

Minutes of the HCDT Board Meeting: 1 October 2020

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

Apologies: Ranald Fraser (Associate Director).

Update: Covid Services (Euan)

The period the Scot Gov funding covered ended on 21 September. Anna's post came to an end, as did the delivery of medications, and the Shop and Drop, in Arnol and Bragar. Urras Coimhearsnachd Bhràdhagair Agus Àrnoil expressed their great admiration for the work we did in their area and are hoping to carry on the services to some extent with their own staff/resources. End of project means a final claim and report is due – this'll be a bit of work, but all records are in excellent order, so not so daunting.

Medication deliveries continue every 2nd day as agreed with the surgery. The run has been covered so far by Don, Billy and me.

Blasta Ready Meals next over-65s delivery is on Thursday. 40 North will do the cooking for the November delivery, but are then taking a holiday for December. I'll speak with Kenny Mackay about doing the cooking for the December delivery.

Update – Shop & Drop Continuation (Sarah)

The Shop & Drop service continuation commenced on 29.09.20. The remaining HIE funds plus the donations pot has meant that with careful planning the service can and will continue which is fantastic! Due to funds being restricted there are adaptations that may affect the service in future months; however, users of the service have been made aware of this. Firstly, the contents of the 'shop' have been reduced, for example there is less fresh fruit/veg and less meats and the meats and pies now come frozen. There were a number of factors that supported this decision including making the ordering process far simpler for us and suppliers, and the purchase of the chest freezer means that any surplus goods are stockpiled and not wasted. It seems the first run has gone well with this change aside from one glitch – deliverers cannot simply leave the frozen goods if nobody is home and the door is open but I think with some guidance on the next letter everyone will be ready and waiting or will at least call ahead to let us know if they will not be home for any reason. One other consideration is that the reduction in contents has meant a reduction in the 'suggested donation' amount and that users have been advised that there is a possibility in the future if the pot runs low the 'suggested donation' will change to a 'mandatory cost' BUT this will be dealt with well ahead of it happening and folk will have plenty of time to opt out. We will carry out a further survey in a months' time to see how folk are adjusting to the 'Adapted S+D' but I am really pleased with where we are at the moment.

Update: Slàn san Dachaigh Healthy at Home post (Euan)

2 full applications were returned, both at an excellent standard for the role. Candidates have confirmed their attendance at virtual interviews to be held on Friday 2 October. The post is part-funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and has the objective of assisting the community's covid recovery, with a focus on health and wellbeing. Job desc and person spec have been sent round previously.

Update: Community space and Building Standards (Alisdair)

No further progress since the last Board meeting. Next step: organise a face-to-face meeting with John Gillies at Building Standards once the lock-down restrictions have been eased.

Update: Trust Development Plan (Alisdair)

A phased project plan for the remaining months of 2020 has been agreed and is included in the Virtual AGM presentation.

Update: Horshader Woodland (Alisdair)

Mick Blunt has been asked to conduct the first phase of the land survey to assess the locations already identified and highlight any additional ones that we might consider. He has promised to provide some initial indications in time for the Board meeting on 01 October 2020.

Update: Holding the AGM (Alisdair)

At our catch-up meeting on 14 September, we agreed to hold a virtual AGM on Tuesday 6 October 2020 following the First Minister's tightening of lockdown restrictions on 10 September. The AGM PowerPoint presentation has been completed and a trial run of the technology will be held on 28 September. At this point, we can finalise logistics for the AGM including agreeing meeting etiquette and understanding how we will deal with voting.

Update: Gaelic Plan (Euan)

All going to plan, some valuable comments taken from those involved in the previous language development initiative (Iomairt Shiaboist).

A forum for island community groups to discuss language development plans was set up by Magaidh Smith, featuring representatives from UCBA, Comunn Eachdraidh an Taobh Siar, An Lanntair, etc. I've also been contacted by development workers at Uig Development and also Ionad Hiort regarding our development of a Gaelic Plan. I'll keep an eye on these other like-minded initiatives.

Update: Support and Connect Update (Don)

The project services have been able to continue more or less unaffected by the lockdown, mainly due to the good work by Don and the team. The return to bus runs has taken place without any problems. Although, as expected, hires have been virtually non-existent between March and September, with students going back to school, and more medical appointments, we've done a number of carefully planned hires since the start of the month (September).

The grass cutting is coming to an end in the next few weeks, giving us a good occasion to review the season. The addition of an assistant gardener role in the 2019 project application, plus being able to bring in local youngsters, has helped the service delivery no end.

Update: External Funding (Euan)

Although there's no word yet from HIE on new funding for Covid response activities, there will likely be some significant funding available in the near future. There are also funds which have just opened which I need to look at – a couple of examples are the Maoin Ealain (small Gaelic

arts fund) and much larger Islands Green Recovery Fund. The Lottery also has Covid recovery funds opening in October.

