

**Minutes of Board Meeting for
North West Mull Community Woodland Company Ltd
Meeting held on Tuesday 10 January 2017**

Present: Colin Morrison, John Morrison, John Addy, Iain Thomson

Also Present: Malcolm Ward (Development manager), Lesley Hastie (minutes)

1. CM **welcomed** everyone to the meeting

2. **Apologies:** Ian Hepburn and Andy Mayo

3. The **minutes** of the Board Meeting held on **Monday 28th November 2016** were **signed** by CM as a true record of the proceedings.

4. **Matters arising:**

- CM still to arrange a discussion with neighbouring land-owner

5. **Items not on the agenda**

6. The **Finance Report** was circulated by AM prior to the meeting. CM went through the report on AM's behalf.

- Outgoings for the Hydro Scheme are still currently being financed via CARES.
- Any CARES loan extension may not have a write off facility.
- Trade account – reminders have been sent out regarding outstanding invoices.
- Sales were good on the run up to Christmas and are starting to come in again.
- Finance reports from Sage are to be circulated monthly as they become available.

7. The **Development Manager's Report** had been circulated by MW prior to the meeting.

- **Forest management** – IAH and MW met with Forestry Commission Scotland. Good discussion on replant proposals, deer management planning and further funding possibilities. Meeting with Tilhill in January to discuss proposals and confirm changes made to our "concept map" for SRDP plan funding. New plan format now required by SRDP/FCS to receive funding. Plant health meeting scheduled with FCS/Tilhill on island towards end of January. MW to raise the issue of costs with at the meeting.
- **Housing** – SG have responded to our application for funding from Island Homes Fund for feasibility and masterplanning. They have not accepted our proposal. This was discussed.
- **Island Woodfuels** – Over 60 Cubic metres of cut/split logs supplied in the 6 weeks running to Christmas – thanks all for assistance and specifically to John M for all his help. PCC back up and running and re-delivering chip. Heat exchanger for Crannich not due until end of January as replacement unit has to be made – our unit is irreparable. MW to Speak to Robin @ Crannich.
- **Funding** – Developing Sustainable Communities Funding from SG via DTAS will end March/April 2017. An extension request has been made and we await the result of this – unsure when we'll hear. This funding is used to cover Development manager salary, travel and office costs. Staff roles and how they are funded were discussed. JM to look at costings.
- **Micro Hydro** – After very extensive/intensive discussion with SEPA and with additional support from Local Energy Scotland a way forward has been agreed to modify the weir to the north of the main scheme area. Instead of their proposed 3 weir structure with excavations required an agreed small modification to the existing weir and "leaky-weir" arrangement, using boulders, below this.
- **Toilets** – Our Asset Transfer Request has been approved unanimously by the OLI Area Committee and goes forward to the full council for final approval on or around 26 January. Without "counting chickens" it may be worthwhile putting ideas together for finance, labour and materials. Discussed consulting the village and especially close neighbours. MW hopes to hear Wednesday.
- **Woodmizer** – Orders still in order book – just need some time to get at this.

- **Eagles** – CM and MW have given provisional notice of attending Thistle Awards ceremony in March. Stephanie Cope who led trips last year will not return 2017 as she's accepted a position as Island Ranger on Tiree.
- **Community** – Christmas trees donated to Craignure Hall, Dervaig PS, Ulva Ferry PS and Dervaig Church Hall. Received a request from the community orchard for stobs for espalier fruit trees and woodchip. Also a request to transport a large gate from Calgary to the orchard.

8. Project Review

- MW had circulated a review of current projects. As two directors were not present (and may not be for a while) due to pressures of work and health, it was decided to go through each and look at what questions are needing answered. This is especially true regarding questions and strategy for project finance.
- The way forward was discussed; which projects to prioritise and which to set aside. It was agreed that for the sustainability of the company the woodshed and hydro need to be prioritised.
- Micro-harvesting was discussed. The Forestry Commission are now looking for smaller areas replanted over a longer period. It was agreed that fencing and replanting needs to begin soon. Micro harvesting income per hectare will be lower than full scale harvesting. Trees felled now would not be useable for a couple of years. Logs will be needed for chipping within the next 2 to 3 years.
- Financing, scheduling and control of housing was discussed. It was agreed that some of the houses should go ahead; kudos for gifting the land, arranging the agreement with West Highland housing; the need for it to cost us next to nothing, limit the housing plan to the 5 affordable rentals for now whilst focussing on selling the current plots.
- The access for the micro hydro needs to go ahead from behind the site. The additional figures need to be put into funding tool.
- The immediate concern with woodfuels is staff recruitment.
- There was a discussion around the phasing of the woodshed build. MW to speak to Ronnie Neil to see if staging the build would be possible/acceptable.

9. Correspondence

- MW and the NFU undertook a review of the insurance to check everything is covered. This led to a lowered cost to premiums for signing a 3 year agreement.

10. Any Other Competent Business

- The auditor has requested a yearly declaration of conflict of interest from each director. LH to find the existing policies, review them and present them to the board.

11. Date of next meeting: Monday 20th February at 7.30pm. The AGM is to be added to the agenda.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm