

MCDC Board meeting held in public, 8th June 2023, 7.30pm Hub

Present

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

Members of the public:

Heath Gairns, Peter and Gilian Llewellyn, Sam Firth, Shirley Shaw, Nicki Burnham, Graham and Jo MacKichan, Kirsten Robertson, Hugh Raven

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. New staff
6. Report from Honorary Treasurer, management accounts and EQ
7. Rem Com paper and members.
8. Matter for decision as per board paper issued – RSPB, Sawmill, CLAM shed, URRAM, NRF funding for digital Morvern-wide volunteer platform.
9. Projects update
 - Hydro – report and minutes from MorVolts
 - Housing
 - Marina – report from HM and minutes from MCTC
 - Website
 - District heating scheme
10. AOB
11. Next meeting – 6th July 2023, 7.30pm Hub

Apologies: Bob Jones, Kenny McLaughlin

Minute of the last meeting: Henriette proposed, Jennie seconded.

Declaration of Interest: Jane with regard to Housing. Henriette, Sue, Lesley, Amy for CLAM. Lesley for Sawmill, Jane with housing for HM, Jane with NRF funding.

Matters: None.

Jane left the meeting due to conflict of interest and Amy chaired this part of the meeting

Hugh Raven – explained the Estate bought Larachbeag for their staff who they have not recruited for yet. The Estate offered MCDC/MCTC a commercial lease on the property to help with the housing issue. Amy explained that MCDC were not clear about our legal implications and those questions have not been answered. What do the arrangements may look like. We need more information on what is involved. This is to do with the business-to-business tenancy and whether we have the responsibility to rehouse. MCDC need legal advice to see what the tenancy might mean for the company and for the employee. Hugh raised an issue as to why no conversation was had with the Estate. Amy suggested that we open a conversation. Hugh stated that the Estate may need to have the property back within 6 months.

Decision: ask the Estate for a sample commercial lease and make a decision based on legal advice.

Empty houses at Ardtornish – HR explained not been able to address this due to financial constraints but hope that would be able to repair some housing and have it available locally for rent. Plans are drawn up to repair The Old Post Office into two units.

Jane rejoined the meeting

New Staff: have 4 new employees – Archie, Heath, Bradley and Isla. Apologies to Archie for missing him from the newsletter.

Newsletter was fantastic. Thank you Isla.

Accounts – Angus presented the report to the board. Accounts with EQ should be ready for AGM in October/November. We now have more emphasis on audit of everything. All three companies have budgets for the year and are looking at budgets to make sure we stay on budget and adjust things if needed. If anyone has any questions, then Angus can answer them in writing. Question was asked if Adeline is still with the company, she is but passed a lot of her admin tasks to Isla.

Decision: Letter of engagement by accountant approved by the board and for Lilia to sign.

Rem Com and Members

It is a sub – committee of MCDC board to decide on pay levels for employees. Jane brought the Terms of reference to the board for approval. Jane asked for board members to email if they would like to join the committee.

Decision: to adopt the terms of reference and any director interested in being on the Rem Com to contact Jane.

Matters for Decision:

RSPB

Request for representative to attend meeting.

Decision: the board support this. Henriette will attend the meeting and report back.

SAWMILL

Request for support from the newly formed Sawmill Community Group

Decision: to find out what the value of the wood is. Whatever happens to the tress, they need to stay in Morvern. MCDC would like to support the sawmill and will consider donating or selling trees.

CLAM SHED

Request for payment of the repairs to the CLAM shed.

Decision: MCDC and CLAM will cover the cost of the roof. Nick, Jennie and Jane agreed CLAM to pay £500 and MCDC the balance. MCDC will look into transferring all equipment to CLAM.

Lesley, Amy, Sue and Henriette were conflicted and took no part in the decision.

Rent review to take place.

URRAM

Request for cooperation

Decision: MCDC will collaborate with MCC on this through Jennie Hodgson. Lilia to reply supportive in principle, ask MCC, keep informed, get involved in the future.

NRF FUNDING

Request for MCDC to explore creating a community platform for volunteers to see what activities are going on

Decision: To pursue. Good idea as long as it is about the whole volunteer infrastructure, rather than this project. Lilia to get in touch with Charlie to find out what is needed.

Projects Update:

HYDRO

Information on the newsletter, transferred £78K to MCDC, there may be more after accounts have been audited. Paid the first chunk of money to EIF loan repayment. Cost of Triodos money has increased but also the FIT rates have increased, we are getting good per unit rate, but it has been dry April, May and start of June. Another good rate is kicking in in September, all prognosis that the company will stay liquid.

Will be pigging the pipe shortly. This clears the pipe of debris.

Bill that is going in front of the parliament that will allow us to sell electricity locally will be publicised on Facebook. Please write to your MP etc.

HOUSING

Drop-in session took place. A couple of issues have been picked up, drainage in particular. Going to planning at the end of June.

MARINA

Great report from the harbour master. Been a slow start to the season, currently low down on season.

SLF process for valuation of the land at the harbour is ongoing.

WEBSITE

Lilia and Isla are working on it.

DISTRICT HEATING

Lilia had a Zoom meeting with Re-Heat who will be doing the initial desk top study of the potential for a district heating system in the village. They will explore steam biomass boiler and ground source as well as potential others that may suit. Once they have done the desk – top study (10 days of free support) they will then seek authority from CARES to come over, probably early July, for a site visit. We may need to arrange access to some properties during that visit.

AOB:

Action: Lilia to check who is to stand out at the AGM and let the board know.

Lesley applied for funds for composting bins for CLAM. Letter required from MCDC to the funder to say no objection.

Action: Lilia to write the letter.

Accounts resourcing. There was confusion about the staffing of the accounts and a director did not know that our bookkeeper was continuing to work. Jane confirmed that there had been discussions and at one stage the book keeper was leaving due to the heavy work load. Following discussions with the bookkeeper they had agreed to stay on with reduced hours and the new Admin Assit role would be trained up to take on a proportion of the work. This was covered in the budgets signed off by the various boards

Jane asked if the Board had any comments on the papers circulated for the meeting. Directors commented they were very long but useful to have them. Jane said she and Lilia would work on improving papers.

A member of the public thanked the Board for the work undertaken.