Lots of work on funding coming up!

Update – Dalbeg/Dalmore Mobile Masts (Sarah)

I have done some research into this and EE have been tasked by the Home Office to improve mobile coverage across the UK (Donnie Morrison at HIE reiterated this research) to firstly increase the emergency services capabilities and in turn improve coverage to residents, businesses and visitors to remote areas. The programme is EAS (Extended Areas Service) – and there is a mast being erected at Tolsta Chaolais through this scheme. I am waiting to hear from Donnie at HIE about our area in particular in relation to this programme, and if it can help us move forward with this. I have not come across any feasibility study or proposal that was previously carried out or anyone that has information on the moneys gifted to the community from Transocean being used for this, so that could be a dead end. Will update further, as and when.

Update – Growing Sites (Sarah)

I am so grateful to have Chris leading the growing sites, he works tirelessly and it shows! I would like to spend time over the winter months with Chris on implementing consistent management processes for all the sites – these projects will always need to be maintained and although Chris has everything just right in his head I think it is important as PM that together we nail down processes, health & safety, users responsibilities, records, marketing and so on. The difference that a year can make is astonishing and the growing sites are a fantastic addition to the community, however we have seen how things can slip and if Chris has to be off sick or absent for any reason I feel it is important that we have a comprehensive document for each site that lays out the ground rules, then spend time on the basic training (essentials) to ensure the sites continue to function well – see ‘consolidated project report’ for more info on upgrades. Chris and I are also working on a plan to present to the board on our ideas for Grinnivat (to commence next autumn).

Update – Sarah’s induction (Sarah)

In general I feel it is important for me to mention that before embarking on any new project ideas of my own, I wish to firmly lay the groundwork on and improve the existing HCDT projects (as detailed above) and make them ‘future-proof’ (the pandemic has seriously impinged on my time and opportunity to be able to do this in my first 6 months but now that services are simplified and slowing down, it leaves more room for this) as well this I think it is important to look at the ‘bigger picture’ and create a 5-10 year strategy alongside Euan to ensure that the projects we do embark upon are sustaining the Trust for generations to come and follow the path to a ‘0’ carbon emission environment, maybe Horshader could be the first community on the island to have its own green energy eco-system! It is a huge undertaking and there are many barriers and challenges we face but we are learning more about green energy, and we have support from CES and are networking with other community groups on the island who are of the same mindset. I agree it is important (as Euan mentions in his email) to take advantage of funding pots that are opening up and tailor projects that benefit the community and match the Trusts objectives but do not deplete Trust funds – this is a win-win situation, especially during such uncertain times. It seems like a great way for Euan and I to work together, in the creation of projects for us to run or indeed the creation of more job roles in the area.

Update: Community Space (Euan)

No further update. 14 September (the indicative date for office and other venue reopening) came and went. No indication at the moment of when we'll get to that stage.

Funding Applications

An application by Gluasad Comhla was discussed. We agreed the Best of You project would be beneficial to the community. An offer will be made on the basis that the group acquire match-funding from other funders.

One Digi-Tech grant was approved for a resident in North Shawbost that is eligible to the scheme due to having full HCD membership and a croft in South Shawbost.

Proposal: 2020 Budgets (Euan)

The proposal is to approve the budgets for 2020. I sent round a budget proposal for 2020, which was discussed at the last meeting. On the night, we were not able to approve the budgets at the planned meeting, due to everything else going on, with the AGM, COVID changes, etc.

My understanding (from the discussion of the proposal at the last meeting) is that everyone was happy with the on-going review, and it was suggested that, rather than approve the new budgets now, we may be just as well to wait until setting new budgets in 2021.

The suggested approach seems good to me, and saves CIB having to update everything twice in the space of a few months (given how late we are in the year yikes), however I feel it would be very useful for the directors to approve new budgets in principle, whether it is the exact proposal I sent, or with alterations. We are currently operating, according to CIB's reports, without any budgets set. Internally we are using the 2019 budgets. Approving 2020 budgets would instantly tidy up a lot of things.

Proposal: Refreshing the West Side Art Show (Alisdair)

As it is clear that we will not now be able to hold a physical West Side Art Show. I would like to propose that we refresh the online show with new images and whatever else we can think of to maintain ongoing interest. I wonder if we might auction a picture or two for a nominated charity; or if there is a way of holding an online raffle?

Proposal: Improving the broadband service in Dalbeg (and any other parts of the Horshader area if they are similarly affected) (Alisdair)

Dalbeg is at the furthest reaches of the copper cable that comes from the green box on the main road. The broadband service is extremely poor - 3Mbps on a very good (and very rare day), 2Mbps more regularly and as low as 0.3Mbps on a bad day. The Dalbeg township is therefore very poorly served. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that there is no mobile signal in many parts of the village and the only way to get sustained mobile service is to piggyback off the home wireless network using this broadband service. Les got in touch with BT to enquire about potential solutions. BT offered to put fast fibre into our house for £75-100,000! They also suggested that there might be a way of getting the entire village to collaborate to get a community internet solution. I would therefore like to propose that the Trust looks into this for Dalbeg and uses this situation as a test case for upgrading any other parts of the Trust where similar issues exist.

