

MCDC Board meeting 5th October 2023 in The Hub

Present:

Jane Stuart-Smith (Chair)
Bob Jones
Lesley Jones
Henriette Laidlaw
Sue Layton
Kenny McLaughlin (on Zoom)
Jennie Robertson

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of last meeting – to follow
3. Update on HR issue – see mediation quote
4. Risk Assessments
5. Preparations for the AGM – review of special resolution
6. Appointment of HR support
7. Housing update – verbal
8. AOB
9. Date of Next meeting

1. Apologies: Amy Stammers, Nick Tordoff

2. Minutes of last meeting: not yet available.

3. Update on HR issue:

Board members had been sent the details of two HR companies, recommended by DTAS. Up to now, MCDC has relied on informal advice from JSS but she said that she no longer has the capacity to do this. The two HR companies provided their credentials and costs: Albany HR, based in Edinburgh and STEP HR, based in Stirling. Help is required for two separate issues - the current case within MCDC and also for future HR assistance. It was felt that STEP HR's package was well set out and also significantly cheaper than Albany HR. It was decided to engage STEP HR for the first task. It was also felt that it would be better to stick with the same company for ad hoc HR advice. Albany HR's offer of a certain number of hours was felt to be attractive and it may be possible to arrange a similar deal with STEP HR.

Action: JSS will engage STEP HR to assist with current HR issue. JSS will also request a more detailed quote from STEP HR for the HR advice as a retainer.

4. Risk Assessments:

This was not discussed and was left until the next meeting.

5. Preparations for the AGM – review of Special Resolutions:

JSS explained that the accountants are late and that it will not be possible to have the accounts circulated 21 days before the proposed AGM on 8th November. It was decided that we should move the AGM to December but still have a public meeting in November.

Action: AGM will be on Wednesday 6th December in Lochaline Village Hall.

The special resolutions, circulated amongst the board prior to the meeting were approved. These need to be presented in a particular format and circulated amongst the membership 28 days before the AGM. A request for new directors for MCDG will be sent at the same time.

Action: JSS will either format the special resolution ready for circulation 28 days before the AGM or seek professional advice on this as must be in the correct format.

HL raised the issue of proxy votes at the AGM and the unclear use of proxy votes at the last AGM. It was suggested that we should provide an explanatory note on the reason for proxy votes and how they should be used. Proxy votes can be used for the special resolutions and the election of new directors.

Action: HL will write a note about the use of proxy votes and send to JSS.

6. Appointment of HR support:

This has already been discussed under item 3.

7. Housing update – verbal:

JR reported that the planning application was underway. The period for comments is now closed and there have been three comments from members of the public, one favourable and two concerned about drainage, which is an issue already under discussion by the sub-committee. Scottish Water confirmed that they have capacity for supplying water and sewage facilities and the Transport Planning Team need more information about the exact layout of roads.

The main concern is the absence of the development officer just when we are ready to start applying for funds. MAKAR are concerned about allocating their resources, if and when they need to assemble a full Design Team.

Action: JR is the point of contact with MAKAR in the absence of Lilia

An expression of interest has been sent to the Crown Estates Grant to fund a housing project officer two days a week, the building warrant and a drainage expert. If we get through the initial stage, a major application will follow in November.

JSS reported that there was not much interest in supporting this project from local businesses, apart from Kingairloch and she suggested that crowd funding might be an option.

The board was reminded that the valuation of 16 KB and the land around the pontoons only lasts for six months. It was decided at the last meeting to shelve the acquisition of 16 KB but to proceed with the pontoon land.

8. AOB

a) HL reported a meeting with Gordon Grey Stephens of the Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest in relation to a NLHF bid for funding the restoration of Scottish rainforest. Morvern has been identified as one of six key areas for this project. The aims are *"To develop the skills and capacity needed to sustainably restore rainforest landscapes, working with young people and rainforest stakeholders, creating a national movement of future rainforest custodians"*. There was some debate whether this is the same project as the one undertaken with RSPB. At the moment the only input may be a letter of support

.Action: HL will liaise with Ellen Bird, RSPB and clarify no competing interests.

b) SL reported Heath's comments about the website and that the harbour needs a more prominent showcase. The board was reminded that the harbour has a Facebook page and it was agreed that Heath should have access to this to be able to post on it.

Action: Heath will be given access to the LA Harbour FB page.

c) Letter from CLAM asking for a donation to the annual fireworks party at the allotments. While we wondered at the cost of fireworks, insurance for the event is £250 and we agreed to make a donation, larger than last year.

Action: £250 will be donated to CLAM towards the cost of the event.

d) A list of all the things that need doing while Lilia is off, compiled by Isla, was circulated round the board. Isla also noted the need for a diary of dates for renewal of the insurance, MOT certificates, road tax etc. KMCL suggested this would be possible using a Google calendar.

e) Petrol pumps. JR reported info from the LDO meeting last week in Fort William. Some other community groups have been investigating the possibility of cheaper fuel for local residents. HIE reported that Awards For All will fund up to £20,000 to help in the cost of

living crisis. This could be used by MCDG to offset any subsidy for local fuel users. This may be possible with a different card system. The Tokheim system is proving difficult with foreign cards and the shop is kindly stepping in to help. It may be useful to investigate other software.

f) Snagging in the Hub and Miners' Court. Leven Homes have been at the Hub this week working on the snagging. John Renshaw has taken full responsibility and will sign this off.

g) HL reported on the village tidy-up meeting. A group has been set up to take this forward and would like to make a display asking for people's views.

Action: A display will be put up in the Hub

h) The Attic was thanked very much for the 70% recycled sofa now upstairs in the Hub to provide comfy seating and absorb sound at meetings.

i) Isla was thanked very much for her efforts in keeping everything going in Lilia's absence.

9. Date of next meeting:

Public meeting on Wednesday 8th November in Lochaline Village Hall