

Minutes of Morvern Community Development Company

Board Meeting held in public

Thursday, 2nd November 2017, Lochaline Primary Community Room, 7.30pm

MCDC/MCTC Directors: Clare Holohan, Sarah Jones, Lesley Jones, Jenni Hodgson, Mike Foulis, John Hodgson, Lilia Dobrokhodova (Development Officer)

Members of the public: Alasdair Firth, Rhona Sampson

Apologies:, Jane Stuart-Smith, Susan Taylor, Angus Robertson,.

Agenda:

1. Minutes of last board meeting, 10th August 2017
2. Matters arising
3. Projects update
 - Marina
 - Community Business Hub
 - Housing
 - Hydro
 - Doctors Wood
4. AOB –
5. Next public meeting – January 2018, date TBC

1. **Minutes** – Mike proposed John seconded.

2. **Matters arising**

None

3. **Projects Update**

Marina – the marina is doing well. Figures for September and October are up on 2016. There was a small fire in the loft, being addressed. Several enquiries for winter berthing, working out a pricing structure.

Community Business Hub – successful with Stage 1 of Rural Regeneration Fund. Decision on Stage 2 in January 2018.

Housing – had a meeting with HSCHT, they seem to be now on board. They will build 2 rent to buy houses at Achabeag as plans are now advanced for this, starting the build in January 2018. HSCHT will contact local businesses following figures MCDC obtained from them on employment needs in the next 5 years. Allocations policy will be MCDC responsibility but allocation will be managed by Lochaber Housing or similar. People needing housing should write to HSCHT confidentially as this all proves the need for affordable housing in Morvern.

Hydro – experiencing delays due to CARES financial modelling.

Doctors Wood – need a clear idea of what to do with it if MCDC were to buy it. A suggestion was to buy it and clear the timber. Need to try and reduce the valuation and look at it as long – term investment. Ideas for community recreation, outdoor activities, sympathetic replanting, local employment, houses, woodland crofts and woodland lots. The whole board to agree the plan.

4. AOB –

Dail Mhor – meeting scheduled with NHS on 9th November.

Electric car – applied for.

Campervan site – John will put some ideas on paper.

Morvern Landscape – Rhona Sampson presented details of the project's development so far: the Morvern Landscape Project is in the early stages of attempting to build a "multi-party consensus" on land management in Morvern, in order to achieve an optimum balance between three pillars of sustainable action in Morvern, the economic, the social and the environmental.

A community consultation held back in March was well attended, and one of the key outcomes was that many people feel that access to land, particularly for agricultural and crofting purposes, is very limited, if not impossible. This situation is complicated by a number of long-standing disagreements on the environmental management of the Morvern estates, in particular deer management, appropriate management and conservation of woodlands and the forest estates, and the 'wild land' vs 'agricultural' debate.

The ultimate goal of the project is to produce a clear vision, backed by the community, (and preferably illustrated simply on a map of the area) of the optimal land-use pattern that could satisfy the environmental concerns of local interest groups, and preserve (or even enhance) Morvern's unique landscape and biodiversity, while supporting cultural heritage (such as crofting and subsistence farming), and providing greater opportunities for younger people to develop and practice rural skills in the community. This ties in with a number of sustainable objectives, such as enhancing community interdependence, increasing self-sufficiency, and (potentially) reducing the reliance on transport and access to services outwith the community.

There is currently a small steering group currently composed of representatives of the Morvern Community Woodlands (MCW), Morvern Community Council (MCC) and the Morvern Community Development Company (MCDC) which is working to an outline project programme, roughly divided into research, consultation and implementation phases.