

Minutes of Morvern Community Development Company

Board Meeting held in public

Thursday, 10th November 2016, Lochaline Primary Community Room, 7.30pm

MCDC/MCTC Directors: Clare Holohan, Malcolm Burge, Angus Robertson, Lesley Jones, Mike Foulis, John Hodgson, Jenni Hodgson, Jim Bolton, Lilia Dobrokhodova (Dev Officer).

Members of the public: Martin Sampson, Nicki Jones, Alasdair Firth

Apologies: Jane Stuart – Smith, Susan Taylor.

Agenda:

1. Minutes of last board meeting, 11th August 2016
2. Matters arising
3. Projects update
 - Marina
 - Morvern Sailing Club – shed proposal
 - Housing
 - Hydro
 - MCFDG
4. AOB – Living Landscape
5. Next meeting – AGM, 8th December 2016, Lochaline Primary School, 7.30pm

1. **Minutes** – Mike proposed, Malcolm seconded.

2. **Matters arising**

None

3. **Projects Update**

Marina – did not get funding for marina expansion, including Sailing Club building, from Coastal Communities Fund. Applied for LEADER funding for pontoons expansion only, with match funding from MCT, HIE and MCDC's own contribution. Decision next week. Lochaline Harbour renewed Sailing Scotland membership and will be actively advertising swinging moorings for long and short term in the New Year. The Harbour reported a good season.

Morvern Sailing Club shed proposal – as MCDC were unsuccessful in securing funding from Coastal Communities Fund, the MSC are now proposing to build a smaller (24ft x 12ft) temporary building on the land MCDC lease from Ardtornish. The cost will be about £5K, MSC will apply for funds to MCT. The Sailing Club is doing well; they have almost 100 members, mostly locals, and need to keep the momentum going. The club require MCDC's permission to put the temporary building on leased land.

Jim Bolton raised several concerns:

- Building to be sited on leased land
- MSC should raise the funds not MCDC
- Application to MCT only, suggest applying to Ardtornish Hydro Fund

Angus had a concern about the building being temporary and suggested that a time limit was put on the potential agreement between MCDC and MSC.

A discussion took place about the above points. Malcolm (on behalf of MSC) explained that once a permanent building is in place, the temporary building will be donated to another community group, i.e. allotments on MCW etc. MSC are successful in their own fundraising, they raised £1,500.00 in donations this year plus grant funding. It was agreed that the building should look good and be in keeping with what Lochaline Harbour already has. MSC will consider applying to Ardtornish Hydro Fund but retains their right to apply to MCT for funds also as it will be up to the Trust to determine whether the cost is eligible. MSC will also revisit the Awards for All application that just needs to be revamped for the permanent building. Jim was concerned about MCDC leasing the land as if MCDC went bust, all assets would transfer to the land owner. Although MCDC have a secure lease with Ardtornish and there are conditions involved with assets that had been built with grant funding, the Board have agreed that land purchase from the Estate should be on the agenda for future meetings. MCDC should try and buy the land currently leased from Ardtornish (Lochaline Harbour).

The Board agreed that MSC's proposal for a temporary building should be forwarded to the Estate (Tony and Hugh) for approval. MCDC will arrange a lease with MSC with regard to time scales for a temporary building.

Housing – awaiting planning decision for both sites. Forestry Site is imminent while the planners are still considering flood risk at the Scout Hut site, despite both in – house and professional flood risk assessments determining that there is no risk of flood. Martin Sampson suggested that councillor Andrew Baxter may be a good ally with planning. Once planning is in place, MCDC board will have a separate meeting to discuss the plan of action for both housing and community building proposals. In the meantime, the Big Lottery invited MCDC to submit funding application for a community building.

Hydro – currently progressing both schemes. Allt achadh Forsa – changed design which in effect is 2 schemes, the upper one is not too good but the lower one is better, both just under 100kWatt. Barr – Angus thinks it can potentially be much bigger (1.5mWatt), he asked Hydroplan to revisit the design.

Grid connection – SSE are in the process of designing the connections after MCDC accepted the grid connection offer. This includes 5km of private cable and changing from 11kW to 33kW.

Planning – apply in January, 6 months to determine. By mid summer, MCDC will have to make a decision on whether to apply for FITs pre – accreditation. Right now, MCDC should be thinking about whether to go ahead or not, also need to start looking at financing the hydro schemes, and their viability. MCDC should also be on the lookout for someone who is able to help with raising finance. MCDC have funds within CARES grant to fund a financial advisor. There are organisations who can provide attractive financial packages for hydro schemes and Angus and Lilia met some of them. Angus suggested at looking at other communities who run hydro/wind schemes as those are currently looking at investing elsewhere, e.g. Wind Shetland investing in a scheme in Argyle.

A question was asked how the funds generated by Morvern hydro would be distributed. There will be a process set up whereby MCDC will either have their own panel to distribute funds or will be passing funds to the existing MCT to distribute in the community.

It was suggested that MCDC start thinking about a catching name for Morvern Hydro, like for example on Mull “Green Energy Mull” or in Applecross “Apple Juice”.

The Board have made a decision to go for planning for both hydro schemes.

MCFDG – Mike indicated that he now intended to stand down as Chair, having taken the project forward for the past 6 months. The original idea in him being Chair was that extensive dealings with the Scottish Government and upper echelons of the Forestry Commission would be required. However, it was likely that it would be some time before any such dealings came to pass, and the DG had evolved into a discussion forum with a community representative aspect. It made sense therefore for someone else to take up the reins.

Doctor’s Wood – MCDC expressed an interest in the purchase. Value is unknown but Lilia will try and find out. There is a possibility of extracting wood from there without affecting the power lines. New NFLS guidelines are being updated, guidelines to be agreed before anything else can be progressed. Angus will try and find information on the value of timber from Doctor’s Wood.

4. AOB –

Living Landscape

Malcolm gave a short presentation on the potential Living Landscape project in Morvern after attending the Living Landscape event at Ardtornish. There are many different possibilities and opportunities with this project. The project is proposed by Woodland Trust and Scottish Wildlife Trust. This could be interesting for the community but the project has to be led from the bottom up with community leading on the project and benefiting from it. Lilia to organise a consultation day in the Village Hall to be open for everyone in the community to gauge community interest and involvement. Woodland Trust expressed an interest to fund a project officer in Morvern. This project is something similar to Coigach and Assynt Living Landscape project, more information on <http://coigach-assynt.org/>

A working group has been formed with representatives from 3 community groups so far – MCDC, MCC and MCW – Clare Holohan and Malcolm Burge, Martin Sampson and Jim Bolton, Alasdair and Sam Firth, Lilia.

MCW – progressing with woodland crofts.

Talks on Marine biology – will be organised by Alasdair Firth in the near future.

CLAM – letter of thanks received for fireworks donations for community bonfire party at allotments.