prosed by Phoenix Group, has ground to a halt. The last update from Phoenix stated the audit would begin in December 2021, but no work has taken place to

date. The board will review the project.

○ **Winter Fuel Extension:**

- * Due to the rising costs of fuel, and the terrible weather, a further £150 will be offered to each household in the Horshader area. £50 will be offered to each household in North and New Shawbost as part of the initiative. The board asked the staff to begin the necessary communications for this by Wednesday 2nd March.
- * Eligibility for the winter fuel scheme was discussed and it was clarified that all households and croft owners/tenants in South Shawbost, Dalmore, and Dalbeg are eligible.

○ **TOSC Email:**

- * The Old School Committee sent an email to John asking for financial assistance with repairs and maintenance costs at Ionad na Seann Sgoile. Fiona and Innes declared an interest, as both are on TOSC. John and Carole invited Fiona and Innes to stay and participate in the conversation. Following discussion, Horshader will cover costs of the repair of one of the turbines, currently not generating, estimated at £7,000. TOSC will be asked to provide quotes for the other works listed. Horshader are committed to supporting TOSC as best as possible, given the value of the community centre to the local residents and organisations who use it. John will respond to TOSC directly.

○ **Governance Review:**

- * John has committed to providing a draft framework for the awarding of educational bursaries and grants for consideration prior to our next meeting.
- * The full proposal for the Governance Review was postponed to the March meeting. At that point, the board will decide how to revise and then distribute the Governing Document.
- * Training Grants and Bursaries will be opened out to residents of North and New Shawbost. The change will be promoted in the newsletter and on social media.
- * Any errors on other trust governance documents will be updated in line with the 2020 and 2021 bye-laws adopted at recent AGM.

○ **AOCB:**

- * The establishment of a Coffee Club was discussed. The project would employ staff to run a cafe in the community space. Local people could join the club for a monthly fee. No decision was made during the meeting.
- * Carole has arranged for Horshader to inherit musical instruments, currently belonging to Young Musicians Hebrides. Euan will respond to an email sent by Jane Gray on 8 February.

Next meeting: Board Meeting, 7.00pm, 23 March 2022. The meeting will be held at Raebhat House.

The Board of the Horshader Community Development Trust