

Strathnairn Development Company (SDC) Board Meeting 2024

Present: Mike Danson (MD), Raghnaid Sandilands (RS) (minutes), Megan Bee (MB), Paul Robinson (PR), Elna Harvey (EH), Guy Harris (GH), Neil Dawson (ND)

Appologies: Hal Robinson & Justyna , Aileen Taylor (AT)

Location: Zoom, 7.30

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies, proxies and quorum

We are quorate.

2. Minutes - circulated by ND. Approved as circulated.

3. Membership / Communication

Details of Trustees for website - Awaiting brief biog details/ photo from GH and AT. Number of Trustees needs edited to 8.

Board membership - Hal and Justyna are having to resign due to family circumstances. Have been encouraged to stay on the subcommittee for active travel and help with gala. They both expressed that they liked being on the board but particularly Hal was unable to commit the time. Conveyed kind words about the board in general. ND is moving from the area.

Advice from DTAS meeting last week is to assess gaps in skill set and consider before we seek more board members, or continue with the 8 we have and/ or look to whether we have skills gaps across the board.

ND happy to be co-opted, come his move from the area.

General membership - approved idea to put out fresh information re; SDC - information about the basics of what a development trust is etc. and draw new members.

MB suggests phrasing it as a natural learning curve, frame as bring the skills you have and expect to learn lots.

MD reflected that one of the challenges is it is that word of mouth, Facebook or happening upon website are the only easy means to reach people, as there is still no newsletter.

MB to spread on the word tailored via school groups to draw new members - mailing lists / Facebook post / Kirsty Guthrie as school head may help put out the word.

Communication ND has been supporting PR on website. Very easy to use and set up. Updates and minutes added. Very instinctive to use. MB happy to take on website role.

Mail chimp account set up by MD based on an older list of members, updated list sent over and adding them in. MD to have a meeting with RS to hand over login.

Action points

ND to lead on writing some draft intro text based on DTAS basics we can e-mail to members, go on fb post, leaflet and posters etc.

Postering for visibility in park, school woods, shop - info. poster with QR code, website, basic details, why they should join.

EH suggested Daviot book club might be a good point for advertising. RS/ MB / MD to post via Facebook / mailing list re; membership drive.

MD to have a meeting with RS to hand over login.

4. Mediation/ SCBF / SDC

Recap;

CDO application form submitted.

Extremely negative feedback when pursued for a reply.

BF and CC asking for a meeting of BF, CC, Hall Committee and ourselves.

Having sought advice from various people, counsel has been consistent. Felt there was a lack of understanding of role of community development.

The discussions were sympathetic and consistently suggested we seek external advice and mediation. From responses we have received from both SCBF and CC, we were advised not to have meetings alone without external mediation.

It was suggested we go to HTSI that provide services on governance, communication etc. They felt this was too complex a situation for them to deal with. They advised accredited mediation.

Scottish Mediation Group do provide this service. They are based in Edinburgh. Work in tandem with DTAS /SCDO. Can be in person/ phone / online.

They facilitate professional discussion. Free service, can be actionable in near future.

They provided paperwork. SCBF would need to agree on us having written communication. We believe this to be a positive step.

ND expressed his surprise as to the SNCC 'statement of condemnation'.

ND communicated our points being made public is due to having no positive response.

ND expressed again at last meeting with CC that the CC or Farr Hall need not be mediators. We have been advised against this. Professional advice communicated to MD to is that this is proper process at this stage. SDC seeking agreement on positive ways to progress, reached with the help of mediation.

MD reported on the immediate replies received to our open letter - responses rushed, criticisms vague and lacked evidence.

DTAS and other national agencies over last few days at the DTAS conference, and having heard the barest essentials, advisors are in full support of our steps and aims re; mediation. Not an unusual issue, it is unfortunate. ND emphasised this is an opportunity. All in agreement.

PR queried that the CC, in their statement, claim their opinion is based on the opinion of a few individuals - some individuals made complaints. PR reminded that CC view is supposed to be aligned with how the whole community feel.

MB asking why the CC need to be embarrassed about mediation. Should see it as something positive, a chance to build back.

PR Stratherrick went through the community body structures. Perennial issues

ND pointed out to CC that we had agreed about managing expectation about what a CDO can achieve. ND relayed some confusion from CC that we were stalling funding.

Action points

MD will read through mediation Scotland's paper work.

SDC to approach SCBF, recognising that it need the BF to agree to mediation.

4. Work Plan

Plans stymied at the moment. A common theme at DTAS was that volunteer directors should not be doing too much. It is bad practice to try and deliver a CAP without CDO support.

We have been communicating to members, this is what we seek to do but, we are limited by BF at the current time.

Active travel - PR sent 3 comprehensive emails re communication with; Colin Ross of Highland Council who is supportive, to the Highland Council Access Officer re; core paths plan and to Kristina High asking if Sustainable Strathnairn want to come on board. And approaching others seeking assistance on this sub committee. Next step is to ask who in community would like to get involved. Then following that have a meeting of interested parties. Attend in October a funding meeting in Strathdearn. AT and Hal expressed an interest also.

Action point:

Liaise with RS to put info on Facebook and ND to include in poster efforts.

Film event - RS and EH leading on taking forward.

To attend meeting in October re staging and promotion. 1st training early September, second in early October.

Activities:

Gaelic fund raised by MD - MD reports on classes, talks Heritage Association, Farr Conversation - all willing to help scheduled for through the autumn/ winter.

Considering whether we have capacity/ funds to run a St Andrew's night ceilidh.

6. Treasurer's report

PR going through the accounts as end of year coming up.

Nearly £14,000 - £500 we have earned. Remainder is left over CDO salary.

We don't have much for events. Limited as to what additional things we can do.

6. AOCB

None

7 Date of Next Meeting - TBC via e-mail

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