

Coigach Community Development Company

Annual General Meeting 25th November 2013

Present:

Board of Directors: Richard Williams (acting Chair), Ben Walton (Treasurer), Theresa Ross, Maureen Fraser, Linda Macleod, Ann Macleod. **LDOs:** Julia Campbell, Abigail Anne Campbell

Ordinary Members: Peter Muir, Steve Husband, Catherine Mackenzie, Bill Drake, Lesley Muir, Harry Hassall, Diana Hassall, Midge Drake, Peter Drake, Marilyn Mackenzie, Beryl Morgan, Julie Edwards, Reiner Luyken (by proxy), Ish Pendred, Nick Clooney, Sheila Dunbar, Keith Dunbar, Lizzie Richards.

1. Welcome

The Chair, Richard Williams, opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees, citing the AGM as an opportune time for members to ask questions relating to the activities and progress of CCDC.

2. Approval of Minutes of 2012 AGM

The minutes of the 2012 AGM were approved, proposed by Nick Clooney, seconded by Harry Hassall.

3. Chairman's Report, including a report from Coigach Wind Power and Ben Mor Hydro

(see separate item) Richard Williams delivered the Chairman's Report on behalf of Iain Muir, Ann Macleod delivered a report from Coigach Wind Power on behalf of Alison Sinclair, and Steve Husband reported on Ben Mor Hydro.

After the report from Ben Mor Hydro, Harry Hassall asked if there was a contingency plan in place should the wind and hydro projects present any conflict of interest e.g. in terms of available funding or grid capacity. Richard Williams agreed that there are three factors which both projects will hinge on and aspects of each, to a greater or lesser extent, are unknowns at this point: planning permission, funding availability, and grid capacity. It is hoped that both projects will be able to proceed side-by-side and both realised. **Richard I think you said more here ...** Steve Husband said that load management may be an option that will have to be looked at. **Steve is that an adequate summary?** A response is expected from Scottish Hydro (?) by the 17th December on whether grid capacity will accommodate both projects.

After the Chairman's report Reiner Luyken raised questions on behalf of Sheileagh Luyken. He thanked the Chair for getting the accounts to members in a timely manner this year, and asked why Sheileagh Luyken was slow hand clapped last year for pointing out CCDC's error in doing this at the last AGM. Also, he asked why a lawyer was consulted regarding her behaviour at last year's AGM.

Reiner Luyken also asked why their household did not get a copy of CCDC's newsletter or a copy of the letter requesting support for planning permission for the wind turbine, and whether CCDC feel it is alright to exclude members of the community. Peter Muir responded to the first point by saying that not every household received hand delivered information, particularly if it was felt that it would be offensive or unwelcome to request support when it was known that the householder(s) were not in favour of the project. Peter Muir said that he had a copy of the letter ready to deliver to another member of Reiner Luyken's household (who had expressed interest in receiving it), but during a phone call of complaint from Mr Luyken about non-delivery, Mr Luyken told Mr Muir not to deliver to this to his son. Peter Muir acknowledged that perhaps he should not have acted on Reiner Luyken's advice and delivered the letter to his son anyway.

Reiner Luyken asked other members present if any of them also did not receive the newsletter and wind turbine request for support, and a number of members confirmed that they had not had hand delivered information either, but were able to access it from hard copies available locally or online.

Lesley Muir commented that as Sheileagh Luyken had already objected to the wind turbine planning application on the Highland Council e-portal, it was felt that it was not appropriate to deliver the letter, as was the case with other members of the community who had already objected.

Reiner Luyken asked a question about CCDC's response to the involvement of the John Muir Trust in the recent CALL application for funding. Reiner Luyken said that the Assynt Trust has recorded their view of the John Muir Trust as 'bad neighbours' and criticised their deer management policy. He asked why CCDC cite CALL as a community supported project when the community hasn't been asked about it, and whether CCDC would side with the Assynt Trust or the JMT. Richard Williams responded that the CALL project is an initiative between landowners on behalf of their areas which CCDC supports, and the issue about the JMT was not relevant to the business of the AGM. Nick Clooney pointed out that that the JMT do not own any land in Coigach.

