

232nd Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Sleat Community Trust

On: Monday 27th of August 2024

In: Board Room

At: 18.00pm

MINUTES

1. Attendance, Apologies, and absences:

Andy Williamson (SCC) AW (as acting Charing role), Ade Stokes AS, Myrielle Macleod MML (admin), Ruud van Ruitenbeek (SCTCL Chair) RvR, Paddy McKay PM, Garry Noakes GN, Chris Pendlebury (SRL Chair) CJP

Apologies :

Ruairidh Morrison RM, Domhnall Angaidh MacLennan (SMO) DAM, Eilidh Grant EG, Flora MacLean (FM)

2. Items for AOB:

- Fire Safety (MML)
- recent disruptive behaviour in Sleat (AW)
- Plot C update (MML)

3. Declarations of Interest:

PM for Sleat Hydro and VS.

AW for Community Council.

MML for shop (supplier).

4. Minutes of last meeting, matters arising:

Proposed by CJP, seconded by GN.

The restricted funds with dates have been matched against their bank statements and they are now all matching and correct in the financial spreadsheet.

The accountancy fees will be discussed separately.

AS has done a template for the insurance research and is awaiting feedback from the board. He will then send this template out to insurance providers (Zurich and Marsh). The claims have been listed separately in the template but need some description about the individual claims.

ACTION POINT: speak to Calum about Skyenet claim and provide this information to AS **RvR**

ACTION POINT: find out about the other claims in the template **MML**

AS confirmed that we can leave the insurance at any time however this may not relate to the directors insurance. This will need to be checked.

ACTION POINT: check if we can leave directors insurance early or not **AS, MML**

HMRC has been contacted by MML and CJP to confirm interest payment query. The extra interest had not been added to the repayment plan. At the moment, MML is checking the online VAT account to keep an eye on it.

CJP spoke to Paul Wood at LLC and the feedback has been positive. There should be some finances coming in which would help to pay the outstanding bills owed to SRL. CJP also asked about the future of supplying wood chip to LLC but has had no reply to this yet.

The cleaner job has now been filled with someone starting the job in November.

AW and PM are still in the process of speaking to someone about getting help to secure funding.

AS has provided a "straw man" email for open day preparation and this has been circulated to the strategy board.

The advertising of the rental spaces has brought in one person so far who is using the spare boardroom several times a week.

Emma at the Forest School has been emailed about the PVG decision and she has accepted the decision. Emma raised a question if she would employ volunteers if those can be getting PVG checked via the Trust. This was agreed on as being okay with everyone.

ACTION POINT: inform Emma about above decision **MML**

AS told Ali at the garage about the proposal to increase the rent however Ali was not happy with the proposal and is now talking to his solicitor. A reply is being awaited.

ACTION POINT: follow up with Ali once he has spoken with solicitor **AS**

Martin and Duncan have not been approached yet about why the offer to buy the garage by Ali was declined in the past however it may have been related to the Lottery funding and the Forest related loan for Tormore.

ACTION POINT: ask Duncan and Martin if they know why offer to buy was declined in the past **AS**

5. Finances:

a.) Report from the Finance Director (AS):

There has been nothing new to report. The next quarterly review is due in October.

b.) Insurance Review (AS):

This was discussed during the minutes of the last meeting earlier.

c.) Lease to MacGillivray Motors – Rent Review (AS):

This was discussed during the minutes of the last meeting earlier.

D.) Accountant invoices (MML and AS):

The accountant invoices are not itemized so difficult to review. They all still need to be paid.

ACTION POINT: circulate invoices to the chairs to discuss payment

MML

ACTION POINT: if needed, speak to accountants about paying in installments

MML

6. SCTCL (Trading) Update (RvR):

RvR mentioned that the shop is currently quieter than hoped which has been affected by the poor ferry service.

Staffing wise, Caramarie has now left. Daisy is settling in well and so is Orla. People are now asking if there are jobs available in the shop showing the good reputation the shop has as a workplace.

In the post office there will be in person training done in September. Online training was supposed to be done before this, however there is less time to spend on this due to time spend on EVRI.

The money the shop gets for EVRI parcels is too low and not covering the costs. The Trading board has decided to gather information what a fair price for the service should be. The shop managers will contact the other parcel offices on Skye and then each one can contact the Post Office about increasing the rate per parcel. If the post office is not willing to improve the payment, a discontinuation of the EVRI service will be considered. Meanwhile the customers are being asked to contact the companies that use EVRI for delivery and ask them to consider using alternative delivery options.

The servicing for the chillers and freezers in the shop is still ongoing. The fuel pumps are feeling less reliable than they were before and the managers are trying to find a company to do maintenance on the pumps.

New products such as herbal tea and honey and more refill items have been added.

Mallaig bakery has been approached about supplying bread, but they are not able to do this. However, a new bakery in Kyle will be approached to see if they are interested in providing bread.

For Skyenet, FM mentioned ahead of the meeting that she was worried about losing customers to Fibre.

ACTION POINT: write communication to customers to compare service to BT and the improvements coming up

RvR, CS

7. SRL Update (CJP):

CJP showed his spreadsheet which has been updated until the meeting day. According to the forecast on the spreadsheet, SRL will be going into the red in November.

The outstanding VAT bill is still being paid off and the VAT Return refund that was due has been applied by HMRC to the repayment plan instead which means the debt should be paid of earlier. It is still not clear if interest is still being added to the outstanding balance.

