

## **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING ON 25 MARCH 2021**

### **Present**

Flora Macleod (Chair), Innes Harrison, Fiona Jefferson, Domhnall Macdonald, Euan MacLeod (Development Manager), Sarah Fraser (Projects Manager)

### **Welcome**

Flora welcomed all to the meeting.

### **Approval of February Minutes**

Minutes were approved

### **Support and Connect Driver/ Handyman**

We discussed the future of the Support and Connect role, currently carried out in full by Don. Following recent health issues, Don is unable to drive the bus for a further two months and can't do any heavy lifting. Don would like to continue in his role as Handyperson, with Driver duties being split into a new staff position. Flora asked Euan to prepare a more detailed proposal.

### **Equity Cure**

We have received a useful response to the questions put to Gillian at Coop Bank. The Equity Cure terms will be amended to allow the fund to be drawn from twice during the first 12 months. The Board approved the proposal to set up the Equity Cure and transfer £100k to a new bank account, which will be overseen by Coop Bank.

## **UPDATES AND PROPOSALS**

### **Insurance Claim Update (Euan)**

The payment recommendation report, with an amount of around £140k, has been submitted by loss adjustors Sedgwick to Bruce Stevenson. We are now waiting for the report to be agreed and are expecting payment by the end of March.

### **Turbine & Subsea Cable (Euan)**

Nothing to report on the repair.

The contract between SSE and RPG is now agreed, this will see us receive some income through energy generated by the turbine and used locally.

### **Power Purchase Agreement (Euan)**

The PPA has been agreed and we are now waiting for the funds generated between April and September 2020 to arrive. We don't yet know what the amount will be but had estimated £60,000 (after RPG operational costs of around £40,000 have been subtracted). £60,000 is the projected amount of RPG income in the recently approved 2021 Budget.

### **AGM 2021 and Annual Report (Euan)**

Draft Annual Report was prepared in time for the February Board Meeting. As the AGM is postponed till May, there is more time to edit and agree to a final version. A second draft will be sent round in April.

### **2021 Finance (Euan)**

The 2021 Budget Meeting was successfully held at Raebhat House on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March. There was a good discussion of the 2021 Budget Proposal, focusing on the effects of the projected reduction of income, ways of reducing the projected deficit, and of reducing projected expenditure where possible. The 2021 Budget Proposal was agreed; however, the budget will be reviewed regularly as more information regarding income and expenditure becomes available.

### **External Funding (Euan)**

James Mackenzie was appointed Covid Activities Coordinator and started on March 15<sup>th</sup>. The short-term post is fully funded by Communities Recovery (HIE) and runs till 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021. A short bio will go in the upcoming newsletter, I've copied it in the Staff Update section below.

Ruairidh MacLennan was appointed to the Tree Nursery person post, fully funded by CNES Crown Estate, and runs to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021.

The e-cargo bike bought with funds from Islands Green Recovery Fund is expected to arrive before the end of March. The bike will be used to deliver the prescriptions 3 times per week (weather dependent). The project has strong environmental themes, significantly reducing carbon use by cutting down on individual car journeys to the surgery and showing the local community the effectiveness of electric vehicles.

Anne Murray from CNES has come back to us with news of this year's round of Emergency Support Fund (CNES) funding. Unfortunately, despite the detailed responses by HCD and the other affected community groups to the design of the ESF when established in 2020, it appears that we will be ineligible to access any of the funding.

CNES have set the fund up in exactly the same way as last year, with the exception that funding will only be provided till October (the point when the generating groups should be generating energy again). As such, groups deemed eligible that have a commitment from a community generator – e.g. An Lanntair, Bethesda, Action for Children, etc – will receive 50% of their expected funding from the ESF, with the remaining 50% coming from the community generator.

The approach to the ESF is extremely frustrating as virtually all the projects supported by Horshader, Galson, and Tolsta will receive zero funding – the only exception I can think of being Buth Tholstaidh, who receive an annual grant from Tolsta. Furthermore, the expectation that ESF funding can be stopped at the end of September, with the generator then meeting costs from October 21 to March 22 seems unrealistic, as funds generated by the turbines won't be received immediately after the sub-sea cable is fixed.

I'll get feedback from the other generators at the CES meeting on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March and will report back at the Board Meeting.

*CNES sent a further update, stating their intention of consulting with the 4 affected community trusts.*

There has been no update on the applications submitted to Robertson Trust; Kickstart Scheme; or Adapt and Thrive.

