

Minutes from Board of Directors' meeting of Coigach Community Development Company,

Monday 19th September 2011

Present: Iain Muir (Chairman) (IM), Ann Macleod (AM), Ian Macleod (IMPost), Ben Walton (BW), Phil Shaughnessey (PS), Richard Williams (RW), Nick Clooney (NC), Steve Husband (SH), Linda Macleod (LM), Peter Muir (PM) (Local Development Officer), Julia Campbell (JC) (Local Development Officer); Alison Hitchings (AH) (Member of Community Energy Subgroup).

1. Apologies from Joseph Peach (Junior Representative). IM reported that Anne Macleod (Nurse) had tendered her resignation due to her numerous other commitments. She is still keen to remain involved but felt she could not give CCDC board duties the attention she would wish to. It was noted that Anne's contributions were always extremely valuable and it was hoped that the CCDC could continue to seek her advice and opinions on an occasional basis.

2. Matters Arising: Staffing: IM proposed Linda Macleod to be co-opted as a Director, seconded by AM. PS nominated Nick Clooney as Vice Chairman, seconded by IM. No other nominations were made. **The Crofters' Commission** (CC) replied to our recent letter indicating an error in the conversion of the extent of croft 115. In their reply the CC explains that they are not in a position to confirm the extent or the boundaries of a croft. However, any person with an interest in the land could make an application to the Scottish Land Court for a determination of the boundaries and the extent of the croft. **Finance:** LM will write to Tommy Beavitt thanking him for his donation from Ross Shire Renewables. **Action:** *SH to forward Tommy's address to LM* **Land and Housing:** LM has prepared a draft follow up letter to Common Grazings Clerks but it was agreed that CG Clerks be approached informally and invited to comment and gauge the views of shareholders. IMPost is on both Achiltibuie and Polbain Grazings committees so can approach shareholders there. **Action:** *AH will speak to Iain Campbell, AM to Alistair Macleod, PM to Anne Girvan.* **Public Comments:** IM has added a statement to the CCDC website to the effect that the site is regulated and that constructive comments are welcome. Full details on www.ccdcompany.wordpress.com "about". **Names for Trading Arms and**

Registering Domains: *Action: Carry forward* **Correspondence:** General correspondence to be filed in folder in hall office drawer: **Action:** JC/PM.

3. Correspondence: Letter received from Crofters Commission has been filed for future reference.

4. LDO Monthly Report: PM attended the DTAS conference in Cumbernauld. He has also met with Anne MacDonald, solicitor to discuss our various projects. PM had also approached Peter Drake to ask if he would be willing to act as a director on the proposed joint venture with SWT. JC met with the **Piers and Harbours** group on 22 Aug to choose a tender for the feasibility study and they selected Wallace Stone. JC and is currently investigating match funding for the Leader application (pos 70%) which needs to be in on 8th Oct. CCC have pledged £1300, Isle of Tanera £250 which leaves £3475 to be found. HC had originally offered £2.5k toward the economic portion of the study but now appear reluctant and have asked for a further tendering process and three quotes which is not possible given the timescale and because this work has already been offered to WS as a part of the original tender. Lindsay Simpson (HIE) knows about the problem and will find out if HIE are able to help with match funding. **Action:** JC to copy Richard Green into correspondence. JC met with Peter and Gaby Rex to discuss the **Polbain Paths** and to answer their queries. Peter R has since contacted Phil Waite who will visit the Rexes on Tues 20th to discuss further. **Fundraising:** soup and sandwiches do has been arranged for Saturday 24th September in the hall. Jody Marshal has offered to transfer his wine tasting event to the hall as an added attraction. Table booked at MacMillan coffee morning on 1st Oct for mug sales and information sharing. Fundraising group need to meet to discuss how best to approach 2nd home owners for donations. JC suggested writing to Michael Palin for support as he once said Achiltibuie was his favourite place. The hall is available for an auction of services on 28th October but this clashes with Village SOS Roadshow in Inverness. Alison Hitchings is working on Edible Ullapool a sustainable food growing project in Ullapool. ATA's new website is now live and business cards are in circulation to promote it. HC have withdrawn their funding for the Over 60's Lunch Club hall hire. PM and JC are attending the CAM event in Inverness Tues 20th and Wed 21st September.

