

Minutes of Morvern Community Development Company Board Meeting held in public

Thursday, 12th February 2015

Lochaline Village Hall, 7.30pm

Directors: Angus Robertson, Jane Stuart – Smith, John Hodgson, Jenni Hodgson, Clare Holohan, Tracy Volpe, Lilia Dobrokhodova (Dev Officer).

Members of the public: Peter Boyle (Snr), Peter Boyle (Jnr), Lesley Smart, Peter Lindsey, Susan Taylor, Kirsty Maclean, Robert Laurie, Callum Finnigan, Alda Grace, John Fisher, Jim Bolton, Alistair Sinclair, Alistair Scoular, Shirley Shaw, Bibby, Kate Cruickshank, Hugh Raven.

Lochaline Stores: Sarah Jones

Apologies: Lesley Jones, Crawford Cameron

1. Minutes of last board meeting 27th November 2014
2. Matters arising
3. Fuel pumps
4. Morvern Hydro
5. Affordable housing
6. Local Development Plan – HC Consultation and community planning event
7. Board training report
8. Sallachan hydro accounts
9. AOB - Morvern Community Woodlands – letter; Scottish Tourism Week – 3-5 March 2015, Glasgow; Scottish Wildlife Trust – letter
10. Next meeting – 12th March 2015, Lochaline Village Hall

Prior to the meeting starting Jim Bolton enquired about Lochaline Stores fuel accounts for the last 10 years. Jane explained that a formal request needs to be put to which she would respond. Jane confirmed that accounts had been agreed in public at MCDC AGM over the years.

In the absence of the chair, Jane Stuart Smith chaired the meeting. She explained that this is a board meeting that is held in public. As a rule, every 3 months MCDC hold a board meeting in public. Jane welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked for coming. Directors have to make several decisions, mainly with regard to fuel pumps. MCDC Directors are appointed by membership during annual AGM and will be making decisions after consultation with the community.

1. **Minutes** – Angus proposed, Jane seconded.
2. **Matters arising** - Angus has now been added as signatory on MCTC bank account. Other matters will be discussed during the meeting.
3. **Fuel Pumps** – shop made a decision not to continue running fuel pumps after doing so for the last 15 years. Angus and Lilia did a lot of work doing research, budgeting and looking into various ways of running the pumps from now on. Online survey has been carried out, 82 people responded to

the survey, majority of respondents were in favour of keeping the pumps open with only 3 suggestions to close the pumps. MCDC also received 15 letters/emails – all in favour of keeping the pumps open.

Angus Robertson looked into ways of keeping the pumps open, he produced budgets, considered the price of fuel, costs. Angus looked into MCTC taking the pumps with the shop carrying on taking the payments etc which resulted in high staff costs and was unaffordable. Lilia got in touch with Applecross community who have a 24/7 self – service system installed provided by Tokheim. Applecross used to have a self – service system provided by Gilbarco but after a year of trouble they changed to Tokheim and things seem to be running smoothly, after a few teething problems. Lilia obtained quotation from Tokheim, it will cost £10K + VAT for the equipment and installation. The machine will not operate with cash, only card payments. The annual running costs will be £1,500.00 per year after the first year. Angus used the above figures in the budget he produced and came up with £8K saving on staffing. It is Angus's opinion that the pumps can operate at a viable rate. MCDC now have to raise capital for the equipment. MCTC has to register for VAT, this will have a negative financial effect on pontoons (loss of £7K), but taking this into account it is still viable to run the petrol pumps as a service to the community.

Callum Finnigan asked a question about current account holders and whether businesses will still be able to have accounts. Tokheim equipment is able to take account cards, it is possible to have 1000 accounts associated with the equipment and each account can have 1000 cards. MCTC will be issuing cards to businesses, likely to be for an annual fee (to be agreed), strict monitoring system will be put in place to ensure bills are paid on time and MCTC will be able to cancel non – payers cards. A possibility of a retainer was also discussed. MCTC also budgeted for either buying the existing stock from the shop or if tanks empty budgeting for filling them up.

Capital costs – Lilia looking into covering 50% of the costs with help from HIE, Awards for All, fundraising, MCT and common good fund. For the last few years 50% of rent shop paid to MCDC was going into a fuel pumps savings account, some of this money could be used for capital costs.

MCDC looked into automatic tank dipping. Sarah Jones advised that it is good practice to dip manually on a weekly basis. MCDC are looking into Harbour Master taking this responsibility on or a volunteer.

Lilia looked into a possibility of purchasing a tyre inflation machine, awaiting quotations.