### **Staff Update (Euan)**

All staff 1-to-1 meetings are arranged for this week. The meetings are my way of working with each staff member to set and review quarterly objectives, set targets for personal development, and raise any issues. As in January, I'll send the directors a summarised version of staff objectives, at the start of April.

Don returned to work on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March after just over a month of absence through illness. Don is still unfit to drive or do any heavy lifting – his main duties – but has focused on Support and Connect planning work and has taken over the phone duties. Don has an eye test this week and should find out whether a return to driving the bus is likely. I'll discuss all this with Don during his 1to1 meeting, with a view to ensuring that the requirements of the Support and Connect Driver/Handyman position are met. We've already discussed the possibility of splitting the, currently full-time, job into 2 part-time roles, among other options. I'm continuing to do the school bus runs for the time being.

As the Projects Manager and Development Manager roles have no line manager among the staff, annual performance reviews for Sarah and me have to be carried out by the directors. I thought we could plan these for August, which would be almost a year since the new board were elected at the 2020 AGM in October.

*The Board agreed to conduct annual review meetings in August.*

*Flora asked if staff were taking annual leave. All staff are aware of annual leave allowance for 2021, plus any amount carried over from 2020, which may be taken, at an appropriate time, up till the end of 2022. Staff are aware that it is unlikely that 2021 leave can be carried over, and that holiday hours may not be liquidated to cash.*

### **James Mackenzie – Covid Activities Coordinator**

*James Mackenzie has recently been appointed as the Covid Activities Coordinator for Horshader. James lives in North Shawbost with his fiancée Katie. Originally from Back, James moved to Glasgow after leaving school to study music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He lived in Glasgow for a number of years working as a professional musician and was a member of folk band, Breabach, who he played pipes and wooden flute with for over a decade. He has toured and performed at concerts in many countries around the world.*

*Having returned to Lewis last year, James continues to be involved with music tutoring as well as working on a new album and a book of tunes. James said: "I'm delighted to be working with Horshader. I look forward to meeting and working alongside more people in the local community."*

### **Slàn San Dachaigh Update (Anna)**

Prescriptions continue every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon.

### **Virtual engagement talks:**

- Friday 5th March - Folklore and Climbing in the Hebrides. Photographer Murdo MacLeod delivered a free live talk based on local climbing spots along the Shawbost coastline.
- Friday 19th March - Minch Swimmer Colin Macleod talked about his swimming adventures and the money he has raised for charity.
- Friday 2nd April - Professor Richard Cox has prepared a pre-recorded talk on Ainmean àite (Places names) An t-Slighe eadar Daile Mòr is Siabost
- Friday 16th April - Archivist and gold medallist Fiona J. MacKenzie will deliver a talk from the Isle of Canna on Margaret Fay's visit to the Lewis.

### **Fitness & outdoor sport:**

- Josh Morrison will run HITT the Beach every Saturday morning for a block in April. All board members welcome to sign up.
- Chrissy will run Easter fitness activities on Shawbost beach for P1-3 & P4-7.
- Immerse Hebrides (Norma MacLeod) is going to run a block of open water swimming sessions on Shawbost beach at the end of April.
- Short health walks will start every Friday mornings

### **Taic sa Ghàidhlig:**

12 30minutes sessions were held for Taic sa Ghàidhlig (Help for parent with children in Gaelic Medium)

### **Tree Ark Nursery UKISG Accreditation (Sarah)**

Work is ongoing to implement new processes, clarify requirements and become prepared for an inspection in the Summer. Under normal circumstances the inspector would come and physically walk around the site but the likelihood is that the inspection will be done remotely using Zoom or Teams so we also need to factor in how the inspection will be carried out this way.

The key is in keeping good electronic records of various forms, notices of intention to collect FRM, certificates, landowner consent forms and so on. At the moment everything that happens in the Nursery is noted in a daily diary. Now Ruaraidh has joined the Tree Ark project we have an extra pair of hands to help with the task of moving from book-form to digital record keeping.

### **Tree Ark (Chris)**

Plenty of trays with Rowan seedlings are coming through, ready for pricking out and moving into their own cells. This is a very delicate, time consuming job. Birch and Alder in cells (30 trays). £1942 sales (1800 trees) £1.50 a tree.

### **Growing Sites (Chris)**

Busy up at Grinnivat getting all the new beds ready inside and outside. All allotments are taken at Grinnivat – rota system in place  
Dalmore full apart from one bed.

