



**Colonsay Community Development Company
Board Meeting
Thursday 28th January 2021**

1. Present

Board members: Andrew Abrahams (Treasurer), Sue Dance (part), Callum Hay, Caitlin McNeill, Liam McNeill, William Joll, Dannie Onn (Chair).

Project co-ordinators: Carrie Seymour Lizzie Keenaghan

Also present: Clare Hay (minutes)

2. Apologies: none

3. Declarations of interest: Lizzie Keenaghan (as crofter with request for the board)

4. Minutes from previous meeting: Agreed

5. Project updates

a. Scalasaig housing and business units project

CS provided a report and updated as follows. A grant of £335K for the business units has been received from the Regeneration Capital Fund. A couple of other funding applications have been unsuccessful, and others are underway. Both Scalasaig planning applications have been submitted, as well as a Masterplan application for later phases on the south site. The ABC planning officer has visited the sites and is very supportive.

The building warrants will be done in phases, the first is due at the end of February. TSL now aim to start site work in June, stop in October and begin the build in March 2022 with completion in August 2022. DO has spoken to John Forbes, as funding may be lost if there is further delay on the CAREs application. Further negotiation with the contractor is needed. £96k from Inspiring Scotland - Islands Green Recovery Programme (contact Rachel Cowper) is to be spent (or committed in terms of orders and contracts) this financial year with £46k going on preliminary fees and £50k on SSE works. Further discussions to follow on expenditure of the balance.

Action DO/CS to query John Forbes about TSL expenditure profile and timetable, length of break and start date. CS to follow up on the use of the £96,000 grant.

MOWI have emailed an offer of £500,000 towards infrastructure, subject to internal agreement, as well as paying for their own housing and supporting the project in other ways if needed. It is not clear what internal agreement means, AA said this should be urgently clarified as funding had to be in place to appoint a contractor.

Action DO/CS clarify MOWI offer status

Action DO contractor to be appointed by the end of February..

There was a discussion as to whether there was a benefit in amending the Rural and Island Housing fund application to include MOWI as a private landlord, as it could bring the cost per house down. LM clarified that MOWI workers do not pay rent, so it is not certain that this would work. DO said the CARES application had been amended and resubmitted but they also want a business plan. It was hoped that the 2019 plan would be adequate for this purpose.

CM provided an update on the crowd funding work. There will be two separate streams, one focusing on a social media crowd funding approach and the other on a formal direct appeal to the Colonsay diaspora and interested organisations. CM is working with Dion Alexander who will coordinate the formal appeal and he can start now. The crowd funding page is ready to go once the financial details have been set up and will be announced in the forthcoming newsletter. It will run for about four weeks during Feb/March aiming to raise £25K. CS said funders would appreciate public acknowledgement on social media.

(Sue Dance joined the meeting)

There was an extensive discussion about amending the house designs, re the merits of varying roof heights, adding gable windows (potentially cost neutral) and provision of shelters at front doors (£2k per house). DO stated these design details had to be finalised as they are needed for building control. Though there was broad agreement on provision of shelters and gable windows, it was agreed that this matter would be finalised within a week by email discussion.

Action all - finalise design detail within a week. DO to initiate the email discussion.

CS highlighted that new legislation requiring the provision of fire suppression systems in new housing would be in place by the time of the build which is not currently in the costs. DO hoped there would be grants available for this.

There was a discussion with regard to the aesthetics of the business unit development. At present timber cladding over the metal structure is proposed but it was felt that tree screening protected by fencing to exclude sheep could do the same job more cheaply. This is to be finalised asap.

Action DO/all finalise whether timber cladding or tree screening along with house details

DO asked whether there was any comment on the masterplan document. This is because the document is taken into account during the next phases of planning, and there is potential to include a design guide for the plots to maintain the sympathetic style of the development.

Action all Provide comment on the Masterplan, at a meeting to be arranged

(Sue Dance left the meeting)

b. Moorings project

LK had submitted a project report, but an email since had clarified SSEN's position. It is now clear that SSEN expect CCDC to take responsibility for moving the moorings if SSEN need access to the cable for maintenance, inspection or replacement works. The safe distance from the cable which removes this requirement is 250m which is not possible at the proposed site. A discussion of the issues followed. While this information made the project look more difficult to deliver, it was noted that it has been put back for a year and that there were possible mitigations to the risk. It may be possible to insure against moving the moorings. It was possible that MOWI might be able to help move the mooring blocks but this was dependent on the weight of the moorings and MOWI's equipment availability at the appropriate time. Was it possible for SSEN to move the moorings themselves and charge the cost back? LK would investigate, revise the risk document and circulate it.

