



Minutes

Lochbroom & Ullapool Community Trust

Board Meeting April 11th 2023

6.30 pm at Ceilidh Place, Parlour Bar, Ullapool.

Present: Tim Gauntlett, Susan Leslie, Mamta Patel, Liz Cotton, Nick Tatchell and Brendan O'Hanrahan on line.

In attendance: Sandy Underwood and Gill Wilson

1. Apologies: Ben Mueller.

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting Monday March 6th 2023.

Proposed – Mamta, seconded – Tim

Matters arising- Nick asked for clarity on the board's decision re the Environmental group applying for funding from the Corriemollie windfarm and EDF fund. Mamta responded. That the Env group just needed to be aware that a grant had already been received last year from this fund, by the employment group.

Conflicts of interest – Gill noted that when the discussion of potential pay rises was made she was directly involved in this.

AOB – Updates on Mo Dhachaidh and CARES

3. Finance report – Liz

Year end provisional figures show an £8K loss as opposed to the predicted £22K loss, this has arisen through increased New Broom sales income throughout the year.

The **proposed budgets** for the new year (from April 1st 2023) are ready and these show a 10% increase on costs and 5% up lift on sales, resulting in a break even budget.

Pay - (The board noted they were happy with Gill remaining in the room for the discussion of pay increases and Gill agreed). Potential pay rises are included within the budget; Gill from £15 to £17.50 to match Sandy's hourly rate for the Sustrans project. Shop staff currently at £10.90 (pay increase last Autumn in line with living

wage) to go up to £11.40 . **All 5 directors in the room approved these pay rises.** Brendan online had stepped out of the meeting briefly. Action: Gill to notify staff, update contracts and notify Mann Judd re payroll changes.

Liz and Mata asked that the budget have an unrestricted funds line added such that the balance of unrestricted funds can be readily visible. Action: Gill and Sandy to look at adding this.

Mamta - the Budget will need updating if anything major changes. The board need to know where the Trust is in relation to the budget at any time, Gill - the monthly variance report (which is the report they draw down from Xero each month and circulate to the board) shows the actual figures against the budget for that month and the year to date. Liz asked for formal approval for the budget. **Budget approved by all 6 directors present including Brendan who had re-joined the meeting.**

Gill- Mann Judd have been consulted about the detail shown in the budget and have given some guidance on how to split costs between funds, this may be too complex for our current needs, but agreed that more detail on the allocation of wages costs between projects would be helpful.

Gill also noted that Catriona's pay is under review within the project and Keep Scotland Beautiful the lead partner are consulting with the lottery as to how an increase in pay and mileage allowance, can be achieved. This is unlikely to give rise to an increase in grant funding but there is an underspend on the project currently that may be reallocated thus any potential rise is covered within the budget.

Action : Sandy and Gill to recheck all figures prior to uploading budget onto Xero and inform the board should there be any amendments changes. .

Hector 250 anniversary celebrations

Liz- we have been asked by the constituted group, organising the above celebrations in July, if UCT would act as banker for the £2k of funds they have been granted by the Ullapool Harbour Trust. Chrissy Boyd's email with an outline of the planned events and those involved had been circulated to the board. Agreed by all 6 directors that this was a project to support. Chrissy has assured the board that there will be a minimal number of payments over a relatively limited period of time the celebrations being at the end of the first week of July. Action: Gill to inform Chrissy Boyd and the UHT that UCT will act as banker. Chrissy to provide appropriate evidence for all payment requests and it was noted that the celebrations must be inclusive. Susan suggested the SLF account is used, as this is currently empty and unused.

4. Growing capacity

Recruitment of additional directors – There was a general discussion about who might be asked. Gill has asked Ishbel Hartley but has not had a response as yet (Susan noted she has just joined the Swimming Pool board so it is unlikely she is available. Brendan suggested Neil Gerrard, one of the Mo Dhachaidh group,

Tim- suggested we make the board meetings more active by having non directors to attend these would be able to inform the board without actually being directors, this might be a way of involving staff volunteers etc. .