5. Hydroponicum: CCDC has received the consent of Scottish Ministers to proceed with the Community Right to Buy process after they considered our business plan and the ballot result. PM is currently seeking funding for the proposed **Hydroponicum** purchase. We are hoping for £32K from HIE, £4K CCDC, and a loan for the remaining £44k. PM has investigated possible lenders and after an encouraging meeting with Ian Boyd of Highland Opportunities Ltd (HOL) they seemed to be a promising local lender. HOL could charge interest only (probably 5%) in year one, thereafter interest and capital repayments which would amount to over £700 per month for a further six years. PM is to meet the HOL Board at their next meeting to explain the Hydroponicum project to them. Albyn Housing Association had visited the site and appeared to be very positive about the site's suitability for a housing development. PM explained that the Big Lottery funds would not fund anything to do with housing but they might be a suitable funder for community workshop units. Ian Boyd of Highland Opportunities inquired whether CCDC's Articles of Association to require an EGM to gain Members' agreement on the purchase of the former Hydroponicum and to borrow the necessary funds. PM to seek legal advice to check whether the CCDC Board have the necessary powers. [The subsequent legal advice pointed us to Article 28 of the Company's articles which provides that the board of directors of the Company may exercise all of the powers of the Company].

There were two proposals to the CCDC Board regarding the proposed Hydroponicum purchase.

First Proposal: It is proposed that the Coigach Community Development Company purchase the former Hydroponicum buildings and land through the Community Right to Buy process of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Proposed by IM, seconded SH.

The Directors present voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

Second Proposal: It is proposed that the Coigach Community Development Company take out a commercial loan to make up the necessary funds to purchase the former Hydroponicum buildings and land. Proposed by IM, seconded by PS.

The Directors present voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

SH had received an email from Liz Stewart and Henk Verweijmeren intimating that they thought the Hydroponicum had been bought by the community and he has replied to inform them that all information has been sent to Molton. SH presented a donation of £500 from Terry Mackay, owner of the Summer Isles Hotel (who wishes to be kept up to date with developments). SH also presented an anonymous £5000 donation. The donor did not attach conditions to the donation. Bernie and Anne McGhee have expressed a desire to help with fundraising: Anne's son's band could perform at a hall function. **Action:** NC will check hall programme for possible dates.

6. Community Energy Subgroup: Wind Turbine. The CARES loan offer has been received from the Energy Savings Trust on 17th September. This offer includes a request to see a strategy for the distribution of profits from wind energy project. PM will investigate ways of reducing EIA costs and ask Atmos to revisit their fees in light of the contributions being made by CCDC and their members. **Action:** PM will approach Kevin Macleod (Springwell) for help with the archaeological element as a way of reducing overall costs. **Proposal: It was proposed that the £150,000 loan offer from Energy Savings Trust be accepted. Proposed by SH, seconded by AM. The Directors present voted unanimously in favour of the proposal. Hydro Scheme:** SWT has also received a £150,000 loan offer for the hydro energy joint venture. The legal structure of the JV need to be discussed but is most likely to be set up as a Limited Company.

7. Land and Housing Subgroup: topic covered under item 6 (Hydroponicum).

8. Piers and Harbours Subgroup: topic covered under item 5 (LDO report).

9. AOCB: Following investigations it now appears that ALL directors can be signatories. **Action:** Opt-out form to be passed round leaving only those directly involved with finance as designated signatories. Lindsay Simpson (HIE) expects to hear soon whether LDO funding will continue and will look into funding additional LDO time following a request by IM. It was suggested that a request for further LDO time be built into any lottery funding bid for future building work. Accountant required for company accounts: **Action** SH will ask Tim Wright. PM will seek to speak to Cllr. Richard Greene regarding CCDC's projects, including the Drumrunie layby/turn off. Extracting some suggestions from the Roads Department for a lay-by solution with information point is proving a bit of a challenge. It was agreed PM should write to Paul Dacre to ask if he would be willing to sell a small piece of land at the junction to facilitate the development of an appropriate 'gateway to Coigach'. SH reported that Chris Bown (Mullagrach) has pledged £300 donation towards the Hydroponicum purchase if his pier is completed by the end of September. Communication is to be added to future agenda. Payroll work is currently shared between IM/NC and RW but they will meet with BW (Treasurer) to sort out.

10. Date of next meeting: Monday 10th October 7pm.