

Minutes to the third Virtual Board Meeting : 28 May 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 second virtual Board meeting using the Jitsi Meet videoconferencing app. Updates and proposals were provided, and read by all participants, in advance of the meeting. This enabled us to focus solely on those issues where discussion and decisions are required.

Update: staff wellbeing (Euan)

Everyone seems well and making the effort to follow guidance on distancing. Everyone is using the building to some extent but this is being kept to a minimum. Don got fed up with isolation and is now back cutting grass and assisting with deliveries. No major issues to report from staff meetings.

Update: Euan's Covid-19 activities

Nothing to add to the general update in the newsletter. Records of beneficiaries, feedback, and volunteer support are being kept - the figures are impressive.

Update: Covid-19 Activities (Sarah)

Shop & Drop is progressing well. We had 31 households make good use of the service on the last drop (26th May) 9 from Bragar and the rest from Shawbost. We expect the numbers could continue to rise. I am keeping a close eye on expenses to ensure we don't go over, Euan has spoken to HIE who have said they would welcome an application for further funding should the service continue to grow in demand. We are gathering good feedback and donations are coming in from folk too which will help supplement our efforts.

Hi5 Awards (extracurricular activities for school children) came up during our catch-up with other community groups and we've subsequently been sent the information which we will circulate on our social media sites. CLD are providing the awards free of charge during lockdown. Initially I thought we could deliver the programme free to disadvantaged families in our area (there is a small fee of £6 for challenge sheets) but now we have found CLD are actually offering it for free anyway.

Community Engagement Programme – Horshader's Facebook and Instagram pages are being regularly updated with updates and anecdotes from our Covid-19 activities and competitions. Our Instagram page now has 93 followers and is growing. Facebook has seen an increase of 43 followers in the past 28 days, as well as over a thousand page visits and there has been a total 17 posts from us. We will continue to keep up this trend as is a great way to engage with folk in and around our community.

Update: Anna's Covid-19 activities

All activities that I'm working on continue as before except with increased volunteer support. Some examples, the recent over-65s meal delivery involved 6 volunteers. I'm very grateful for the help given by HCD directors on top of this. Also, when I've had Shop & Drop delivery days, volunteers have assisted with prescription deliveries. Volunteers are all delighted to help out.

Community support leaflets went out to the villages covered outside of the Horshader area: Arnol, Bragar and North & New Shawbost.

Nobody signed up for virtual Gaelic - the group of 10 we had probably enjoyed the meeting up element. I haven't spoken with all the class, but the few that I have would prefer to be in an intermediate group. I'm reassessing and will offer something more suitable.

I'm doing 1 hour of Taic sa Ghaidhlig 2 days per week. Parents seem appreciative of the support.

Update: community communication (Euan)

Increased communication with the community carries on. A second newsletter went out on 27 May 2020 with loads of good stuff - changing to a bi-monthly or monthly newsletter may be the way to go in future. There is always plenty of content and Alisdair's idea to get more input from the community would make it more interesting for the reader and our archive.

As per Anna's activities, a second lot of leaflets went out to houses outwith the HCD area to let residents know about the Covid-19 activities, also providing contact details. Don is doing an excellent job on the phone since it's been diverted to his mobile.

All the social media content has been great too! We got some good content with the BBC report (TV and radio) and CNES are finally putting out their piece about our efforts next week.

Update: plan for the rest of the year (Euan)

Each staff member's personal plan has been incorporated into the 2020 plan. Sarah and I added in our own objectives. It's comprehensive but flexible enough to allow changes of plan and new ideas - like the digital tech grant! This is a simple version, other documents contain notes and go into more detail on the objectives - e.g. resources, timescales.

Update: Trust Development Plan (Alisdair)

An updated Trust Development Plan has been circulated for approval by all Directors.

Update: student summer placement (Euan)

Start dates confirmed as June 8th. All students have suitable laptops. All have provided a bio and a pic for newsletters – Katie's is in the current edition.

Everyone has copies of the project plans. I've been developing these with additional weekly tasks and targets to give the students more direction. We won't be able to meet face-to-face but I'll be available and will check in with each of them on a daily basis initially.

Update: technology grant (Euan)

The grant was announced in the newsletter and will be open to application as of Monday 1st June. Terms and conditions and application form will be uploaded to the website by the end of the week. We agreed that applications should be divided into two groups as they arrive: those that clearly match the grant criteria and should be actioned straight away; and those where the case is not as clear-cut – these should go through an additional level of scrutiny. If demand outstrips the available budget, we will clearly prioritise the applications with the greatest need.