Nick noted Evie may be interested. Gill reminded the board that Evie had already been co-opted and had then decided that she did not want to join, agreed that Nick should speak with Evie and see what her thoughts are now.

Brendan felt potential directors should have already lived in the area for a while before joining, to have local knowledge. Gill noted this would rule out 3 of our current 7 directors, Tim emphasised that we have three very active members who are all recent to the area. Agreed that having directors with local knowledge is important but the skills each individual brings is also very important. We need a mix. Brendan suggested Christine or David Crook may be interested at some future date

One of the new GP's Dr Katie Walter, is actively looking at how the surgery might be more involved in community issues, unfortunately she is currently on sabbatical. .

Agreed a youth representative would be good. Mamta will ask at youth group.

Tim asked if the school has a student council? Mamta suggested looking at leadership awards as a way of recruiting youth. .

Mamta- D Keating manager at Seaforth may be interested also Ben Williams, his past experience as Dev officer would be useful.

Next steps could we send out a notice with key themes roles and responsibilities and a note of skill sets that the board requires. Liz suggested these would not have to be directors, they could be volunteers assisting the board. Action: Mamta to draft an article for the UN and website. However this wont be enough we will need to approach people directly .

Tim- it is good to recognise, that whether folk have been here a long time or not, we do have members who have a strong community spirit.

Sandy noted skill sets required include functional roles such as use of social media, marketing and HR knowledge/ experience.

Membership drive- When did we last push this? Gill some 4+yrs ago.

Liz – suggested we should be better at publicising and celebrating our achievements Tim asked what members get – a newsletter?

Brendan noted we serve the community not just our members. This was agreed but we are a membership org, we do need the voice of our members to validate our work. Nick asked if the push for more members was a good use of resource why do we need to increase them? Noted some funders will require validation from our membership HIE or SLF will look for community engagement . Tim - if we define our organisation b an active membership, this might make it easier to find directors.

Tim noted the hydro scheme did encourage members and involvement very successfully and UCT have not encouraged active involvement.

Brendan left meeting at 19.33

Mamta – as a membership organisation for legitimacy, we should have active members and involvement.

Sandy noted that legally the board serves its members.

Susan noted that in its earliest times, UCT was set up to get funding for specific projects namely major projects for both the Swimming Pool and the Village hall.

Agreed we do need a membership for our identity. What we give back will be regular emails and communication.

Action: Use the shop to promote UCT and Liz and Gill to work on some wording a poster and leaflet. What is UCT how does it link with the shop.

Action: Move membership button onto the website to be more obvious and accessible – Gill to ask Ali Parsons

Action: Links to website. Work emails and social media to have links to membership and website. Gill Sandy Catriona.

Action: use the UCT Ullapool News monthly page to show what the Trust and Its working groups are doing.

Need for a full time development officer

All agreed we do need this. How would we fund this? Mamta -could we combine with another org. such as the Village hall? Mamta has been trying to have a conversation with the hall's board. A joint working would this involve two bodies or would they be subsumed within UCT ?

Tim would there be mileage in approaching HIE. Sandy through DTAS has knowledge of a fund opening from July but this will be a very competitive application and having already had DEV Officer funding we are unlikely to be favoured. Any funding is likely to be short term and geared to revenue stream development Tim As a community we do not currently, have the source of funds, we need a new revenue source. Sandy- as a larger community we have lots of groups who all need directors so we compete.

Agreed that a role model/ job description for a dev. officer is needed. Plus income models suggestions. Gill- expansion of the New Broom Liz agreed maximise the NB income. Action: Gill to continue working on her business plan for an expanded New Broom offer.

