

## MCDC Board meeting 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023, 7.30pm The Hub

### Present

Amy Stammers – Vice Chair  
Jane Stuart – Smith – Chair  
Sue Layton  
Bob Jones  
Nick Tordoff  
Lesley Jones – MCTC  
Jennie Robertson  
Henriette Laidlaw

### Members of the public:

### In attendance:

Lilia Dobrokhodova – Co Secretary  
Angus Robertson – Hon Treasurer

### Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous meeting
3. Declarations of interest
4. Matters arising
5. Projects update
  - Hydro – report and minutes from MorVolts
  - Housing
  - Marina – report from HM and minutes from MCTC
  - Website
  - District heating scheme
6. Risk
7. Policies
8. MCC representatives on MCDC board
9. Update on RSPB steering group meeting
10. AOB – SSEN
11. Next meeting – 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023, in public

**Apologies:** Kenny McLaughlin

**Minute of the last meeting:** Nick proposed, Jennie seconded.

The Board met without the Project Officer for 30 minutes to discuss a paper submitted by three directors. Not all issues resolved and further discussion required. This was the first meeting of the new arrangement that directors meet at 7 pm for 30 minutes and are then joined but the PO and or others attending the meeting.

## **Declaration of Interests:**

**Accounts:** Angus presented the management accounts. The Attic has made a very generous donation of over £1000 to MDCD and the Board is extremely grateful for this.

The cash position of MDCD is healthy due to the large donation from MorVolts so it is really important to keep an eye on the budget and spend wisely.

MCTC board members confirmed that they are keeping a close eye on costs and revenue and although the start of the season had been slow MCTC is in a better position than budgeted for at this stage.

Angus said that MDCD accounts are complex and not that of a conventional business as it is a charity which often has grant income which may or may not be restricted income and other sources. He is working on the best way to present the accounts as this is not easy. Directors said the arrows (green and red) were very helpful and so would any graphics to show the financial position.

MorVolts has started building up its reserves in line with the policy adopted by the Board. MDCD and MCTC have not started building their reserves yet. MorVolts reserve policy is set at £500K and MCTC at £75K and MDCD at £75K.

Following the agreement by the companies to build up reserves this will happen but not overnight. MorVolts's reserves have been put to good use during the very dry weather of April-May 2023 when the rainfall was very low and there was a drop in hydro income..

**Decision: Angus would include a note on reserves in the Executive Summary of the quarterly accounts for each company.**

JSS asked that if directors had any further questions on the accounts these should be emailed to Angus.

Suggestion to put some information in the newsletter about fuel pumps as this might help explain the pricing. Henriette could see from the accounts that all was in order but explaining the costs etc would be helpful.

**Decision: An explanation of the costing and running of the fuel pumps would go in the next newsletter.**

**Matters Arising:** None.

**Hydro** – Nick apologised for the lack of minutes as the MorVolts meeting did not happen. MorVolts propose to move to 4 meetings a year. There has not been much rain, this is highlighted in the management accounts. This means there may be less money to pass on towards the end of the year, but this was modelled into the finances and the income generated (or not in this instance) was within the financial model agreed with Triados. As a company we need to be aware that the climate is changing and what might historically have been a wet month might no longer be that.

Sue asked what the position was on the legislation to enable communities to keep electricity generated locally. It was going through the House of Commons but no news and confirmed that MCDL cannot sell its electricity locally until the law changes.

Nick confirmed that MorVolts was in conversation with Oxygen and Strontian about possible future collaboration on local energy supplies.

**Housing** – Jennie reported on the public consultation that took place in June at the Hub. Lots of comments including about drainage and the wet area. Need to work on the drainage issues as there is a lot of water on site and we need to ensure that it is properly managed. Hub Sub committee asked to keep this a live issue in conversations with MAKAR who are preparing planning drawings. The next stage is to submit the drawings to planning for approval which we anticipate should be in about a months time. Funding to this stage is in place.

Funding for paying for the building project is the next critical state and demonstrating need for housing in Lochaline is difficult as we do not fit the conventional model of having a long housing waiting list. We know there is a strong demand from employers as well as some from residents.

**Decision: Jane and Lilia to work on a letter to all local employees asking to demonstrate demand for housing by the businesses.**

**Marina** – the HM sent the report in. MCTC board meeting minutes are on Dropbox. Fire is the major issue. The board thanked Lilia and Heath for their very hard work on the night and also the fire brigade.