Proposal – Covid Proofing Raebhat House (Sarah)

As it stands we have a number of folk using the space (covid services, deliveries, volunteers coming and going, lovely folk from the community dropping in with donations etc) and with new tighter restrictions coming into force, I think it is appropriate we set aside some time to ensure the building is as safe as it can be. The outbreak in Uist is particularly worrying. I am happy to take on this task, bearing in mind this will take some time and staff training. I propose we have signage at all entrances/exits, markers on the floor indicating a one-way system, sanitising points dotted around and clear instructions available in all spaces. As a community organisation we are carrying out 'essential work' so there are no big barriers to us continuing to use the space, and there is plenty room to move around and distance but staff must show diligence while indoors and at least if we can show we are doing all we can to make our work environment safe then we can rest easy. This will not make us popular amongst the staff and we cannot force people to stay at home, but the First Minister has said that legal action could come into force in the future if offices show non-compliance (and we don't want to be in that position). The plan would be to basically stop staff congregating in one office – which unfortunately is still happening even with the updated advice. For me, this takes priority and I would like to start work on it next week. Costs would be minimal, although it would eat into my available time and other workload.

HCDT Board of Directors on 1 October 2020

Addendum: Decisions made by email on 2 October 2020

The following proposals were discussed at the board meeting before being approved by all directors by email on 2 October.

- Proposal #1: adopt the budgets proposed by Euan for the rest of 2020;
- Proposal #2: agree to provide one third of the funding for the Best of You programme and ask the requester to seek additional funding from other Trusts on the West Side;
- Proposal #3: progress Alisdair's proposal that we initiate an investigation into what can be done to provide better internet to Dalbeg and any other geographical areas within Horshader where there is also very poor internet service: ~2Mbps.
- Proposal #4: put the Horshader woodland project on hold until we can have a proper community consultation (following the conclusion that the three initial areas identified for planting are unsuitable);
- Proposal #5: progress Sarah's proposal to increase the Covid protection in and around Raebhat House;
- Proposal #6: inform Elsa MacTaggart that we would like her to proceed with a piece of music for the Trust and that her proposed fee is entirely acceptable;
- Proposal #7: approve the latest membership applications;
- Proposal #8: progress Sarah's idea to give each Horshader Trust household a Covid-related voucher at Christmas time;
- Proposal #9: provide each of the children that would have come to the Christmas party with a surprise Christmas 'stocking'.

Euan – 7/10/20

HORSHADER TURST PROJECT STATUS REPORT : 29 September 2020

2 projects on schedule; 4 projects on amber; 0 projects in trouble; 0 projects completed since the last report

Project	PM	Sponsor	Start	Finish	Comments	
Shop & Drop service	Sarah		April 2020	December 2020	Using remaining HIE grant & donation pot S+D is projected to continue to 22.12.2020. As funds are restricted, with no further hint of continued grants from HIE we have to limit the number of benefiting households to 40 maximum, in the areas of Shawbost/Dalmore/Dalbeg only.	
Dalmore Growing Site Improvements	Sarah		05/06/20	01/11/20	Remaining work; watering system for the site and signage	
Coastal Walk Upgrade	Jordan		06/01/20	09/05/20	Work is now complete and the upgraded coastal walk is now in use; signage at both entry points to be implemented reminding users of their responsibilities.	
Tree Ark Extension	Sarah		14/01/20	29/05/20	Awaiting delivery of materials for the outdoor growing area; delivery is still being impeded by lack of production due to pandemic. However the contractor has been in to riddle the ground in preparation for the netting. Electricity still to be connected to Crubs; electrician is awaiting parts. Signage to be erected; quote from Sawmill/pyrographer in process.	
West Side Art Show	Anna	Alisdair	12/02/20	05/06/20	Virtual show up and running. Physical show on hold due to tightening of restrictions across Scotland.	
Horshader Forest Ph1	Alisdair		20/02/20	01/06/20	Project on hold; a quote for work to determine potential sites has been gained from Mick Blunt, he has indicated that he will update us on his progression by 01.10.20	
Horshader Area Beach Access/Upgrades	Euan	Flora	05/06/20	10/08/20	Stage 1 community consultation complete; action plan and time frames for improvements by feasibility and priority out for circulation; more information to be relayed during virtual AGM 06.10.20	
Dalbeg/Dalmore Mobile Signal Mast	Sarah	Alisdair	01/09/20		Initial enquiries have been made to Donnie Morrison (HIE Broadband, Mobile and Wireless); awaiting response	
Not yet approved	On schedule		Issues on the horizon		In trouble	Completed