Sunart Community Company - Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 27th March 2019 **Venue**: Fire Station

1) Welcome and Apologies:

Attending: D Barker (DB) Chair, J Jones (JJ) Secretary, J Madden (JM) Vice Chair, J Hilder (JH) Treasurer, I Baker (IB), J Tyldesley (JT) K Campbell (KC), J MacKinnon (JMK). The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies: L Cameron (LC), C Millar-Craig (CMC), K Proctor (KP), A Carmichael (AC). M Simpkinson (MS) had written to the secretary to tender his resignation. He has changed jobs which currently leaves little time to devote to the Board. Matt hopes there may be a chance to assist in the future.

- 2) **Review of LDO Performance**: JH, JJ and IB had met in 25th March 2019 to discuss and review performance. IB expressed concern at the amount of time in lieu she has accrued; JH explained that this would be paid as previously agreed. The focus recently has been the Oakwood Information and Tourism Centre (formerly the Visitor Information Centre) which had taken more time that anticipated. As a result there is a little slippage on the Woodland and Common Benefit Fund work. This was discussed and action agreed
- 3) **Minutes of the last meeting** 19th January 2019: Proposed: JH Seconded: DB

4) Matters Arising not covered by the Agenda:

i) Meeting Dates for 2019/20

ii) Note re D Gibb Highland Council } See AoB

5 Finance Report:

Balance: £42,612.54. The balance includes NHS grant for Lara Van de Peer, monies held for Common Benefit Fund and outstanding items where monies are held for specific purposes e.g. the Angling Club.

The treasurer has opened a separate account for the Oakwood Centre and discovered that the Clydesdale Bank had been treating the Company bank account as a business account not a charity. After discussions with the manager main Company account is changed to charitable status and fees and charges paid should be reimbursed. A grant for £1,000 has been received from the Community Council as a contribution to the Oakwood Centre and the Directors expressed appreciation for the support of the Council ACTION : JJ to write a note of thanks.

6 Capacity Building & Enhanced Employment:

a) Loch Development: JH has spoken to the Highland Council and they have agreed to his request to reduce the Council's legal fees. Also, JH has been in contact with Crown Estates/ Marine Scotland with regard the need to upgrade the jetty if we proceed with the transfer of ownership. The Crown has revised the Heads of Terms to require that the jetty need <u>only</u> be maintained in its current condition, which is far less onerous and less of a cost. It was acknowledged that leasing the jetty and slip brings with it additional third party risk, and a cost associated with the lease and running repairs. JH explained the Company has an insurance policy which will provide adequate cover and running costs can be met by annual subscriptions from users and fundraising events such as the Water Festival. Financing for upgrading the facilities is only likely to be accessible from grant funders if the charity has the leasehold so it is proposed that the Company proceed with the acquisition of surrounding land and the lease of the Jetty and slip., The Board agreed that the Heads of Terms be signed and the legal process should now proceed. The Secretary is arranging a Loch meeting for April 2019.

- b) Paths, Trails and Maps: The Back Road has been cleared of debris and the signs are still to be erected/replaced. The benches need to be sited and installed. The Paths Leaflet has been agreed and printed and the Board wish to thank the IB and the Path Volunteers for all the work and effort involved. The electronic maps and GPS are being developed with Karl and Dean, and with volunteers logging the various routes. The money for the signs and signposts is available and the Men's Shed has been asked to price materials. The secretary is in the process of organising the next Paths Group meeting.
- c) Community Building Hub, Heritage, etc. No action
- d) Community Woodland No action
- e) Lifelong Learning No action
- f) Transport Links No action
- g) Housing No action
- h) Community Benefit Fund (CBF): The date for the next meeting is being arranged. The treasurer will ask for £5,000 towards wages. At the outset, when the CBF Group was being established it was agreed that there should be a review after 3 years to consider its operation, how group members are replaced, whether there should be money set aside for future legacy when the FIT payments cease, etc. The proposed date for the review is 1st May 2019 with Company Board, the Hydro Board and the CBF Panel attending.

7 Assets

- a) Old Schoolhouse Plot: Nothing to report
- b) Back Road JJ/DB will arrange to have the trees inspected.
- c) Composting site: Nothing to report.
- d) Community Woodland Plot (Behind V&D Barker's): Nothing to report.

