

DRAFT

Sunart Community Company Annual General Meeting 27th January 2024 Ariundle Centre

Attending: P Sharples (Chair), J Hilder (Treasurer), J Jones (Secretary), R Henderson, L MacGregor
Members: J McIntyre, C Nater, J Dunn, R Dunn, C Hunter, M Jones, K Campbell, H Tait, J Tait, L Sharples, M Stewart, J Childs. There were also five members of the public present.

1. **Welcome:**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Apologies and Proxy Votes:**

M Hilder, D Anderson M Simpkinson, J Green

3. **Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising:**

Amendment: On the list of Directors: J Henderson should read R Henderson.

Acceptance of the minutes for the AGM meeting on 28th January 2023 were proposed by R Henderson and seconded by L Macgregor.

4. **Chair's Report:**

Paul Sharples presented his report. Hannah McDonald and Tony Burke have resigned. Hannah had a baby and she and Dermott have moved back to England. The Chair mentioned the sad loss of John Tyldesley who passed in 2023. John was very actively involved with the Community Company and established with Men's Shed group. Also, he acted as auctioneer at the Company Christmas auctions.

Joan Madden is standing down after her tenure of six years. The Chair expressed special thanks to Joan for active commitment and support over the years. The Chair thanked Tony Burke as he had been heavily involved with Oakwood organising and managing the installation of the solar panels and with the Men's Shed arranging and managing the water and electricity connection and importantly, he also set up our risk register and systems. Thanks went to Rowena for organising the burger stall at the annual Ardnamurchan Agricultural Show and for recruiting many new volunteers who helped on the day. The Stall raised £1,000 after costs were deducted. Rowena and Laura also organised other events during the year.

Andy Hughes has joined as director; John Jones who has been the Community Council representative; Jacob Green who was proposed for the Community Council representative

Achievements include:

The Men's Shed now has water and electric, the heating works and it has been cleaned. The ramp and a second door has been installed, the site cleared and the hedge cut back. It is now available and is a fully inclusive space available to all groups. Oakwood had had solar panels and an electric charging point installed.

As mentioned early, the solar panels have been fitted on the roof of Oakwood. The crafters and producers and all the people that volunteer and assist in maintaining the visitor centre and shop, play a vital role to provide an excellent visitor attraction.

We have been working with Dulchas to acquire the Strontian church from the Church of Scotland. This is progressing after much delay and discussion over the asking price.

As a result of the Community Survey and subsequent community meetings, there were community events in the Village Hall including the event of the coronation day and the clothes swap. So thanks to everyone involved, to people who attended and to Justine Dunn for working on clothes alterations on the clothes swap day. There were also events including the summer show, the Christmas market and Hogmanay evening.

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Mark Embling has refurbished the telephone kiosk in Polloch and Tony Burke organised for electricity reconnection and the installation of a defibrillator, which is now available for people in the area. The Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) are selling their shed in Polloch and local residents in Polloch have asked the Company to acquire the shed for their use: this is in hand.

We have worked with Sunart Community Renewables to distribute the £150 cheques to every full time resident household.

We have had our fund raising activities: the burger stall at the annual Ardnamurchan Agricultural Show; the Christmas market and the online auction.

Local swimmers are using the jetty more and there have been a few yachts using the visitor moorings.

We would like to thank the Community Council and the Sunart Community Benefit Fund for all their support and also thank all those in the community who volunteer and support the Community Company.

In the coming year there are a number of items to address:

Progress Longrigg Woodland acquisition

Progress the Sunart church acquisition in conjunction with Dulchas

Repairs to the jetty and window in the green shed

Continue with developing the Men's Shed and greenhouse site

On-going maintenance of the footpaths

Preparing Oakwood for the 2024 session

Planning and organising community events

Working with the Community Council and FLS to install the Faeries walk footbridge

The Burger Stall and the summer show and the Christmas market

Siting of the bench offered by Lorna Tonge's family

Questions were raised about Longrigg Woodland and Strontian Church:

- An update on the Longrigg Woodland – the bid has been accepted and price and funding agreed. We are currently discussing with FLS re cost of lorries using the turning facility at Camuschoirk. A project manager will be recruited who will organise the timber felling and extraction. A proposal from the floor asked if there could be liaison with the residents of Longrigg Road and near neighbours so people are made more aware of what will be happening.
- The Church of Scotland (CoS) valuation: the Company Surveyor assessed the value as £30,000 and the Church of Scotland valuation was £150,000 and there has been a lot of discussion and they have agreed a price of £50,000. We have discovered that the sale only includes the church building as the CoS do not own the graveyard, this is owned by the Highland Council. We are in contact with Highland Council and they can offer it to the Company for one pound. An application for the final funding will be submitted and we are informed that we have a strong case because of all the preparatory work we have done in the last 12 months. Hopefully, we will acquire the property in 2024 and fund raise for the repairs and alterations. A question was asked about the renovation as to whether or not putting it back to its original condition or a new, modern standard. Our surveyor has indicated that to restore it to its original specification will cost approximately £250,000 and so it is more likely that a more modern, multi functional building will be the way forward.

There was also a proposal/ request from the floor for a Christmas auction to be held in the Village Hall, as we used to have pre the Covid pandemic; this and requests for other events highlighted in the community survey are being considered.

5. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts

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James Hilder presented the accounts and mentioned these were 40, pages long and had produced a summary, condensed to six pages. He explained that we are established as a community company and as a charity, which were the only options in 2000, when the company was set up. The Board may consider changing the status under new Scottish legislation, as this will simplify matters, including the accounts. James went through the resume, assets are £147,000 and the turnover £227,000 this year. The full accounts are posted on the Company website. A note was made that the Loch Sunart Bowmen have dissolved itself and £954 transferred to the Company. Acceptance of accounts: Proposed R Henderson, seconded Jamie McIntyre.

6. Retiral and Election of Directors

Joan Madden has stood down after her 6 year tenure and Hannah McDonald and Tony Burke have resigned. Andy Hughes, Jacob Green and John Jones have submitted Director application forms for consideration. The current directors are Rowena Henderson, Laura Macgregor, Paul Sharples and James Hilder. As the number of applications is below the maximum number for directors these applicants will be automatically elected.

7. Any other Business

An announcement from the floor: For information, The Sunart Community Renewables Ltd are holding an event on Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall for a proposal for a wind turbine up at the mines and to explain a proposed local power club, whereby electricity produced locally is offered to local people.

The matter of items identified at meeting from the community survey about paths and a food bank were raised. It was explained that these sorts of activities rely on people volunteering and in the past this has tended to fall on directors only. Therefore people in the community who are interested will need to step forward. There was a list of people who identified themselves as willing to volunteer for paths group so the secretary will raise this at the next meeting in February.

There is a proposal for a "Mending Workshop" and "Mend it Monday and Reuse it" and Justine Dunn proposed that the Men's Shed might be a suitable venue.

Action from above items: Invite Christine Nater and Justine Dunn to the February Board Meeting

8. Paul Sharples thanked everyone for they attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.