Tim reported on the staff/ volunteer New Broom meeting. Held two weeks ago. 10 staff/ vols attended, positive feedback and good ideas expressed. Tim's overview- They identified with the New Broom rather than UCT and they didn't see their role as raising funds for UCT, but more providing a service and a resource acting as a social hub. A successful meeting and we will have them bi monthly. All 5 directors present confirmed this has full board backing.

Tim - involving the board in the shop and the staff in the workings of the board, inviting them to meetings and having information about the Trusts work available in the shop – again the need for a leaflet.

5. Community Benefit Fund- widening the donor pool, involving more groups

Action: Gill to circulate legacy, details. All to think about ways to grow this fund.

6. UCT terms of reference and draft guidance for working groups

Ben and Brendan have responded by email to the guidance. Nick expressed caution that we may be trying to over govern ourselves, the working groups are bottom up and so an annual working plan will only work for major projects. Mamta - this will be fluid, clarity on roles is important a plan will help identify what does the group want to achieve. What is realistic. Action: Nick to look at the guidance and how having this might have informed the Env groups approach to the ERS bid.

Susan leaving 20.28

Mamta we should give clarity on the threshold for funding support for groups, agreed previously at £7,000 and how it was arrived at.

Sandy -delegated authority for working groups, needs to be addressed. Our articles allow the Trust to delegate as much as it wishes. Mamta -we need a clear model for terms of reference.

Agreed that the terms of reference and delegated authority need to show how risk reputation and finances must be considered.

Action: For next Board meeting we need to agree terms of reference.

Tim suggested to promote better attendance should the whole years meetings be set out. Agreed that we already have this in that we meet first Monday of every month as a default.

7. Proposed Wester Ross Third Sector day email from Jo- Ford SLCVO circulated. Agreed this is a good idea inviting other development trusts to Ullapool for a day of workshops etc. SLCVO would organise and fund DTAS might fund attendees costs,. Tim noted that September may be too busy and deferring to Oct might be better. Action: Mamta to contact Jo.

8. Dev officer and working group reports any questions.

Empl group Mamta has suspended this groups meetings for now due to other commitments for both herself and the attendees.

Active Travel – Sandy noted that the consultants has been approved and contracts will be ready for the Chair to sign shortly. Next step will be the induction meeting.

ENV group- Nick has circulated notes from their recent meeting. ERS- the groups bid team, need to know that there is board support for it before they put any further

effort into a renewed bid. As a cost neutral project, the bid team felt disappointed that the board was not more supportive. Tim - the board did really let the group down as they had not the financial preparedness for the project. Tim if we can get the structure in place then we can be more prepared and supportive. Sandy it was not just cash support that was required, but a steering group for the project. Mamta asked if the group was interested in re submitting. Nick - No not currently. He noted that there were two other highland bids that were successful and both were much larger than ours.

Tim by our very nature as a Trust we have too many interest groups and needs. UCT cannot support them all, some will have to take a back seat at times.

Liz could we investigate bridging loans or similar as a means of funding for short term financial support when grant funding is retrospective.

AOB

CARES Sandy asked for the boards approval to cancel the grant renewal . The Loch a Broain developer has fully repaid the loan and CARES have no means of enforcing the agreement to provide community benefit. Thus the grant cannot be used. He noted that Topher LCC is in agreement with this. Agreed by 4 directors present. Action: Sandy to inform CARES and circulate a summary of the decision to all board.

Mo Dhachaidh Gill noted that at the last Mo Dhachaidh group meeting it had been stated that the Medical Practice was not minded to purchase the premises, although a public information request by the group has shown that there is no security of tenure for the practice. The groups are actively pressing NHS Highland to acquire the building, however they do at the same time wish to pursue the registration of a community right to buy. Gill has made it clear that a working business plan to show use and financial viability for the project will be needed first. She expressed concern that the willingness to acquire the building as a community asset might get ahead of the hard fact and essential requirement of it being a viable project.

Meeting closed 21.11 pm

Thankyou