### **Horshader Shopper (Sarah)**

The new Shopper service started on the 17<sup>th</sup> March (3 orders) and continued on the 24<sup>th</sup> March (2 orders) The logistics of the project are fine for a small number of shops, but we are working towards being able to do a lot more if demand becomes high as we now have Covid Coordinator, James Mackenzie on board to help deliver the service.

### **Shawbost Old Church (Sarah)**

At the last board meeting a decision was made to put the Community Consultation on hold. However, everyone did agree that more research was needed 1) Into the UDS project consultations and 2) Into realistic possibilities for the building.

Attached are the two Community Consultation results (one from 2013 and one from 2016) and a tourist survey (from 2017) for your reference.

I understand that a great deal of work has gone into UDS's project and it was unfortunate that the project never came to fruition. However, because the consultations that were carried out were centred around the building being redeveloped as a bigger/better heritage museum/space and I think that if we were to be picking up the previous project as it stands it would be fine to re-visit the consultations already carried out. But my thinking is that now as time has gone on, things have changed, the consultations may be outdated, our finances are under pressure, UDS is on its way to disbanding and we are thinking about other possibilities for the future of the building that it may be reductive to rely on these.

[In order to move the proposal forward somewhat without consulting with the community, I would like to suggest a brainstorming session.](#) I think it is important to have a collaborative effort between myself as the proposer and yourselves as the directors so that our efforts are in sync. As we are all aware there are hundreds of possibilities for the building and I of course have my own shortlist, as I'm sure others do too, but a team of heads are much better than one!

I am happy to converse over email or we can set aside some time during a future Board Meeting to agree on a shortlist of ideas to then develop some more in detail and produce feasibility studies for. Thereafter the Board can be presented with a comprehensive list of ideas to choose from and bring forward. The presentation would include a Project Brief and Charter for each idea which would consider the merits of each project.

I will pop this in as a proposal at the end.

With regards to UDS – I have heard from Catriona and they are still happy to keep the offer open as long as we need too and just to keep them updated of any progress.

### **Brainstorming Ideas Meeting for the Old Church (Sarah)**

#### **Proposal**

The idea of holding a brainstorming meeting was put forward. Everyone was open to the idea though no date was set.

### **STV Winter Support Grant (Sarah)**

This has been a nice small project to work away on. The families receiving the grant have been pleasantly surprised with a phone call offering them something to help through winter months. We are on track to use up all of the grant money (£4000) issued to us in food or clothing vouchers for 40 kids in the area which is great.

### **Mobile Phone Masts Dalbeg/Dalmore (Sarah)**

Donnie Morrison is retiring at the end of March and has provided us with a report detailing the situation when it comes to mobile/broadband connectivity on the Islands. I have a copy if anyone wishes to see this but there are no real developments to report. The SRN programme are still to release information on the sites of interest. Keeping a keen eye on this!

### **Funding applications**

The board discussed an application by An Eathar. The group had applied for £2500, to cover costs of new safety equipment, and summer event costs. It was agreed that no funding could be awarded at this stage, with the full HCD community fund budget being allocated to bursaries. Use of the mini-bus and use of the Community Space will be offered as a way of supporting An Eathar.

### **Actions from the last meeting**

Flora was satisfied the actions had been progressed accordingly.

### **Membership applications**

There were no applications this month.

### **Any other business**

Flora asked for a disclosure check to be processed for James Mackenzie (Covid Activities Coordinator).

Innes requested the board meeting document be projected onto a big screen at subsequent board meetings – as a way for directors to see the agenda items, reports, etc. We already own a projector and screen; Euan will set this up for next meeting.

Mike Andrews is one of the 3 local weavers renting a loom from HCD. Mike contacted the office to ask whether the board would consider a change to the current loom rental contract. Mike has had the loom since 2015 and has paid £7000+ in rent. He'd like to change to a rent-to-buy agreement and wondered if this would be considered. The board were open to any proposal. Euan will respond to Mike.

### **Actions from the Meeting of 25 March**

Be vigilant regarding Covid rules: All Staff

Keep on top of annual leave: All Staff

Maintain project management system: Sarah

Continue research into UDS project: Sarah

Inform applicant groups of funding decisions: Jordan

Arrange PVG checks for new staff: Euan

Work with Directors to find solution for Support and Connect staff issue: Euan