Insurance claim: The size of the loss incurred is still unclear and there is probably smoke damage to the main building as well as other damage that needs repairing. Agreed that this is an opportunity to improve the layout of the area and design and directors are asked to think of ways of improving layout etc. Reducing the risk of fire again is critical. eg the rubbish should not be sited near the buildings.

Disposable BBQs are banned and LAMA has provided a purpose built BBQ at the marina. LAMA thanked for this.

There have been some questions about the use of the pontoons by local commercial boats. There have been crossed wires about use of the pontoons by LCB which is allowed.

**Decision: Lilia to inform HIE about the loss of 2 bikes.**

**Website** – This is making progress and the menu has been sent to Andy for comments, landing page includes all facilities, services and organisations in Morvern.

**District Heating** – decision to go ahead. No risk or cost to the company.

## **Risk**

Nick presented the paper on risk, the full paper is on Dropbox.

**Decision: to adopt the paper. Jane and Lesley will work on MCTC risk, Nick on MorVolts. Lilia will draft the MCDC one. All three companies will have the first draft for August meeting.**

## **Policies**

There is a list of policies every organisation should have. Lilia working on policies. All policies to go to Dropbox. Lilia will inform the directors on a new policy. Lilia concerned that if all and every policy is on the website it will congest it. Some may relate to internal HR matters and may not be appropriate to go on our website but in principle all should unless a good reason not to for transparency reasons.

**Decision: Directors agreed that the policies to be listed on the website via a link so they do not clutter up the website**

**Polices to be reviewed every two years and dated with** two dates to include in the policies, updated and review date.

## **Communications Policy**

The directors need more time to read and send comments to Lilia who will review and edit and a revised draft will be circulated to the board and then hopefully to adopt.

**Decision Directors to feed any edits or comments to Lilia by the end of next week 14<sup>th</sup> July**

## **MCC representatives on MCDC board**

Email from chair of MCC received asking that the current number of MCC representatives are kept on the MCDC board. Suggestion to ask DTAS what the way forward might be and lay out pros and cons. Further discussion will be held by the board. A conversation with MCC may be needed. Also need to consider the rotation of directors.

**Decision: JSS to seek advice from DTAS and then bring back to board for further discussion on pros and cons.**

## **Update on RSPB steering group meeting**

Lilia and Henriette attended the meeting. RSPB are putting a big bid together to the Nature Restroation Fund, due mid-July. With this funding, a potential for up to 7 new jobs. If funding is unsuccessful, they will still carry on as they have development funding for 2 years and will carry on with the tree nursery and other work. Connection with housing with MCDC ambitions.

**AOB** – SSEN have a fund for shovel ready project that will deliver net zero. MorVolts will look into this.

**Retirement of directors** – Jennie and Nick are to stand down, Jane was re-elected at the last AGM and is not due to stand down. The next two people to stand down are Bob and Amy, and unless no agreement between Bob and Amy, then the decision is made by lot.

**Directors standing down** – The articles result in 3 directors having to stand down each year which results in a large churn of elected directors as the MCC directors are not included in the 3 that must retire. This creates problems and Nick suggested a change to the articles to reduce the enforced resignations from 3 to 2. Any change would have to be at AGM. This does not get round the issues we face for the current AGM. Henriette suggested that a director that did not have to retire stands down and then stands for re-election (as Jane did in 2022) as this would avoid having to conduct a lot between Bob and Amy.

**Decision JSS will ask DTAS about changing articles to require only 2 directors to stand down.**

**DTAS training** – offered to do a session on a Saturday sometime after the AGM so that new directors attend. The board will go away to check diaries and see what they can do. Saturday is difficult for one director. December is best for Bob. Jane will carry on speaking to DTAS. JSS said that as Chair she requested that training is obligatory for all directors as it makes the Chair's job less difficult if directors understand their roles and responsibilities.

**HIE** – starting chair + 1 training, offered 2 places for MCDC on 7<sup>th</sup> October. Suggestion for Amy and Jane to go. Anyone who would like to go, then email Jane.

**Corran Ferry** – JSS asked if it was worth writing to the HC with regard to the ferry. The impact on local business is terrible and one of MCDC's purposes is to help with economic activity.

**Decision:** Jane will draft a letter and send it to Henriette and Nick for comments.

**Sand Mine trail** – Jennie reported that it is all coming together. 4 panels are being worked on.

**Decision: The designs will be displayed in the Hub main room during the Gala week for inspection**

**Housing of Harbour Master**

**JSS left the meeting as she was conflicted.**

A discussion took place about the housing situation.

**Decision:** It was agreed that MCDC would seek legal advice on the terms of the lease offered by Ardtornish and then the non conflicted directors would take a decision.