

Sunart Community Company Minutes Board Meeting 5th February 2024 - Village Hall

Attending: Directors: P Sharples (Chair), J Hilder (Treasurer), J Jones Secretary), R Henderson, L Macgregor, J Green, B Drinkwater, Sarah Traynor, Nick Brooks

Apologies: A Hughes, K Simpkinson, Justine Dunn and Christine Nater

1. **Welcome:** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, each person introduced themselves to the group, as there were three new members: Sarah Traynor, Jacob Green and Nick Brooks.
2. **Acceptance of Minutes of last meeting 30th October 2023 & any matters arising not included in the agenda:** The correct spelling of Dualchas was clarified and the Secretary apologised for the oversight. The acceptance of minutes was proposed by James Hilder, seconded by Laura MacGregor
3. **Post AGM actions:** Appointment of office bearers: Chair: P Sharples, proposed J Hilder, seconded L McGregor; Secretary: j jones proposed J Hilder seconded P Sharples; Treasurer: J Hilder proposed J Jones seconded P Sharples. The co-option of Sarah Traynor and Nick Brooks was proposed by James Hilder and seconded by Laura Macgregor and agreed by all. It was proposed and agreed that the matter of identifying directors to take a lead role on items be postponed to the planning meeting On 25th March 2024.
4. **Community Company Planning:** It was discussed and agreed that there should be a separate planning meeting, which will include a presentation on how the Company operates, agree items for action for 2024-25 and agree lead roles for directors. The date proposed is Monday 25th March at 7pm and venue to be decided, either Village Hall or Community Centre
5. **Update** (standing items, so brief, and only if required):
 - **Longrigg Woodland** – Andy Hughes emailed an update. The FLS are looking to proceed quickly and have emailed information to our solicitors, McPhee & Partners. There are a couple of items to clarify but all seems in hand and James and Andy are going through the details. We have been awarded £250,000 grant from FLS, which includes purchase price and other costs, and we can draw down the funds as needed.
 - **Oakwood:** Karyn is preoccupied with:
 - Stock reconciliation complete in order to produce valuation for year end accounts; should be with James & Wendy for end February 2024
 - Reopening Oakwood on Thursday 28th March; would welcome update on Paths leaflet to ensure stock available from that date
 - Advert will be sent to De Tha Dol? announcing reopening
 - PAT testing within Oakwood is completed (thanks to Tony B); smoke alarms and exterior lights remain on the “To-Do List” with possible exterior repaint
 - Regarding exterior repaint - can we organise a Working Party as last year? Karyn can use social media to call for volunteers, but could Board agree a date(s) for this in March when as many of them as possible are available?

EV Charging point is up and running and working well and Urram pay for the use. The charging point can only be accessed using an on-line App and a card. The two charging points behind Oakwood are owned and run by the Highland Council, although they sited jointly on Company land (Village Green) and Alisdair Macleans property. These have not been commissioned and the Highland Council informs us that they are unable to get an electric meter installed; this is a problem in the supply from the electricity company, apparently this is not unique to us.

 - **Men's Shed:** The shed is now ready to go. There is water electric and heating. The access ramp is now installed, as is the second door/ emergency exit. There was a discussion about how to develop use, which is for all from the community and so a different, more inclusive name is proposed. The workshop room needs setting up again and the tools and storage need reviewing. The PAT testing has been done but there are tools that need to go into storage as not all items have been tested. The suggestion is that we apply for some funding

from SCBF for a part time co-ordinator and James will then seek some match funding. An **action point** is that we need to draw up a job description for the co-ordinator role.

