

Minutes to the second Virtual Board Meeting : 30 April 2020

Participating: Flora Macleod (Chair); Jimina Macleod; Mairi Maclean; Domhnall Alan Macleod; Alisdair Wiseman; Euan Macleod (Development Manager); and Sarah Fraser (Projects Manager).

This was our first virtual Board meeting using the Jitsi Meet videoconferencing app.

Update: Staff wellbeing - Euan

Everyone seems to be safe and well. Efforts to adhere to distancing guidance and to reduce contact to a minimum have gone well - good examples being the process used for the first food delivery scheme (where 3 staff members worked to get the packs ready, but in separate locations), and Billy and Sam's system for grass cutting. Quarterly meetings will go ahead as normal, through Skype/phone, with objectives being set in line with the 2020 plan.

Update: Covid-19 activities - Euan

We now have a clearer plan for how the 5 strands will be delivered up to late September. Sarah and Euan are currently thinking about how the Coordinator can best assist with the delivery and day-to-day involvement for these activities - with this role in post, we will have more time to engage with the community (recreationally and putting additional volunteer effort to good, safe use) and to allow more time to be spent on our pre-existing aims, projects, etc.

Sarah has more on the development of Shop and Drop service, but from Euan's perspective it went exceptionally well. Discussions with Urras Coimhearsnachd Bhràdhagair agus Àrnoil are ongoing to decide on the best way for Covid-19 services to be promoted and delivered in their area.

Food delivery scheme - the first Family Night deliveries took place on 30 April, 110 meals to 28 households. The next delivery for over-65s is 21st May.

Other services continue without problems.

Proposal: HIE Anchor Organisation Coordinator - Euan

Euan has been successful in securing funding from HIE to support and coordinate Covid-19 activities. This includes funding for 4 months at 4.5 hours per day, 5 days per week for a temporary Coordinator. Euan has created a Project Brief outlining how he sees the Coordinator's role working – he will forward this to everyone for comment shortly. Duties will include: daily prescriptions deliveries; communication and organisation of the volunteers; and integrating the Shop & Drop service into the other Covid-19 activities. We agreed that we need someone to fill this role with immediate effect, someone who already knows the community and some of the jobs involved. We agreed unanimously that Euan should approach Anna Mackenzie to offer her the role because she has already been doing much of this on a completely voluntary basis and going through the normal recruitment process would mean that we could not get started for perhaps another month. This will enable Euan and Sarah to focus on running the Trust and progressing other projects from the 2020 Plan.

Update: Community communication - Euan

The most recent newsletter went out at the beginning of April, along with the most recent meeting minutes. After switching to a digital approach where possible, only around 20 paper copies of the newsletter were posted. Annual Report 2019, plus the Horshader Forest Update, was due to go

out prior to the AGM. Sarah's been reviewing the group's communications and has set up new Instagrams and is engaging with folk in new ways through social media.

We agreed that the Annual Report and the first Horshader Forest Update should be sent out to the community as soon as possible. Once again, where possible, we will e-mail these documents.

As we are delivering prescriptions outside the community, we agreed to include a flier with a subsequent delivery offering other people the chance to be included in services and e-mail communications in the future.

Update: HCDT 2020 Plan - Alisdair

All the Directors have seen and approved the 2020 Plan. Covid-19 may prevent us from doing some of the things on the plan but there are a number of other projects that we can progress regardless of the lockdown. Once the Covid-19 Coordinator is up and running, we can agree where the priorities lie and begin mobilising those aspects of the projects that can safely be undertaken during the lockdown. The projects in the 2020 Plan divide into three categories: those that are already ongoing, such as the Support & Connect Programme; those that are on hold because of the lockdown, such as the West Side Art Show and the events programme; and those that have not yet been started, such as the in-depth community consultation and the creation of a Gaelic Plan. As well as keeping a close eye on the very important Covid-19 activities, it makes sense to begin elements of the most important new projects rather than wait till the end of the lockdown.

We discussed the project to understand which people in our community would be described as 'disadvantaged' and what the Trust might do to support them. Clearly many people are additionally disadvantaged at the present time. However, this project is more aimed at individuals who experience long-term disadvantage, unrelated to Covid-19. We are keen to understand who these people are and what we might do to alleviate their disadvantage.

Jimina raised a specific disadvantage associated with home-schooling where families with a number of children require access to laptops or computers to do their schoolwork. We discussed the possibility of offering either equipment, or a grant to purchase equipment, to families with insufficient resources to support all their children. In the first instance, we will try to determine the extent of the need and then agree how to meet it.