Reiner Luyken asked Peter Muir why he wrote a letter to the Ullapool News as Project Officer for Coigach Wind Power Ltd. Reiner Luyken said he was not aware of this post and asked what the job was and where it was advertised. Peter Muir said that he is a volunteer for the Coigach Wind Power like any other and it seemed like an appropriate title for the letter being written.

At this point Lesley Muir asked for her "deep unease" to be minuted at the tone of some of the questions being put to Richard Williams by Reiner Luyken by proxy. She stated that she did not think the AGM was the forum to try to "trip people up" and that she suspected that more members than herself feel that some of Reiner Luyken's questions were not relevant.

Reiner Luyken asked why CCDC is portraying such a depressing picture of Coigach to the outside world, and said that he had concerns that visitors would be put off from visiting "this dump". Harry Hassall said as a member he took issue with Reiner's point, saying that CCDC is merely stating facts, such as one of the local shops having closed, the school roll having fallen, and the Smokehouse having closed. Harry Hassall said that he disagreed entirely with Reiner Luyken's point as these are facts that cannot be disputed. Reiner Luyken asked why CCDC does not mention the positives? Midge Drake responded saying that the whole ethos of the CCDC is positive – they are trying to do something about these things. Midge Drake said that she wished all members of the community would support the CCDC and do something positive instead of being negative. Richard Williams said that CCDC is fully behind efforts to promote Coigach and works to this end.

Acceptance of the Chairman's Report was proposed by Harry Hassall, seconded by Bill Drake.

4. Treasurer's Report

Ben Walton presented the prepared accounts (see separate item), and talked through the income and expenditure for 2012/3.

Harry Hassall commented that there was not a lot of detail on the activities of the two subsidiary companies, Coigach Wind Power and Ben Mor Hydro, and pointed out some instances. He also asked how CCDC are apportioning costs, such as staffing and running costs, across the accounts, and if at some stage the detail of the accounts of the two subsidiary companies will be presented at a meeting. Peter Muir said that the accounts of the two companies are available on Companies House, and at present both companies are run by volunteers and so are dependent on accountant's presentation of the accounts. A different or more detailed account could be requested from the accountant but would increase fees. Peter Muir said that as these companies grew consolidated accounts would indeed be needed. Richard Williams agreed that it would be good to have some detail of some of the instances Harry Hassall had pointed out, and said that CCDC would endeavour to produce the accounts in a format which gave more information, and in the meantime to get this information to Harry Hassall.

Keith Dunbar asked how sure CCDC were of their revenue for the next few years. Richard Williams explained that staffing costs are met by LEADER/HIE funding, and this is confirmed on a 15-month basis, with CCDC having just received confirmation of funding for staff costs for the next 15 months. Other than this, CCDC apply for funding on a project-by-project basis as necessary. Richard Williams said that CCDC were working towards the goal of being self-sustaining by realising projects such as the wind turbine.

Reiner Luyken asked if CCDCs move from holding a Santander bank account to a Co-op one has any effect on CCDC. Peter Muir said that the Co-op bank account is a good one, commonly used by charities as it has a number of useful features.

The approval of the accounts to the end of March 2012 was proposed by Marilyn Mackenzie, seconded by Steve Husband.

5. Approval of Accounts

The approval of the accounts to the end of March 2013 (subject to more detail as requested by Harry Hassall being provided) was proposed by Sheila Dunbar, seconded by Maureen Fraser.

Reiner Luyken said he would like to vote against the accounts to the end of March 2013 being approved, in agreement with Harry Hassall's point about a lack of detail.

6. Fixing of Annual Subscriptions.

It was agreed that annual subscriptions for membership remain at £5. Proposed by Peter Drake, seconded by Catherine MacKenzie.

7. Election of Directors:

The Chair explained that in line with CCDC's Articles of Association, the following directors are stepping down: Iain Muir, Richard Williams, and Linda MacLeod.

Nominations as directors were received and voted on individually by those members present for the following: PHIL O'SHAUGHNESSEY, STEVE HUSBAND, IAIN SCOTT, IAIN MUIR. Richard Williams gave some information about Iain Scott to members, as he is perhaps less well known to members at present. **Put info that Richard said in here.** All directors were voted in unanimously, apart from one against for Steve Husband and one against for Iain Muir.

8. AOCB None raised.

9. Questions and Answers

Ish Pendred wanted to record a vote of thanks to the Chairman, Directors and staff of CCDC for all their hard efforts during the year.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.