Update: Sarah's induction (Sarah)

I had a show around of the growing sites and turbine last week. Chris kindly took me around and got me up to speed with where we are at with the growing sites and Tree Ark. Although I have seen and read up on paper about these projects, for me physically being there on a daily basis is the key to forming the comprehensive knowledge I need to progress so I am very much looking forward to a time when I can be a regular visitor to the sites and be more 'hands on' My home office is almost complete, I am waiting for my new work laptop to arrive which will help streamline communications and make my working day run more smoothly! It is due on Wednesday/Thursday

I've opened an account for Horshader with Mail Chimp (a useful tool for communicating with our audience) and I am attending webinars next week to educate myself on the main points. Euan is hopefully moving to using MailChimp for the next publication of the Newsletter. For the basic package the platform is free, I can't see that we will need it to be any more sophisticated for our small pool of members

When producing attractive imagery for use on social media sites etc I have trialled Shutterstock, which is an excellent library of images with a decent editing programme. At the moment we are in the first month's free trial, we will re-asses after the month is up and decide if we think it is worth the £20 a month subscription fee.

Euan and I had discussed the possibility of having some sort of working platform to enable us to work better together while working remotely. A friend of mine suggested Trello. So I downloaded it, and have begun to load the current projects Euan and I are working on for the 2020 plan. It is free and easy to use, and keeps track of our activities on multiple projects at once. I think it will be a useful tool certainly whilst working remotely and when things return to normal.

Euan and I are working together (when not committed to Covid-19 activities) to action the 2020 plan. We have set goals for each quarter and are working towards achieving these on time.

Update: "One of the Good Things to come out of Covid-19..." (Sarah)

The competition launched on Friday last week. I would expect entries to start coming in at the beginning of next week. I am working on a proposal to do a series of competitions to include all demographics and different media and prose. Perhaps two more, one for high school ages and one for 18 - 35's and depending on the success of the initial competition we will decide whether or not to continue with it. We agreed to recommend local charities that could be on the list of three that will receive a donation to match the number of entries into the competition.

Update: Support and Connect (Don)

Billy, Sam and I are busy cutting grass. We are keeping on top of the schedule so far this year. Clients are getting a cut every two weeks.

The minibus is being well utilised, constantly delivering prescription's, food boxes and meals on wheels. Investing in Communities (the funding body) have been satisfied with everything to date.

Update: Head Gardener (Chris)

The contractors will be back on site on Friday 29 May to continue the concrete work in the second polycrub. After that I hope they will carry on with the pad for the netted tunnel. If this is the case, we will need to order the tunnel from northern tunnels. The rowan have not broken their dormancy yet but some are popping through much slower than expected. We are also losing too many aspen cuttings. Speaking with Jonathan and looking at other nurseries operations, it has become

evident that we need a misting table to help the cuttings in the early part of their development. I will get costings for this prior as soon as possible.

The Polycrub Rota continues. Pete and Josie will not be using their allotment this year. Fiona is in the process of leaving Dalmore but does have some plants that need to stay in for the rest of this season.

Looking ahead to the rest of the season, I shall carry on with planting and assisting allotment holders as required. Works to be done include: supply of water to all crubs to be upgraded so as water leakage and broken connections can be minimized as well as the availability of crub holders to fit their own irrigation systems to their individual plots. For Dalmore, I have a contractor coming to give a quote for: supplying graded soil; cleaning area to the right of the gate and laying a suitable surface; digging up the drain and fitting a pipe of large enough diameter to carry the water away or possibly leave it open and fit a walkway.

Update: Westside Virtual Art Show (Anna)

I'm working with Jordan to launch the virtual exhibit – a new page on the Horshader website. Five artists have come back to me with the required info and 5 high-quality images. The plan is to have a launch mid-June with a live steam art talk – the talk we had planned for the opening event. We don't have this confirmed yet but I'm looking into alternatives if the original speaker is unwilling or unavailable.

Update: Community space and Building Standards (Alisdair)

No further progress since the last Board meeting.

Update: Horshader Forest (Alisdair)

I have formally put the project on hold until we can sensibly move forward. The two critical next steps are to appraise the suitability of potential locations for the forest and conduct a community consultation, both of which would be best done face-to-face. The consequence of this is that we will effectively be a year later getting started.

Update: Jitsi catch-up meetings (Alisdair)

Following the success of the first virtual Board meeting using Jitsi, we instituted a weekly, informal Jitsi catch-up meeting at 3.00pm on a Monday afternoon - no agenda, no minutes, attend if you can. This too has been very successful and it would seem sensible to continue at least as long as we remain in lockdown.

Update: Westside Coastal Walk upgrade (Jordan)

Our contractor is ready to start but has been unable to get materials from his usual source. He is concerned that moving to a different supplier will increase the cost of materials. He has been asked to let us know the cost of materials from a new supplier so that we can make a decision on whether or not to absorb any increase.

Update: funding applications (Euan)

I am working on the CNES Crown Estate application to submit this week. Originally the application was due in by the end of March and I was going to include the Tree Ark expansion capital costs. With the fund delayed, and recent movements of project contractors, it was best to

change tack. The new application requests funds for a nursery person to assist in developing the project, which will be a big boost to the whole operation if successful.

I've just submitted the CNES administered business support grant application. The funds would cover loss of earnings on hires and rents.