Update: Sarah's induction - Sarah

Week 1

My first week at Horshader was unfortunately interrupted by the 2nd week of national lockdown! So, Euan was busy with prescription deliveries, liaising with the Foodbank, HIE and organizing the ready prepared meals for over 65's. We took a phased approach in the first week as it was a challenging time for everyone.

Euan was really helpful, sending me lots of reading to do. Reading up on current projects and getting familiar with the processes we have in place. Alisdair sent me some important reading on Team Project Management too. I worked on getting my home office setup, thank you for the printer!

By the end of the week and following the phone survey carried out by Jordan the week before, we identified an area of concern whereby the most vulnerable folk in the community who were self-isolating due to their age or health - were worrying about having their essential shopping

needs fulfilled. So, Euan tasked me with my first project. Which later became our 'Shop & Drop' service, which went out on its first delivery on Tuesday morning (28th April)

Week 2

Social Media Presence. We launched HCD Instagram and Twitter accounts. I also attended a webinar produced by Business Gateway, which was useful and informative on how best to engage with followers, and create valuable content.

We drew up potential costs for the 'Shop & Drop' and contacted lot of local suppliers to let them know what we were doing.

The 'Shop & Drop' project was growing, we were kindly given supplies from the Eilean Siar Food Bank and from CAB/FareShare which helped bring our costs down. But with no funding confirmed we agreed we should go ahead using the money set aside for 'Blasta' lunch club.

We notified members, by email and via Facebook and Instagram. Then by phone. It was good to speak with some community members; they were already very thankful for the prescription deliveries and the readymade meals and welcomed the addition of 'Shop & drop'.

Week 3

Communicating 'Shop & Drop' as much as possible wound up at the beginning of the week and by midweek we had a total of 12 households who had come forward for the service.

Using as much of the stock that had been kindly donated, we ordered the remaining stock and fine-tuned the plan to execute the first run. With timings of delivery of goods from several sources ranging and the latest being Monday 27th we agreed we would use Monday to sort and pack everything, with a view to deliver on the following Tuesday morning. Billy and Sam helped me do this, using separate spaces at Raebhat. And Jordan called ahead to the recipients to let them know when to expect their delivery.

Week 4

Shop & Drop initial run was completed, with good feedback.

We are currently requesting feedback from all recipients to fine tune things even more and find out how long folks think this delivery will last them.

I also took charge of delivering the prescriptions on Wednesday 29th which was really useful in finding my way in and around the community and also so folk would be familiar with my face in future. All went well.

Update: Polycrubs and growers - Chris

The polycrub rota appears to be running fine, with all allotment holders sticking to it. The rota system will remain in place until restrictions are lifted. Euan agreed to pass on our thanks to Chris for getting everything organised to enable the growers to continue working on their allotments.

Update: Tree Ark expansion - Chris

No movement at present with the expansion as the contractors are still on lockdown. However, they will be in touch as soon as the situation allows them to recommence work. In early May,

aspen cuttings will be started, last year's Rowans will be potted on and the first batch of birch seed will be sown.

Update: Coastal Walk upgrade - Jordan

Mitch Thompson has been asked to go ahead with the works based on the quote provided. He is currently in the process of ordering all the materials, though he said there may be delays in the delivery. Assuming delivery of the materials are not too delayed, he is aiming for completion by June at the latest. He will keep Jordan and Chris updated throughout, by email and phone.

Update: Community space and Building Standards - Alisdair

No further progress since the last Board meeting - the next step is a physical meeting with John Gillies which will need to wait until lockdown restrictions are relaxed.

Update: Horshader Forest - Alisdair

We were obviously unable to have our third physical meeting. There have been three items of progress however. Val Halcrow, from the Woodland Trust, has agreed to provide ad hoc support to the group. She is furloughed at the moment, with a potential return to work at the start of June. She has asked for a map of the proposed locations so that she can give some initial guidance on their suitability. Secondly, Mark Bradley alerted us to the Yearn Stane Project in Renfrewshire where they intend to rewild a substantial area of upland peat bog and moorland. Alisdair has been in touch with the leaders of the project and they have agreed that we can stay in touch so that we can learn from their experience. Finally, as we were not able to present the initial concept of the Horshader Forest at the AGM, Alisdair has outlined the concept in the first Forest Update which will go out with the Annual Report shortly.

