

ECC minutes Directors meeting 23rd Feb '23

Present: Alistair Danter, John Boyle, Roddy Macfarlane, Karen Pettit, Stewart Whatley, Sara Twaddle, Kelly McKenzie, John Davies

Apologies: Billy Shanks, John Lowrie

Declarations of interest – none

Minutes of last meeting – accepted propped ST, seconded JD

1. Management matters / Finance matters/ Insurance / Quickbook sub + computer requirements
 - Sara Twaddle nominated + accepted nomination for Chair
 - Stuart Whatley has now stepped down as a Director, happy to remain as Co. Sec with the Pottery being the Co. address.
 - Alistair Danter taking on book keeping role
 - With SW standing down + AD taking on book keeping as part of an admin function ECC needs a defined finance authorisation process system ACTION KP to propose system to be discussed at next meeting
 - Meeting agreed to set up an online subscription to Quickbooks + acquire a computer ACTION AD to organise
 - KP agreed to become a secondary signatory
 - Meeting agreed to move to a paperless book keeping system
 - Insurance matters AD to request review of current Director liability policies in relation to playpark, footpaths and cycle routes + any other liabilities that may be arising as a result of ECC development work.
 - Meeting noted that ECC has a separate insurance policy for the shop, recommendation is to maintain current policy while development proposals are being drawn up.

2. Development worker report
 - Karen's Track final tarmacking work to be completed in March
 - Shop topographical survey complete, report to be available shortly
 - Directors need to develop proposals for community consultation process
 - a) School needs to be included
 - b) Public consultation should preferably be on a Saturday + include cake
 - AD & RM have a meeting shortly with Lawyer representing land owner of ground next to shop required for car parking

3. Administrators report – attached
 - Actions completed from last meeting
 - Campervan signage erected
 - Payments agreed for campervan signage (supply + erection) and Senior citizens Xmas dinner

4. Local Trusts / Community Council meeting – RM / ST
 - Met with Struan (3 groups) Dunvegan Trust, Portree & Braes Community Trust and Minginish Community Hall Assn – note of meeting attached
 - Meeting focussed on benefit funds, no discussion involved regarding investments in any of the projected wind farms
5. Benches for play part – no progress KP to follow up + report at next meeting
6. Funding applications:

Anna Macphee – Nursing degree Glasgow Caledonian Uni

 - AD requested an agreement in principal, Anna has produced all required documentation but still needs to submit in an appropriate format. Meeting agreed in principal, AD to action.

Ian Brown – Support for costs of Housing survey for Skye Climate Action group

 - Meeting not clear on purpose of survey + data provided, requested that IB and / or a rep of SkyeClimate Action attend next meeting to explain, AD to action.
7. Finance report – no material change since last meeting.
8. AOCB
 - Query raised regarding VAT – does the annual payment include VAT – RM to look for original agreement, further action may be required.
 - ACTION AD to contact Vattenfall to ask for copy of benefit agreement as ECC now has a new cohort of Directors.
 - Concerns raised regarding footpath / cycle route at Teeny's cottage, AD to follow up with local access officer.
9. DONM – 13th April + meeting agreed to move meetings to every 6 weeks.

Appendix 1

Administrators report

- AGM actions completed with regards to OSCR and Co,s House + registration of new constitution + name change
- Contact made with VAT consultant waiting for and agreed date to meet to start work that will initially focus on VAT + the shop development
- Contact made with Wind 2 regarding Community Benefit payment + potential support for the School in advance of the windfarm being built + potential direct benefit scheme for all householders, on line meeting set up potentially for 2nd March
- THC follow up regarding purchase of land at Coishletter
 - Value for land (2 phases of development NOT including Lodges – 3rd phase) £230 - £279k based on value of 25 units un-serviced at £10k / unit
 - Value of land on lower site slightly less value ‘cos of servicing requirement Once services in this increases value of overall site
 - THC will see if SLL are interested – Title deeds indicate that they paid £120k for the site originally
- Now that formalities complete regards “Right to buy” compliance + constitution amendments registered with Co.s House + OSCR I will now register our interest for RTB with Scottish Govt.
- Started work to take over book keeping from SW
- Updated GDPR statement on website
- Campervan signage erected in village

Notes from meeting with “Near Neighbours” – 20th February 2023

Present: Neil Campbell (Portree & Braes CC and CT), Roddy MacFarlane (Edinbane CCo and Skeabost CC), Sara Twaddle (Edinbane CCo), Peggy Semler (Struan CDG), Sarah Illingworth (Struan CDG), Jason Bold (Dunvegan CT), Graham Campbell (Minginish CHA), Eilidh MacLean (Minginsh CHA), Ali Morrison (Struan CC), John MacKinnon (Struan CT), John Laing (Dunvegan CC), Donna Campbell (Dunvegan CC), Donald Beaton (Struan CT).