HIE are open to a new application if expenditure rises for the Covid-19 activities.

There have no new applications to the Community Fund although there is a possibility that we will be approached by some groups shortly. Euan will get back to the WIKPA and encourage them to follow through on their desire to get funding.

Update: collaborating with Bragar & Arnol on a Gaelic Development Officer (Euan)

I've received an update with the job description for the role drafted by the Bragar & Arnol Trust. They were meeting on 26 May and are due to get back to me shortly.

Actions from the last meeting

13 of the 18 actions were completed.

Everyone agreed to look at the projects in the 2020 plan and indicate their view of where the priorities lie.

We agreed that it would be a good idea to trial a videoconferencing application that would enable us to hold community meetings online. We will identify the most appropriate solution and then work out a meeting to trial it on. This might pave the way for holding a virtual AGM using this same application.

Modifications have been made to the Business Interruption Plan – it will be circulated for comment.

We agreed that we need to give some detailed thought soon to how we will manage the delivery of Trust services once the lockdown restrictions have been eased. In particular, we need to understand how we will do the school runs.

Proposal: consultation on upgrading beach facilities (Alisdair)

Upgrading the facilities at each of the community beaches has been on the Trust Development Plan since it was first formulated in 2018. However, this project has not been included in any subsequent annual plan. As a result, no progress has been made. The first stage of the project would require consultation with the immediate communities (the people of Dalmore for the Dalmore beach, and so on) and this is something we can do by letter, e-mail or even videoconference. It is also something that we could do without burdening the staff team. A more detailed proposal has already been circulated. We agreed to progress the consultation phase of this project. We will try using Survey Monkey to gather Members' views.

Proposal: proposals protocol (Alisdair)

As we all know, we are currently unable to meet face-to-face for Board meetings and the like. We have set up a discipline for updates and proposals that appears to be working well. An important part of this is putting forward proposals for new activities, projects and ways of working. These proposals require us to approve them if we wish to take them forward - this is effectively a decision

and, as always, we need to be quorate to make decisions. I would therefore like to propose that each Director responds to a proposal within an agreed period so that we can demonstrate, for good governance, that we were indeed quorate. The response might take three forms: approved, not approved or more discussion required. If it is the second or third response, it would be helpful to get some additional information so that the other Directors can create a full understanding. I believe the response time should be 2-3 days but certainly no longer than 1 week. We could then look at proposals that required more discussion at our weekly catch-up meetings or the Board meeting, whichever came sooner. We agreed to go ahead with this proposal.

Proposal: conducting a virtual AGM (Alisdair)

This proposal was put forward at the last Board meeting. At that time, we agreed not to proceed with a virtual AGM because OSCR has provided some latitude and there are no pressing issues that need to be put to the community. I would like to propose that we review this decision at each subsequent Board meeting, as the Covid-19 situation evolves. We agreed that we should look to hold a virtual AGM in the not-too-distant future. As mentioned previously, we need to trial the platform that we will use to do this

Proposal: getting the bursary students to volunteer (Alisdair)

The Trust has made a series of bursary awards through the course of this last academic year. Part of the agreement around providing a bursary was to ask recipients what they would give back to the community. It may be that some (or perhaps all) of those commitments are unable to be delivered during the lockdown restrictions. Whether this is the case or not, it seems that this would be a good time to ask those people who received bursaries to participate in volunteering activities to help with our Covid-19 response. We agreed to go ahead with this proposal.

Proposal: Shop & Drop logistics (Sarah)

Shelving or some sort of better organised space to hold stock for Shop & Drop over the next few months. As the service has grown in demand, the community space has been fantastic for it, although now I find it's a bit muddled and could definitely be organised better. We discussed a number of alternatives and agreed to do what we can to make the Shop & Drop service easier and more efficient to organise.

Proposal: community consultation campaign video (Sarah)

Euan and I are working on how to best execute the Community Consultation in the months of July to September. I thought it would be good to produce some sort of campaign video using our new equipment that we could circulate on social media while we conduct the consultation. Perhaps a foreword from the directors, then Euan and myself. And if we can coax the rest of the team to do a montage of sorts. I'm thinking just a short clip stating our objectives, our goals, and that we are here to listen to the needs of the community. I think it would bring the consultation to life, virtually anyway. We agreed to go ahead with this proposal.

Any other business

Euan will forward the names of the volunteers to Jimina so that she can vet the people involved in prescription deliveries.

We will do whatever is necessary to refurbish the community noticeboards.

Flora will approach Anna to see if the Gardening Club wants funding to stock the flower tubs in the townships – this feels like a more important thing to be doing than ever.

We need to look at recruiting new Directors onto the Board. Mairi has indicated her wish to stand down soon and that would leave us with just four Directors, the same number we require to be quorate and make decisions. Clearly, whoever is approached would need to satisfy the eligibility criteria laid out in our Governing Document.

The Board of the Horshader Community Development Trust – 28 May 2020.