ACTION POINT: follow up on interest payments

MML

The shortfall which is coming up can be covered by felling. The Long-term Forest plan is still on track but has had a slight delay. It is now due by the end of September and then needs to be approved.

Of the 3 tenders that were send out only one was interested in the felling of the proposed area.

With the predicted cash flow issues starting in November, SRL has asked the SCT and SCTCL board to loan them about £15,000.00 to tie them over until the money gets in from the felling.

There is another area of the wood that is a bigger area and with better quality for which SRL will put tenders out again.

In principle, all present were happy to process the idea of internally funding this. After the next SRL meeting, CJP will have to put up a proposal to the SCT board and a decision on this can be made via email but during the next SCT meeting this can be formally approved.

ACTION POINT: contact SCTCL board about loaning money to SRL

RvR

ACTION POINT: write up proposal to SCT board

CJP

The SRL board meeting, which was due on Friday, 23rd of August, has been postponed to Friday, 6th of September.

CJP also informed the board that his time as chair of SRL is coming to an end in November and he will step down. So far, there has been no replacement found.

AW informed the board that Clan Donald has found a ranger for the next year and that they are happy to discuss a collaboration with SRL and SCT for this.

ACTION POINT: mention the Ranger collaboration at the SRL meeting

CJP

8. Staffing: General Update:

The cleaner job has now been filled. Updates about shop staff were mentioned under SCTCL.

9. SCT Chair: Strategy, governance, and management (AW):

The strategy group has met on 30th of July and the meeting notes were provided to the SCT board ahead of the meeting.

The key strategic questions were raised in this are:

- How do we generate income
- How do we build value in our assets
- What can the trust fund
- How do we create a pathway to financial self-sustainability

The financial position of the Trust was discussed and this brought up the question of how to go for bids/funding without being able to fund this role.

It was suggested that it would be necessary to start collecting project ideas now that can be used once funding comes available.

It was also mentioned that it would be good to hold a strategy meeting for all members of the board.

Volunteers will be needed to help with bidding and other aspects of the Trust and to promote the Trust the relationships between SCT and other local community and voluntary sector organization's needs to be built and

strengthened. Promoting the Trust will also help to get people to understand what the Trust does and why and its history and future.

Some potential ideas for projects were discussed such as upgrading the Hydro Scheme or building a modern day Bothy that shows sustainable development and would provide a long-term income for the Trust.

The overall strategy meeting for all of the board members should be held before this years AGM and all present agreed on this. For this meeting, some external organizations must run this.

ACTION POINT: contact Jennifer MacPherson at HIE about running the meeting **AW**

Possible venue options include An Crubh or SMO.

ACTION POINT: check with SMO about possibly using their meeting rooms **AW**

A time scale for the meeting has been set for early October.

AS read the articles of the Trust on the Companies House website and noticed that SCT is not compliant with some of the items listed there.

ACTION POINT: make a summary of things that SCT are not compliant with before next SCT meeting **AS**

To promote the Trust, FM will be at the SMO Freshers Fayre in September. Plockton High school also asked if the board could attend their Third Sector Careers Fair which falls on the same day as the fair at SMO. No one will be joining the Plockton Fair.

ACTION POINT: contact Plockton High School and tell them SCT not taking part **MML**

A recent email was sent out about the group called Skye, Lochalsh & Wester Ross Community Partnership and their invite for the board to join. There are also some planned Zoom meetings by this group. Someone is required to get involved in this. AW said he would do this if no one else comes forward.

ACTION POINT: follow up with board members if any one is getting involved with this **MML**

10. CRF2165: Playpark Report (AW):

There has been no update on this.

112. Office Rental/ Shared Office Use (MML):

This was discussed during the minutes of the last meeting earlier.

13. AOB – from items given in 2 above:

Fire safety (MML):

After a recent incident of the fire alarm going off, MML spoke to shop managers and it was confirmed that the Fire Safety has been not reviewed regularly since Mike S. left. MML asked the board if anyone can advice on the actions and checks listed in the Fire Safety Logbook and it was suggested to get Mike S. involved in this. MML has volunteered to do the regular checks once training has been given.

ACTION POINT: contact Mike S. about Fire Safety Courses **MML**

Recent disruptive behaviour in Sleat (AW):

AW mentioned that some campers left behind a mess at the Clan Donald open camping area in Armadale. This part of land is of no strategic importance for Clan Donald and therefore there has been the idea to take the land over from Clan Donald while paying them a nominal amount of money. The area could be developed into an amenity area such as a play park, or something that would help managing the land and keeping it useable.

Concerns were raised that this might just be shifting the problem over to SCT.

To pursue this proposal, ideas of what to do with it need to be collected and the conversations with Clan Donald about a ranger position need to be continued.

It was suggested that AW mentions the the idea of getting a ranger for the whole of Sleat on the Community Council Agenda.

ACTION POINT: mention Ranger for Sleat at Community Council Meeting

AW

Plot C Update (MML):

The most recent application has been withdrawn due to the plot not being affordable. The land needs to be reassessed to find out what can be done with it.

ACTION POINT: discuss what to do with land at strategic meeting

Strategy Team

Working from Home (MML):

MML asked the board if working from home is possible for 2 days a week going forward which will be on a Tuesday and Thursday. All present agreed.

The meeting finished at 19:45 pm. The next meeting is on Monday, 23rd of September in the Board Room.

GN will be chairing the next meeting.

RvR and MML will not be at the next meeting.