

Horshader Community Trust
Redacted Minutes of Board Meeting
Monday 27th May 2024

1. Preliminaries

Present: Carole Miller (Chair), Fiona Jefferson, Flora Macleod, Jimina Macleod, Donna MacLennan, and Gordon Matheson (keeping the minute)

Apologies: None

Minutes of previous meeting: Minutes of 29th April 2024 meeting were approved.

Declarations of Interests: FJ is a member of the SOST; DM is a member of the WWM.

Risort: The Board noted that the Risort Board had met earlier and agreed a financial statement and accounts. These accounts will feature in the Group Consolidated Accounts.

2. Review Of Actions From Previous Minutes

Big Survey – The board noted the positive press coverage in the Big Survey Results. One member reported a limited concern that with the small numbers in the survey it would be possible to identify individuals. Gordon reported that the results shared outside the board had masked very small numbers, which could be used to make such an identification. Low raw numbers were replaced with “<5” or “<10”.

The Board discussed other options for what to do in response to the high level of fuel poverty exposed. It was agreed to approach Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) with a view to secure, funding dependent, an officer to carry our Energy Performance Certificates on about half the homes in the Horshader Area. This project was anticipated to take about 2 weeks work, costing ~£2,000. Households would be offered the opportunity to opt in. The benefit would be twofold – individually it would serve as a basis to identify homes which could benefit from Warmworks schemes to improve heat efficiency; and secondly it would contribute to a body of “hard data” on a small representative sample set – and allow modelling of the plight of many typical island homes.

Dalmore Water Meter – DM reported that the matter was heading towards resolution. Brightwater have instructed us to pause the DD. The problem seems related to the meter readings after a meter replacement.

Accounts & AGM – The RPG accounts are complete and audited. The auditor (MJG) are nearing completion of the Trust Consolidated accounts, and they are due for 24th June. The Board agreed to a provisional date for the AGM on 3rd September.

3. Project Evaluation Group

Timing of PEG Meetings – The Board agree that the PEG should meet once a month, ideally 7 days before the Board. Applications would only be considered if they were submitted 10 days before the Board. Applications falling after this would not be considered until the following month.

Carloway Agricultural Society – Requested £590; PEG recommended this amount in full. The Board approved the recommendation.

Shawbost School PC – Requested £370; PEG recommended £200. The Board approved the recommendation.

Westside War Memorial – Requested £11,932. PEG recommended making no grant at this stage, and supplying the CC with a range of War Memorial Funders they could approach. The Board approved a grant of £2,000 at this stage, to enable the CC to seek Match Funding more easily (with some money already awarded).

4. Operational Update/Financial Update

Membership Applications – None

Bursary Applications – None

Update from Development Officer –

The Board requested written monthly reports in future. The DO reported on:

- TOSC – As the main funder, COF, is a UK Government fund, it has run into a clash with the timing of the General Election. The Fund is effectively mothballed until after the election – so no announcements of successful bids; and likely no opening of Round 4 Window 2. The Board agreed to suspend progress on the TOSC Project until after the General Election.
- Other Project Updates – The Gaelic placenames and mapping project is being reviewed. The Minibus replacement via Motability Foundation’s Community Transport Grant Programme seems unlikely to be successful, due to the Trust’s level of cash reserves.
- Trust Articles, Memoranda and Bye-Laws – GM reported some difficulty in navigating the complex arrangement of the Trust’s constitutional documents when preparing the AGM minutes. The Simplified Document actually proved not simple, and it may be worth considering this at a future meeting. The Board agreed that with the management restructure ongoing, this was not a good time to review the Articles &c.
- Fire Plan – The full policy is being redrafted, and will come to the next meeting. One item of fire risk had been identified as higher risk – the location of the bins. It would be good to relocate these away from the external walls of the building. There is a plan to relocate them to behind the wall between the Community Space and the Shed (currently used by An Eather to store the skiffs).

Update from General Manager – The GM reported on the following:

Audit

- Meeting the assorted requests for documentation to meet the auditors requests

Declarations of Interests Auditors Report

- The Board were asked to complete Col reports for the Auditors.

Financial Position

- The balances of the Trust's two main entities were reported as:
 - Horshader Community Development £1.139m
 - Risort Power Generation - £1.255m
- Investments (within the HCD Balance)
 - Insignis Cash Platform £428k
 - CAF Flagstone £400k
 - These investments are performing well – far more than bank interest.
- Repayment of CES Loan
 - Loan outstanding repaid in full - £53,783.27 – from Horshader Funds.

5. **Project Updates** –

Tree Ark – Laura McEwan has given notice that she was successful in her job application to Woodland Trust. She has requested that she be allowed to continue one day per week in a limited role with the Tree Ark. The board agreed to this.

Given the staffing shortage this will create, with immediate effect, the Board agreed to approach Anna James, one of the Tree Ark volunteers, with a view to her taking on a 20-hour per week role to staff the Tree Ark. The Board agreed to consider casual posts for the summer months, recruiting students to meet urgent need. It was agreed that these casual posts could not be filled using Zero Hours Contracts, as we are a Fair Work employer.

Community Woodland – Further re-assessment of the site is to be completed.

Grass Cutting – Ongoing.

6. **AOCB** – Several Items were raised:

N4/Northland – Following the Community Council public meeting with Northland representatives (held in RH, on 14th May, a member of the Trust had written to the Board, requesting that we take a more active role in representing the community in representations to Northland Power Ltd. The Board noted the answer given at the AGM, and saw no reason to move from that position, specifically that the CC were the right body to lead the community response.

Ness and Westside Forum: Alice Murray at CnES has organised a meeting the NWF on Tuesday 11th June at 7:00pm in the Clan MacQuarrie Centre. As the Forum would discuss, among other things, the Crown Estate Revenue Fund applications, GM felt a member of the Board should attend with him if possible. CM will attend.

Hustings: With the election just announced for 4th July, GM asked if the board would be happy to host a “Horshader Hustings” event somewhere in Shawbost. The Board agreed to the proposal, to be hosted at either RH or TOSC depending on numbers, provisionally on Thursday 20th June.

Management Post Discussion / Restructure – After DM and GM left the meeting, the Board continued a discussion about filling the General Manager post, and more generally the Trust’s staffing organisation. It was agreed to hold a minute of this discussion aside, to avoid a conflict of interest with staff members.

The Board agreed to ask GM to act up until a new manager was appointed.

Next Ordinary Meeting: 24th June 2024