Update: Westside Art Show - Anna

No further progress. We will determine the best way forward once the Covid-19 exit plans are better understood. Alisdair suggested that we might be able to set up a virtual art show, perhaps using the Trust's Facebook page, to enable people to see images of the work that will be exhibited once the lockdown has passed. Nothing would be for sale and this is not supposed to replace the physical show. Exhibiting artists would be invited to provide digital images of their work and new images would be added on an ongoing basis and we might perhaps strike up some community conversation. This could then become a part of the lockdown community engagement programme. Alisdair will circulate a Project Brief for comment.

Update: Grants provided to HCDT - Euan

£2K from the STV Wellbeing fund is being used to develop the Food Delivery Scheme to include Family Nights.

£35K through HIE from the Scottish Government: our acceptance form has been sent and the first payment of funds should be with us this week.

Communication from the Crown Estates, where we hope to get funding to support the expansion of the Tree Ark, has been a little confusing. It appears to say that we should continue to make applications but that they will not be dealing with any requests until after the lockdown.

Update: Grants requested of HCDT - Euan

No formal applications to the HCD Community Fund have been made although an informal request for support has come from the Western Isles Kidney Patients Association whose normal fundraising activities have been curtailed by Covid-19.

We commended the recent Sandwich Candles fundraiser for Bethesda where over £65,000 was raised. We briefly discussed the possibility of making a donation to Bethesda and of doing a fundraiser for a variety of other island charities but came to no firm conclusions.

Proposal: Conducting a virtual AGM - Alisdair

Following the Covid-19 lockdown, we set a new provisional date for the AGM of Tuesday 28 April 2020. While the lockdown remains in force, a physical AGM is clearly not possible and, when restrictions are lifted, it is already clear that large group meetings will be one of the final things to restart. We talked about the possibility of holding a virtual AGM, using an app like Jitsi or Zoom. An upside is that we might actually be able to involve more of the community than would ordinarily attend a physical meeting. In addition, this would enable us to update the community in a (slightly) more personal way than e-mails and newsletters, Directors could step down by rotation and be re-elected where they wished to stand again, pass any new bye-laws and field any questions or concerns directly. Clearly, one of the downsides is that we effectively exclude anyone without access to the internet - we could however ensure that they were able to vote by proxy on any proposals put to the AGM. After a short discussion, it was agreed not to hold a virtual AGM. The guidance from OCSR suggests that they will take a lenient view of delays in holding AGMs, given the current lockdown. There is no pressing need to hold the AGM. And the physical challenges of managing such a virtual meeting appear daunting. In the meantime, we will send out the Annual Report and advise everyone that an AGM will be held as soon as possible after restrictions are relaxed. We did however agree that there might be some merit in holding occasional Jitsi community meetings as part of the community engagement programme. We will look into this further in the coming weeks.

Proposal: Staying in touch - Alisdair

It's been a challenging few weeks for Euan and the rest of the team and we know that all of them have been busy playing their part in supporting the community through these uncertain times. However, it feels strange not to be able to drop in to the office to stay up to date with what's going on and we've been keen not to deluge Euan with e-mails requesting information and updates. We therefore agreed to institute a weekly Monday afternoon Jitsi meeting, of no more than 30 minutes duration, with no formal agenda and no minutes where we can talk briefly about what's been going on and what's planned for the following week. Directors can participate, or not, as they are able. The first catch-up will be Monday 11 May at 3.00pm – Alisdair will send out the meeting invitation.

Actions from the last meeting

23 of the 25 actions from the last meeting have been completed and were therefore not discussed.

Lodging our Annual Report and Accounts with OSCR: Euan will find out from CIB Services if the Accounts need to have been approved at an AGM before they can be lodged with OSCR. If Director sign-off is sufficient, there seems to be no reason why we should not forward these documents to OSCR.

Business interruption contingency plan: at our last meeting, we agreed the need to have a full office closure plan in place should circumstances require it. This action was somewhat overtaken by events. However, Alan Murray had previously created a Business Interruption Plan following

the fire at the Galson Estate Trust in 2019. Euan and Jordan will revisit this and make any amendments based on our experience of Covid-19.

Any Other Business

Summer placements: Euan confirmed that the interviews for the summer placements will take place on the afternoon of 7 May and Flora will represent the Board. We have three excellent candidates for the post, two from North Shawbost and one from Barvais.

Jimina offered a heart-felt vote of thanks, on behalf of everyone in the local GP Practice, to Euan and those involved in the daily prescriptions delivery service.

Next virtual Board meeting, again using Jitsi Meet: 3.00pm, Thursday 28 May 2020.

The Board of the Horshader Community Development Trust