

Sunart Community Company

Board Meeting 7:30pm Wednesday 15th February 2023 (Sunart Centre)

Attending/ Invitees: J Hilder (Treasurer) J Jones (Secretary), J Madden, T Burke, R Henderson, L Macgregor, B Drinkwater (via Zoom) and S Traynor,

Apologies: H McDonald, K Simpkinson, A Hughes and P Sharples (Chair)

1. **Welcome:**

James Hilder chaired the meeting in the absence of the Chair, Paul Sharples. James welcomed everyone to the meeting and also Laura MacGregor, our new director.

2. **Appointment of Office Bearers**

J Hilder proposed that the appointment of the Chair post was carried forward to the next meeting and this was agreed. Appointment of Treasurer: James Hilder explained that having been the treasurer for a number of years he was hoping to step back from the role and had asked Tony Burke however Tony declined at this time. James agreed to stand but for only a further 12 months at most. J Jones proposed J Hilder; seconded by L MacGregor. J Hilder asked for nominations the post of secretary and explained the role. J Hilder proposed J Jones; seconded by T Burke. The Board approved both nominations.

3. **Acceptance of Minutes of last meeting** 11th January 2023 & any matters arising not included in the agenda: proposed R Henderson; seconded L MacGregor

J Madden queried information in the second paragraph, the Community Survey information, with regard to number of people registered and the number of £150 cheques that had been issued, as information in the De tha dol? indicated that 420 cheques had been issued. J Hilder explained that the information in the minutes of the 11th January were an early summary, paraphrasing. The exact information on numbers of residents registered to vote is not available, as was previously the case, due to GDPR regulations. Also, it was not necessarily households, as someone living here permanently but not in their own house or flat e.g. hotel staff living in staff accommodation, would have been eligible. He explained that as the SCR directors when they issued the cheques they obtained recipient details (and consent) so we can now update our resident's database. J Jones also explained there couldn't have been 420 issued, as the number of cheques available was far fewer than 400.

4. **Approval of Accounts** 2021- 2022: J Hilder explained that the accounts were still with the accountants and there were still some discussions on-going so they will be presented at the next meeting, 22nd March 2023. The discussions are about certain expenditure and under which cost headings items should be posted. He had shown T Burke the accounts and asked Tony for any points: Tony mentioned that the Risk Register forms part of the annual accounts, a later item, and that there was mention of a separate "company", about which he was unclear. James explained that the Community Company has another company, Sunart Community Enterprise Ltd, which is a trading company i.e. non-charity status, and is currently "mothballed". Sunart Community Enterprise was set up to build the community hydro scheme, and subsequently Sunart Community Renewables was then set up to run the hydro, sell the electricity and donate excess income to the Community Company. The mothballed company is being retained for the day when the sales income from Oakwood exceeds the HMRC charities small trading threshold, as above that figure the charity will be liable for corporation tax. Oakwoods is primarily a trading company. Currently we are well below the HMRC threshold, as the

Draft

accounts show a small loss. James has annual discussions with the accountants as would prefer Oakwood as a separate entity to avoid the possible liability for Corporation Tax but the accountants say Sunart Community Company is below the charity threshold.

5. Community Company planning

It was explained that we normally look at this item about once or twice a year e.g. for planning the burger stall, the Christmas market and auction, etc. However, we perhaps need to look more frequently and try to plan other income opportunities, as the Burns' Night Supper was very well received. If we plan more activities it is the ideal opportunity to generate more income. Also the community survey has highlighted that people want there to be more activities and events in the village and some people have indicated their willingness to volunteer.

Laura MacGregor and Rowena Henderson expressed an interest and volunteered to set up a Sunart Social Group sub-group. J Hilder proposed setting up a group to analyse the survey and identify options and potential items to develop further. He will produce a summary but would like some people to work with him: Becky, Tony and Rowena volunteered to help and Hannah to be copied in as she set up the survey. The group will meet urgently to agree consultation dates.

The report will identify potential offerings e.g. Church/ heritage, electric vehicle, Longrigg Woodland, etc.