8 Potential/ enhanced community facilities:

- a) Longrigg Woodland: KP is the lead director on this and has arranged a meeting for 1st April 2019. There have been issues with people on the email list not replying or acknowledging receipt of the email. Amanda Calvert has indicated that high value wood is commercially viable. On the 1st, the Steering Group will consider whether or not the consultants should prepare to proceed to the next stage i.e. the preparation of the full business case and make recommendations to the Board. Also, it appears that the Common Grazings Committee have not yet been formally contacted. These points will be taken to the working group meeting on 1st April.
- b) Men's Shed: JT gave an update and informed the Board that they have made a bench, bird table, an Owl Box to replace the one in the Community Woodland, they are looking into signposts for the Paths group and Wooden stobbs for the car park outside the Oakwood Centre. The question "how do we get a shed?" was raised i.e. the Who? What? Where? When? How? etc. JH pointed out that the Men's Shed is up and running, there is now "a story to tell", a track record of progress and increased attendance in the last twelve months. All of which will help with applications for funding bids to build a permanent Men's Shed. The Extraordinary General Meeting in 2018 identified it as a priority, and the old compost site as a good, central location close by other facilities. This is now an action point and so funding bids are the next step and JH will report back at the next meeting. It was agreed there needs to be a proposal to the Board at a later date outlining possible options and costs.
- c) Oakwood Information and Tourism and Centre (formerly the Visitor Information Centre (VIC)): Since opening on the 18th March sales have been £450.70 with the biggest category being books. The Producers are happy with the good range of sales, and this is before being fully operational. Currently the opening hours are Monday – Friday 10am – 4pm and Saturday 12noon – 2pm. A major commitment has been on training for volunteers but this should reduce, and the paperwork/ systems

side of things and the Facebook page. The budget: there is money in hand but items still to pay. Initially there was £5,000 for the Common benefit Fund, £2,500 from the Scottish Land Fund and most recently £1,000 from the Community Council. To date: the refurbishment is £5,400; stock i.e. Company items stock, £1,700, leaving a current balance of £1,700. There will be a stocktake on 31^{st} March 2019 as this is the last day of the financial year.

The Board thank Tim and Lynn Coldwell, Colin Ferguson and all the volunteers and directors who have been involved with the refurbishment and preparations for opening. It was agreed there should be an official opening – a party for all the people involved. The insurance is with Zurich, and at the moment there are issues with insurance for the third party stock.

Alison Carmichael is the linked director for the producer side and DB with the building and maintenance. IB will work towards producing a monthly business report. There is to be a review of operating procedures and costing models in the middle of the year. Currently there are three rates for selling products: a) rent only; b) commission (local); or external commission, sales or return, or C) buy up front. The suggestion is that the payment options and the level of commission be reviewed. The Chair complimented IB on all her work getting the centre up and running.

9 Output 4 – Sustainable Community Company:

- a. Fundraising
 - i. Fund Raising & Income Generation: None
 - ii. Gift Aid: None
 - b. Board Development: None
 - c. Strategy Review and Business Planning: See item 4b above
 - d. Staffing: None
 - e. Office: IT is now working is Dail Mhor and Lara is based there in the Company Office.
 - f. Website: None

10 Other Matters:

- a. Fisheries: None
- b. Drimnatorran Farm: Noted
- c. Village Hall And Old Primary School Building: See 12c
- d. Community Building Hub, Heritage, Pool: None
- e. Lifelong Learning: None
- f. Transport Links: None
- g. Housing: None

11 Correspondence: -

a. None

12 Any Other Business:

- a. Items from the Community Council: See items 5 and 8c)
- b. Longrigg Woodland See Item 8a)
- c. Agenda item 4c) re D Gibb who chairs the Primary School Transition Project has been criticised for the inaccuracy of the minute keeping and reporting. The chair and Secretary of the Strontian Community School Building Ltd resigned from the project group as contents of minutes agreed by the group have been mis-recorded or deliberately changed even after the Chair asked for inaccuracies to be corrected. The Company has experienced this also, when Lara Van de Peer asked for corrections to the minutes. JH had replied to an email and circulated an email to the Board from the Chair of SCSB Ltd this re-states our position that the community company has no interest in the building other than to try to ensure good services for the local community and that the existing building does not deteriorate. Also a rumour had been started when Marie Law (NHS) reported that the Sunart Community Company was interested in acquiring the village hall and primary school building,

which was incorrect. The situation with the Village Hall and primary school building remains unchanged and will continue until the NHS and Highland Council make some decisions.

- d. Board meeting dates 2019/20: the secretary will circulate a list of proposed dates to Board members and asks to highlight any issues or clashes with other activities, etc.
- e. The Board thank Sunart Community Council for the £1,000 donation to the Oakwood Centre

13 a) Date of Next Meeting: 8th May 2019 7pm in the Fire Station, Strontian