Action LK research risk mitigation options for SSCN distancing requirement

c. Campsite project

DO said there was nothing to report. It was noted that the community council had issued a survey to assess community feeling about camping.

d. Old Manse Project

LK reported that the CCDC had ownership of the Manse from 29th January. It is insured, but services will need to be switched off if it is unoccupied long term. Various possibilities for short term occupation were discussed, but no firm conclusion was reached.

LK has begun registering the CCDC as a landlord, but this cannot be completed until the necessary electrical works are done. Plans for all the other necessary works are in hand and contractor quotes are being organised. DO asked for the scope of works and quotation for electrical checks from Hammer and Thistle.

Plans for celebrating and publicising the purchase were discussed. CH said the communications needed to be thought through, including the history, planned works and planned use. There will be a paragraph for the newsletter in the meantime.

Action LK to pursue the above.

e. Crofts project

The first registration has been accepted at the Crofting Commission. CM has been waiting for the mapping team to do their bit since 13/1/21 and will follow up. The decrofting applications need to be started along with the letting applications so that all are proceeding at the same time LK provided an update on the progress she and Darragh are making at their croft. A meeting will be arranged between them, CM and DO to agree the terms of the sale of their new house plot.

Regarding the access across croft land for the access road for the West Highland Housing Association development, LK reported that WHHA would be aiming to acquire the rights of servitude to the track, not the track itself. There was concern about how any necessary sea defences could be built if WHHA did not own the track. It was noted that this issue belonged to WHHA not CCDC. Discussion revealed other possible solutions and that DO/AA would write to ABC to highlight the issue.

AA felt it should be noted that CCDC as landlords have rented out crofts with known access problems. CCDC was led to believe by WHHA that they were going to purchase the disputed area from MHWS to the Robertson fence line. CCDC was asked by WHHA not in any way to jeopardise their negotiations. WHHA were made aware from the outset that any road improvements had to be defended from storm surge. By only purchasing enlarged Servitude Rights of Access, WHHA would seem unable to defend the road.

Action DO/AA to write to WHHA

6. Finances

AA noted that the company accountant was retiring at the end of the financial year. He proposed that a formal vote of thanks to her for all her hard work on behalf of the CCDC over the years be minuted, and that the occasion should be marked by a gift. All present agreed to this. AA has been researching potential new accountants who have experience working with organisations like CCDC and will report back on possibilities.

AA noted that the financial reserves are good and as developments were starting later than anticipated, it might be sensible to move projects such as the Manse works forward and get them done.

CH reported on his work with LK and CS to develop two types of spreadsheet to assess (i) project cashflow during the build stage, and (ii) long-term financial viability. The draft spreadsheet on the Moorings project will be available shortly. AA said that John Forbes had not provided much detail about the viability of the long term running of the projects.

CH felt that the TSL schedule provided by email did not show enough detail. CS said it was a fixed rate schedule, paying for work done on a monthly basis. CH said that there was also a need to build a comprehensive picture of the funding streams showing what was confirmed, when it was available and other relevant information.

Action AA to organise card and gift for accountant

Action AA report back on accountant replacements

Action DO will meet with John Forbes and CS (+CH?) to clarify funding picture

7. Risk registers

CH said he was keen for comments & suggestions on work done so far on the CCDC risk register. The registers will become working documents and a regular feature of board meetings.

Action All provide feedback

8. Trading Company.

DO noted that new legislation may restrict wood and coal burning which may impact on the trading company's business and on plans to install woodburners in the new housing. To be monitored. The future planning for the trading company will be discussed at a later meeting.

9. Staffing

There is five months funding left for the property coordinator post and there is work to be done in that area. It was agreed to appoint someone to the post from March.

Action CM/DO organise advertisement and interviews for the post.

10. Community Engagement

CM was congratulated on the comprehensive engagement plan provided. CM highlighted the importance of working with the community council and said that Helen Mann had been working with her and was happy to be a contact. CM said she planned to learn from other organisations who have carried out such work especially in the area of post-pandemic views. There would be information in the newsletter about the engagement process. It was noted that the community council had nominated Helen Mann and Richard Buttrick to be contacts for the CCDC and it was agreed that this would be very helpful to the CCDC.

11. Website

It was agreed that the CCDC website needed to be updated and kept up to date. Various ways and means were discussed. LM agreed to take on this role.

Action LM to discuss with TW and DO.

12 Innovation Grant Scheme

Action DO will write a piece about this for the newsletter

13. AOB

None

Date of next meeting Feb 25th at 7pm