There was a general discussion about the issues that our respect communities were encountering with the various wind farm developers and, in particular, Muirhall Energy.

There was a general agreement that developers – particularly Muirhall – were adopting a “divide and rule” approach. There is also a concern that there would be a general loss of community control, if some of these proposals were to go ahead as currently planned.

Dunvegan CC and CT are now working together in a similar way to Struan, with the CT taking the lead in their case.

RMcF advised that there was a further application in the pipeline for the Waternish/Greshornish area, consisting of a further 15 turbines. We have since discovered that this has been in Scoping with the ECU since November 2022, (Ref. ECU00004662) however it is probably too late to submit a response to this.

Although Struan stated that compensation for disruption during the build phase of the development was one of the things that they were insisting on Muirhall providing, there was little enthusiasm for this from the other communities, at the moment at least.

AM said that he had identified the appropriate contact within THC with regard to transport plans, but they would not be taking any action until formal planning applications were in the system (Muirhall expect to submit in May).

PS explained that Broadford & Strath had a rather different perspective on the situation, in so far as they are very angry that they are going to have to put up with the disruption and long term presence of the upgraded power line, without a penny of community benefit being offered or provided to their community, but are very keen to see the establishment of the “Skye Wide” fund, regardless of the involvement of HIE and/or THC, both of whom they work with as partners in many of their local developments. They are also not

satisfied with the community benefit fund being proposed for the wind farm in Breakish (£5k/MW).

Other communities – e.g. Dunvegan - said that with regard to community benefit funds, “their” wind farm developers were being rather vague about what they were offering the respective communities, and there was a feeling that they may all be waiting to see what Muirhall implement. Ben Aketil were not saying that all the benefits from their development were going to continue to go straight to Dunvegan CT, and they admitted that other communities (unspecified) had approached them asking for funds.

RMF advised that Wind 2 have suspended their offer to make fuel subsidy payments to Edinbane residents, apparently because of the issue of how this may affect people on means tested benefits.

With regard to community benefit funds, the following general points were agreed on:-

1. That if the communities don't start consulting and working together now, a huge opportunity will be missed.
2. That £7k/MW (index linked) was the lowest acceptable rate of community benefit.
3. That we should all aim to get **all** developers to agree to a split of the funds into 40% for Host communities, 40% for Near Neighbours, and 20% to a “Skye Wide” fund”.
4. There was little or no support for the idea of a “Skye Wide” funding body made up of representatives from all 15 Skye Community Councils, (some of which are in abeyance anyway) coordinated by HIE/DTAS, and that this would not be workable in practice.
5. No one objects in principle to the idea that the Host community should get the bulk of the community benefit fund in the first instance, to use as they wish. However, as Struan CT can demonstrate from its previous record, that does not preclude part – or potentially all – of those funds being put towards any project(s) that benefit the wider community, be that “Near Neighbours”, North Skye or “Skye Wide”, should that be what the host community wishes to do. The main point being that the control of those funds should remain with the Host community, and be used for the benefit of those communities most affected by the respective developments.
6. In the case of Muirhall, this would mean that each of the “Near Neighbours” would get 10% of the community benefit fund. With other developers, such as Vattenfall, where there are existing agreements in place who are both going to repower, the respective communities – Dunvegan itself and Struan/Edinbane need to discuss how they wish to take the relationship forward in relation to their respective Community Benefit Agreements.

7. It was suggested that the remaining 20% should be held and administered by the Host Community's legal entity as ringfenced funds, and applications then invited from across the island (and Raasay) to access these funds. Decisions on such applications should then be made a small board of appointees (not 2 from each community council district).
8. That we would leave the issue of community shares in wind farms at this point in time, but might return to them at a later date.

There were a few issues which were not discussed or agreed in any detail and these include:-

- If 40% of the funds – for example from Muirhall's GUII - were to go to Near Neighbours, would they still do as is being proposed by Muirhall, set up a special CLG to administer these funds?
- How and when we should set up an appropriate group to dispense the "Skye Wide" funds.

It was agreed that we would review these decisions with our respective Boards and get back with confirmation that everyone is either happy with them, or requests specific changes.

Ideas and suggestions about how we should move forward would be welcome!

10. Development workers report – verbal AD
11. Administrators update – Paper 1 AD
12. Land next to shop update AD / RM
13. Meeting with Other Trusts update – RM / ST
14. Benches update for play park - KP
15. Funding Applications – Anna Macphee + Ian Brown
16. Finance report
17. AOCB + DONM