6. Update (briefly and if required) on:

- **Longrigg Woodland:** Andy Hughes sent apologies and texted an update: the most important point to note is that the CATS application went in and all associated invoices are being dealt with (thanks to James and Diarmaid and The SCC funds!). The application is in the public domain and we wait to hear the [FLS] decision. Our [Scottish Land Fund] Stage 2 application can begin shortly and we have been in contact with Philip Coghill (HIE), they are hopeful (once we have a decision regarding the CATS) of a March application. J Hilder thought that a March application deadline would be very tight to submit the required information. Becky Drinkwater that there had been a visit by application panel, which was generally very positive and there are some questions that they would like clarifying. J Hilder asked for the date of the next SCBF Panel; Becky will get back to him with the date – (NB this is the evening of Wed 29th March)
- **Oakwood:** Karyn Simpkinson will be doing an end of year stocktake. A new computer is required, as the one she had has died; it was several years old. J Hilder has spoken with Tony Gowland and provided another, old computer, which Tony will use if it will work as it will only be needed for the stock take records. We will be replacing the All Square cash/invoicing system. Solar panels will be fitted, Tony Burke explained that the Company must pay and claim back the grant and has supplied the Treasurer with a cashflow. Tony has also asked Tony Gowland to look at beaming Wi-Fi into the Village Hall. Joan mentioned the no alterations for fixings can be made at the hall, as required by the Highland Council agreement; she was assured none would be needed
- **Men's Shed:** This is being managed by J Jones and T Burke; the electricity is connected and all electric testing has been done; British Gas (electric provider) have overcharged, a £300 bill being £2,300, which Tony has resolved and obtained £100 compensation. The water and meter are installed, Nigel Traynor will be doing the connection and he is an accredited Business Stream contractor, so can sign off the work. There will need to be a tidy up day, the hedges need cutting [before birds are nesting] and the roof and painting requires attention. Urram will pay for the cost of the paint. The Urram Chair explained that they had obtained grant funding for lunch clubs, activity/ support for older and isolated members of the community. Tony and Rowena will draw up the risk assessment and operating policies for the Men's Shed –

Draft

J Jones explained these had been done for the old premises by Izzy Baker so could be a starting point

- **Loch/ Moorings – Jetty and Green Shed:** J Hilder explained that he and his son had installed/ strengthened some of the roof beams and installed mesh to prevent nesting birds gaining access, as they fouled the changing area. The window needs installing by Tim Coldwell but he has been tied up recently. James also reported that the timber planks purchased in 2021 to build changing cubicles had “gone missing” and someone had used part of the shed as a urinal! J Jones mentioned that 3 3x2 flagstones had also disappeared some months ago. The raft is currently on the shore and James will return, and Laura McConnachie is donating a ladder, which will be mounted on the raft, this will make it easier for the swimmers to climb on the raft to rest if they are tired. The three moorings anchors will need inspecting and there have been two requests for installing mooring so James will get in touch with Mallaig Marine.
- **Paths:** James and his son, who is a tree surgeon, have done some work on the trees on the Back Road path. Laura Macgregor asked about the wood from the trees, where it is stored: currently at James’. Laura asked if a wood “club” might be established for local people to access firewood, etc. It was explained that this is something the Longrigg Woodland group have suggested, once the woodland has been purchased.
- **Website/ Communications/ Newsletter:** Becky gave an update and suggested the aim will be to have more regular communications with members and keeping them up to date. There can be blog options and Christmas mailshot. The Company now have a complete database as a result of the recent £150 cheque issue. It was agreed the website needs to be updated and Laura’s name to be added. Becky suggested a “meeting the team” page with a picture and brief resume for each director and member of staff, which was agreed and Becky will send out an email. It was also agreed to add “newsletter “ to this agenda item
- **Heritage:** the information is that the Church of Scotland will dispose of the building in Strontian by December 2023. Sarah had met with the Minister and the formal request to purchase to the Trustees had not been registered by the Church of Scotland solicitors. The minister has circulated a valuation for £120,000 but with the amount of repairs, we consider it overpriced. Comment from the valuers “we understand there has been some community interest in purchase” appears to indicate that information hasn’t been passed on to the church’s solicitors.
The graves recordings has been completed this includes photographs and information so there is now comprehensive records of the church graveyard. Meetings and an exhibition are planned, one will be in April; a leaflet is being prepared; there will be a donate button on the website; it is hoped to do “story recordings” of members who live here and from people who have moved away from the area.
There are several local residents doing a great deal of voluntary work supporting Dualchas e.g. collating the information, which has been gathered and compiled a database. There was a suggestion for a story - recording project and the Youth Development Officer may be able to get a youth group.
J Hilder will update the Minister and ask for information for claiming the £5,000 funds from SCBF for the initial immediate and urgent repairs to the building.
- The Polloch telephone kiosk: Cameron Morris is doing the electrical work for the defibrillator and T Burke has asked for the recommissioning of the kiosk in Scotstown