- **Loch/ Moorings – Jetty and Green Shed:** A question was asked about when the pontoon can be repaired. James explained that he is hoping this will be in the next month at the high tide, when the pontoon can be floated to the jetty and repaired. There are questions about the Company moorings as we are having difficulty getting these inspected, which is necessary for the insurance. There are people in the village asking for moorings, so it may be an option to sell the moorings. For the mooring association, the fees are still outstanding and have to be collected. **Action:** J Hilder and P Sharples
 - **Paths:** At the AGM Christine Nater asked about when the new group would be formed. She was invited to attend and asked for the information from the Paths consultation meeting but. Becky explained that this information is on the website. John Jones will email Christine and invite her to the next meeting on 4th March 2024. The Paths Around Strontian Leaflet is required for the reopening of Oakwood. John Jones had emailed the printers but will follow this up.
 - **Website/ Communications/ Newsletter:** There was a Newsletter/ Update sent out before Christmas and another before the AGM. The suggestion is to do another Newsletter in April and this might be timely as there will be a lot of information on which to update people. The “documents” pages are up to date but there are a number of pages that still need text. Nick Brooks will work with Becky and look at the website pages content. The request is for photos of any work or activities that are going on – pictures have a big impact.
 - **Heritage:** Sunart Church acquisition is proceeding and a price of £50,000 has been agreed in principle with the Church of Scotland (CoS) Trustees – hopefully the purchase can be completed in the summer. The figure is just for the church building as the CoS do not (apparently) own the surrounding ground or graveyard, this is in the ownership of the Highland Council. James has spoken with Highland Council and we should be able to acquire it for £1. James has written and lodged expression of interest in a Community Asset Transfer to the Highland Council. It will be necessary to fund raise for the purchase of the church and then for the repair/ renovation costs. Hopefully, it will be possible to employ a project worker. Sarah explained there has been a survey of the graveyard and cleaning of the headstones. Some work has also been done on digitising some of the archive information but there is a lot to do. Becky, at James’ request, is preparing to submit an outline planning application for the church refurbishment to seek reassurance from the Council that any plans will not be blocked.
 - **Social/ Activities:** James suggested a vote of thanks to everyone who was involved in organising and arranging the Hogmanay party in the Village Hall and the Burns’ Supper in the Ariundle Centre. Both events were well attended and comments/ feedback has been very positive. Our thanks to Kate and her team at the Ariundle Centre, and to Iain Michie for playing the bagpipes. The plan for a ceilidh in February has been postponed to avoid a clash with the Shinty Club fundraising events.
6. **Assets & Risk Register** (standing item): nothing at this time, and this will be an item for the planning event on the 25th March
7. **Income generation** (standing item): nothing at this time and this will be an item for the planning event on the 25th March
8. **Finance**, The Oakwood A/c: £7,713; Company (including SCBF Residue) A/c: £33,468. Income from the Christmas Fair is £863; the Sunart Bowmen has been dissolved and £954 has been received to go to the Sunart Community Benefit Fund (SCBF) for allocation as they think appropriate. The online Christmas Auction raised about £1,200 less the admin charge.
- a) **Cost of Living Award:** Company has received £20,000, approximately, from Sunart Community Renewables Ltd for the distribution of the £150 cheques to local full time resident households. There are still some outstanding payments to be made to some households in Scotstown, Polloch, Longrigg Road and along the A861 to Resipole. If we are involved in this exercise again a suggestion is that people should collect their cheque from a central point, as many did on the night of the Christmas Fair. However, a further suggestion is that the

Treasurer write to Sunart Community Renewables Ltd and suggest that rather than the same again, any payment be targeted to people more in need. Currently AliEnergy (charity in Oban) have the contract for supporting households in need/fuel poverty from Highland Council. AliEnergy have made three emergency Cost of Living Payments in the last year to Sunart residents using money set aside by the Sunart Community Benefit Fund and Community Council. This pot of money is still available to any household in receipt of benefits who is struggling with finance.

- b) JH indicated there is likely to be an increased demand on SCBF funds for upcoming projects and activities in the community e.g. the church acquisition, Community Shed, Longrigg and for money to be placed in the Community Endowment Fund, Proposed: James Hilder, seconded by Laura Macgregor and carried by unanimous vote.

9. **Staff matters** (standing item): Nothing at this time

10. AOB

- AGM in 27th January 2024 - Draft AGM minutes were circulated, a copy will be placed on the website
- Draft meetings dates - proposed dates circulated for comments and to be confirmed at the next meeting, 4th March
- FLS sale of shed in Polloch – There has been a request from a local resident in Polloch to acquire this for the local community. James has asked that the local residents confirm their support for this request and Billy Brown is arranging a meeting, which James will host on the 12th February. The idea is the local residents will renovate and manage the building. James has submitted an initial expression of interest, which means the FLS will suspend the sale of the building pending our enquiries and fund raising. If it is decided to proceed, the process is much simplified because of the low value/ cost e.g. a full survey is not required. It will be necessary for the local resident to establish a committee to manage the renovation process and the running of the shed. JH has committed approx. £200 of SCC funds to jointly commission a valuation with FLS.
- “Mending Workshop” and “Mend it Monday and Reuse it” - Justine is putting together a bid for some funding for a pilot project from LEG, with a view to making a proper bid to the Climate Hub funding round in the summer. She hopes to use the Men's Shed for the mend it sessions, which don't have to be a Monday.
- Paths – Christine Nater has been invited to the next meeting as she has expressed an interest being involved as a coordinator.
- Food Bank/Food sharing initiatives – this was mentioned by a person at the AGM, it was something that Hannah McDonald had introduced and was added to the community consultation in 2022/3. To be discussed at planning meeting 25th March

Date of next meeting: 4th March 2024 7:30pm, Village Hall with a longer Planning / Strategy meeting 7pm to 9.30pm on Monday 25th March

Future meeting dates: to be confirmed