MCTC will take over running the fuel pumps as soon as cash is raised for capital costs. Once MCTC take over, it will have full responsibility for fuel pumps and contact details for MCTC will be available on a sign in case of any issues.

Decision – all Directors present voted in favour of installing Tokheim self – service equipment and MCTC taking over the running of the pumps. MCTC will take a long look at account holders and agree terms and conditions with them. All accounts will be cancelled with the shop and reopened with MCTC

under new terms. Angus, Jane and Lilia will discuss details of transfer with the shop. Sarah advised that the cost of full fill is approximately £11K.

On behalf of the Directors Angus expressed thanks to the shop for running the fuel pumps for the community for the last 15 years. Sarah Jones thanked MCTC for taking it on.

4. **Morvern Hydro Project** – this is a project realised in conjunction with the Forestry Commission Scotland, looking at hydro potential of two burns – Barr River and Achadh Forsa. MCDC secured £150K loan/grant from CARES which should take the project through to planning application and grid connection. MCDC carried out community ballot where 94.3% of the community voted in favour of the schemes going ahead. Thank you to all who voted. MCDC now need to look further into the viability of the two schemes by conducting an in depth feasibility study. MCDC have not used any funds from £150K loan yet, as soon as MCDC use however small amount the whole £150K will have to be declared as De Minimus funding and there is a three year limit as to how much De Minimus a company can have. Jim Bolton asked if the power house for the Barr scheme was likely to be and whether it would affect trout. Angus said that the power house position would not affect the trout. Grid connection as Barr is an issue. FITs have been cut back, it is tricky to know when to build the scheme, FITs may rise again at the next review in April 2016, if they do planning by April 2016. Lilia is applying to NFLS for the hydro project with deadline of 28th February 2015.
5. **Housing** – MCDC received a letter from Kirsty Maclean supporting the idea of affordable housing.

MCDC have been offered the land belonging to Forestry Commission next to Dalrainich, with planning in principle for 3 houses. MCDC are also looking at possibility of sheltered flats around Scout Hut area. Also Rowan Bank steadings – possibility of affordable housing there too. MCDC instructed District Valuer to value all three bits of land, the DV should produce his report by the end of the month. MCDC are currently looking into options, ideas, demand, Lilia obtained figures from Lochaber Housing Association and Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust on housing demand in Lochaline and Drimnin and figures clearly show demand for family homes.

A member of the public asked about what was happening about land at Kiel Camp – Forestry Commission retracted their offer.

Ardtornish land – also possibility for affordable housing.

6. **Local Development Plan** – the Highland Council are updating local development plan and seeking feedback from the community before 28th March 2015. Directors wondered if the community would like MCDC to organise a community event where members of the public could express their views on zoning, housing, business development etc. Lilia to get in touch with the HC to see if they will help by providing relevant maps and information. Lilia to feed back to Directors and if positive response received from the HC to organise an event soon.

7. **Board Training** – MCDC board undergone a formal training and the report was distributed among the directors.
8. **Sallachan Hydro** – MCDC invested £30K of MCT money in it, MCDC are share holders and also have a loan from MCT. The scheme is operational from 8th January 2015, it is working and generating. The scheme was built under budget by 5%. First payment is expected on 31st March 2015, this will be going back to MCT.

9. AOB

Morvern Community Woodlands – MCDC received a letter from MCW for funding for Achnacha wood. Directors asked Lilia to ask what the money was required for and break down the costs. MCDC received a response that was circulated to Directors. MCDC have an obligation to make sure that everything we do is financially viable, therefore MCDC are not in the position to fund. MCDC is not a grant funding body, if we were to fund, MCDC would need to see accounts and proposal reasoning.

Angus indicated that this community has a Community Council, Community Company and Community Trust and each one of them has a different role to play in the community. Groups should address their funding request to MCT. Lilia to write to MCW.

Scottish Wildlife Trust – letter asking for funding for rangers. This letter should have been addresses to MCT, sent to MCDC in error.

Scottish Tourism Week – 3-5 March in Glasgow, good opportunity to expose Lochaline Harbour to the wider audience. Directors would make a decision by email of who should go.

Oil club – possibility of revisiting this idea.

Gleaner – offered to talk to the community about bulk gas.

Jim Bolton – formally asked for fuel accounts for the last 10 years.

Scottish Rural Parliament – Susan Taylor encouraged MCDC to be part of it and will forward info.

Drimnin water taxi - Shirley Shaw asked if Lilia could look into funding for it.

Jane thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and for supporting MCDC. The meeting concluded.