7. **Assets & Risk Register** (standing item): T Burke has compiled the risk register but explained that directors would need to be involved – Tony will recirculate the risk register. Polloch: BT kiosk - Cameron Morris is undertaking the required electrical mods, funding from SCBF is awaited to allow the purchase of the defibrillator.

Draft

8. **Income generation** (standing item): it was agreed to purchase a BBQ for the summer burger stall as the one we borrowed for 2022 had "died". If a new BBQ is purchased it will not need an annual inspection and certificate until year 2 or 3. The issue of loaning it out, storage, cleaning and maintenance was discussed. Price in a sale is estimated to be in the region of £1,300 - £1,500.
9. **Finance**, including Common Benefit Fund (CBF) & Oakwood: Bank balances: Oakwood is £10,693.70p and Company a/c £31,530.30p but this includes ring-fenced monies held under sub heads.
10. **Staff matters** (standing item): Nothing to include at this time

11. AOB

- Draft meeting dates for 2022 -2023; meeting day Monday or Wednesday or another day? Directors to look at the dates and provide John Jones with information on school holiday dates and if there are any other activities scheduled that might clash.
- Re-launch of Strontian Paths Group – J Jones submitted a draft for consideration and will now update for an insert piece for the De tha dol?
- Strontian: the village green phone box was decommissioned by BT some years ago; as a part of the Resilience team's work, BT have been asked to recommission this so that it is available in an emergency, should we lose mobile networks.

Date of next meeting: 22nd March 2023 Venue TBA

Draft

Please find below status of activities

Oakwood:-

- phone/broadband
 - provision of Wi-Fi to village hall... Tony G. reviewing options
- solar panels:-
 - installation 8/9 March
- Improved Lighting of Oakwood sign & external socket for Xmas lights:-
 - order placed with Cameron Morris
- Safety checks:-
 - fixed electrical inspection and PAT testing – order placed with Cameron Morris

Man-shed:-

- Electricity:-
 - Corrigans made final connection on 1st Dec. and performed fixed electrical inspection and Portable Appliance Tests.
 - Billing by British Gas (BG) a nightmare!.... 4 incorrect charges totalling £2,000 against actual usage of £252 for 3 month period. Complaint now sitting with BG CEO
 - Had to use BG initially as they were the **only** company willing to fit a meter!
 - Tariff expires 6/6/23, intend to move to cheaper tariff with Octopus (same supplier as Oakwood) once compensation received from BG.
- Water:-
 - all parts purchased & trench works inspected by Scottish Water, Nigel Traynor will be completing installation
- Sewer:-
 - as of 9/2/23, Nigel Traynor will be completing these works and can sign off installation for SW.
- SCC liabilities:-
 - need to investigate risk assessments, safety checks and “training records” to ensure only authorised people use equipment. NB may need key control to prevent unauthorised use of equipment
 - need to check council tax, public liability insurance – done
- Strontian BT phone box:-
 - slow progress! Currently, can only be used for 0800 numbers. Neither cash nor credit-card calls are permitted from kiosks, calls to UK landlines & mobiles should be free but this aspect not yet working. Once enabled, we should then publicise kiosk’s availability so we can increase its usage and prove its worth.
 - Kiosk has had some TLC!

De-fib unit in Polloch Phone box:-

- order placed with Cameron for electrical mods
- Awaiting confirmation of funding from SCBF panel to purchase defib & cabinet

Regards,
Tony