

Minutes of Sunart Community Company Board meeting 24th August 2026

Attending: J. Jones (Chair), A. Gainsford (Treasurer), N. Brooks (Secretary), P. Sharples, S. Traynor, S. Willis, H. Taylor, J. Campbell, A. Harpur.

Apologies: N. Mellis, L. Cameron MacGregor, R. Sinclair

1. The Board expressed a formal welcome to J. Campbell and confirmed her co-option to the Board; proposed by J. Jones, seconded by H. Taylor.
2. The minutes from the previous meeting (20-06-26) were accepted; proposed by A. Gainsford, seconded by J. Jones. Minutes have now been added to the web site.

Major Project reports:

1. Dualchas Heritage Centre:
 - Structural Surveyors have now been appointed and work is to be carried out w/c 21-09-26.
 - Following the above work, architects will be appointed. Initial contact is to be made with potential architects.
 - A photo and video archive is to be created documenting work before, during and after the refurbishments.
 - Attendance at the Agricultural Show had been successful and raised a significant contribution towards the restoration fund.
 - Major funding will still be required. This will be dependent on the initial survey and design work, which will provide a clear picture of how the building will be developed, along with costs. In the meantime a publicity plan for attracting donations from the diaspora will be developed.
 - Connection has been made with the Heritage Group at the Rockfield Centre in Oban, for sharing information and ideas.
 - A report is being prepared on the energy efficiency of the Heritage Hub, with recommendations for future energy efficient systems.
 - The Board thanked A. Gainsford for setting up a crowd funding facility.
2. Men's Shed/Craft Hub:
 - The cladding and room are now complete.
 - Workshops etc re-commence in September.
 - Funds remain for the construction of raised beds and landscaping, but this needs to wait until the Polycrub is built, as access is required.
3. Community in Bloom entry:
 - Strontian has been shortlisted and voting is imminent.
4. Playpark:
 - A potential shortfall in funding, together with a lack of clarity regarding funds raised to date and the exact amount still required, prompted lengthy discussion. Concern was expressed regarding the imminent deadline for access to allocated funds from Highland Council; these need to be drawn down by October or will potentially be withdrawn.
 - To move the matter forward A. Gainsford will approach the Playpark sub-committee for further information. If required, this will be followed by an emergency Board meeting to discuss any funding shortfall.
5. Faeries Road bridge:
 - The new bridge has been completed. The Board expressed its thanks to A. Gainsford for her work with the funding providers to get the project completed.



6. Oakwood:
 - A detailed email update had been provided by Laura Wilson. In summary, the business has an excellent start to the summer period, with revenue and profit being on target, new products being introduced and minor system improvements making it simpler to manage producers and stocks.
 - Decoration is expected by the end of September.
7. Rainforest Project:
 - The application for new funding has been approved, with the proviso that full match funding be raised and landowner/occupier declaration forms are completed. Both matters are largely complete, although final confirmation from all match-fund providers is currently outstanding.
 - The application includes an allowance for a Project Officer. The Board agreed that it would be sensible if Euan Palmer, who managed phase one of the project, could be re-appointed, as he has existing project knowledge, the requisite expertise and an excellent track-record.
8. Longrigg Woodland:
 - Approximately one third of timber has now been extracted. Despite the significant increase in fuel prices, extraction continues to be commercially viable.
 - The sub-committee is currently drafting a future forest management plan, to be presented to the Board at a later date.
9. Sunart Community Renewables:
 - The AGM is on September 24th.
10. Wildfire and resilience planning:
 - After a brief discussion, it was agreed that this should be the remit of the Community Council and the Resilience Group. It was pointed out that few people were aware of the Resilience Group and J. Jones agreed to raise this at the next Community Council meeting.
11. SCC project coordination role
 - A. Gainsford is currently exploring funding options through DTAS for a directly employed SCC project coordination and development officer.
12. Vision planning:
 - Kick-off meeting has been arranged for the 2nd December.
13. Finance:
 - A. Gainsford provided a financial update.
14. Articles of Association:
 - Board members were reminded that any changes to the Articles of Association need to be proposed prior to the AGM.
15. AGM:
 - Date confirmed as Saturday October 24th.
16. AOB:
 - A. Harpur is now a CPD-certified Green Champion, giving the SCC and other community bodies help with managing environmental performance.
 - Trees along the Back Road and the Anaheilt road require attention. Highland Council roads department to be advised.
 - It was proposed that CCTV cameras be installed at key locations to protect SCC assets. To be discussed at the next meeting.

