

CDO Summary January

Summary: January was a very busy month, I have really enjoyed my work this month and feel settled into my role. I've been doing varied and interesting work, and it's exciting to see the start of some great projects.

Hub Steering Group

Providing ongoing support to the Hub Steering Group, attending meetings etc

Organised a visit for some members of the group over to the Strathdearn Hub, met with Maureen McDonald Cook (Development Officer) and did a tour of the hub. Both the group and I got to ask Maureen questions about the development and running of the hub.

Researching community owned gyms and identifying examples in North/East Scotland

Community Exchange Visit – spoke to the Hub Manager at the Kyle of Sutherland Hub to find out more about how they operate, what has / hasn't worked. Made further enquiries about doing an in person exchange visit.

Engagement Feedback Lunch – Attended the feedback lunch organised by the Steering Group. I chaired the meeting and facilitated discussions about potential elements of the future hub. I compiled and consolidated written and oral feedback. Created a mobile friendly presentation to present the feedback in an interactive and engaging way.

Cinema Project

Advertising: Designed 4x posters and 4x facebook friendly flyers for advertising on social media; got posters printed for display in Farr School and Farr Hall. Emailed both Farr and Daviot Primaries to make parents aware. Writing and publishing facebook posts to increase awareness

Costed project and sent this to SDC Board

Set up Eventbrite and managing this to sell tickets. Created physical tickets and arranged for printing.

Ongoing contact with Film Hub Scotland

Daviot Church

Met with ladies from Daviot Church. They are conscious that the church might be closing in the next year or so, so are keen to increase community use of Daviot Church. I met with them and suggested community focussed events which are still mindful of the church being a place of worship. Potential projects include an author's reading (perhaps SG Maclean, local author), inviting the art group to sketch or paint the Church, a collaborative photography project with a photography group in Inverness (perhaps collaborative with other areas in Strathnairn), and events based around music or Gaelic music for Gaelic week. The church session were very supportive of the above.

The ladies have set up a Steering Group to guide the events which I will support. They are all really enthusiastic and have so much energy, which will be a great asset when starting up some new projects. I'm looking forward to helping them develop these plans further.

Mini Mill Project

Beth Rose approached me with an idea for a mini-mill project. This is a small mill which would process wool for smaller suppliers, even farmers/crofters with larger flocks that want to keep some wool for themselves. Beth had the idea to work with other women across Highland to create three mills, one of which would be in Strathnairn, as a social enterprise which could employ people. I

advised on some corporate structures such as Community Interest Companies, but really my knowledge is stronger with charities so I only gave a basic outline. I advised Beth to contact Just Enterprise which give free advice to social enterprises in their infancy, including advice on corporate structure. I discussed her idea with James Turner at Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and he was very interested as was his colleague in business. He indicated HIE may fund this project earlier than usual, at feasibility stage rather than growth stage. He advised Beth and colleagues incorporate in a suitable structure, prepare a business plan, then come back to HIE. I thought that was very encouraging. He shared the details of another social enterprise in Alness which makes ethical sustainable wool clothing so I shared that with Beth.

I advised Beth on potential sites, I had heard on the grapevine that Forestry Land Scotland are currently very amenable to Community Asset Transfers, so that was something to keep in mind.

This project is extremely interesting so really excited to see how this will work out and eager to support in any way I can

Local Place Plan

Ongoing research and thoughts about the LPP. This will be a spatial planning document looking at infrastructure, land use, transport, recreational facilities. Hopefully the completion of this plan will lead to some site selections for the active travel, housing projects. I would be interested in including climate resilience or adaptation in this LPP (see below Highland Adapts)

Looking into maps for engagement

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

As mentioned above, met with James Turner from HIE (Head of Strengthening Communities, Inner Moray Firth). He explained budgets have been cut and they are tested at the moment, however they are still open for business. Potential projects need to be multi faceted and tick many boxes to qualify for their funding now.

Discussed Hub project, funding would not be available for the café (HIE generally do not fund cafes in IMF area unless exceptional) but could be for hot desking aspect. Advised on SDC getting a Net Zero Action Plan as this could strengthen funding applications to ease pressure on SCBF

HIE will not fund an affordable housing project outright but will support SDC with networking with other communities to see how they met this challenge.

Highland Adapts

Met with Harper Loonsk from Highland Adapts, who are an agency looking at Climate Adaptation and Mitigation in Highland. She had some great ideas on developing a climate angle to the LPP. She advised undertaking an informal assessment to see how resilient Strathnairn already is to climate, inc engaging with SEPA or Scottish Fire Rescue Service. She recommended the Scottish Government's Place Standard with a Climate Lens which is a great asset.

Soirbheas - I met with Kara Scott who is a CDO for Soirbheas, it was good to network with her and share ideas/tips.

Climate Hub – Met with Alice Fogg who is the development worker for the Climate Hub for our area. She mentioned different funding streams; discussed the support the Climate Hub can offer SDC/me. Showed her around Farr Community Hall and explained some of our upcoming projects

TGDT – I spoke to Oliver Giles from Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust about their Affordable Housing project and got great information on how they went about the project, the

support they received from Communities Housing Trust etc. He gave some pointers on our project and felt that site selection would be the biggest issue for us. He offered support to me / SDC going forward which was very kind of him.

Daviot – discussing potential school closure with various members of the community in Daviot

SSE Carol Masheter – met with Carol to find out more about SSE and how the windfarm benefits work. Also a networking opportunity.

Craft Club – attended a couple of times in January to chat to folks.

SCATA - Advised Donna on setting up a dedicated SCATA email which she did. I helped her with setting up a survey monkey to get feedback on knowledge of SCATA and what Strathnairners think.

Strathnairn Community Woodlands – I met with Davey and discussed the woodlands in general. I gave advice on volunteer recruitment, including having specific volunteer profiles. I suggested linking in with other groups in Strathnairn and also in Inverness to increase visitors to the woodlands – if a place is important to folks then they maybe more likely to volunteer to preserve or maintain it! I suggested linking with the birdwatching club in Inverness and provided a contact there.

I also explained QR codes and raised the possibility of having a printed QR code at the woodland where people could find out more and perhaps volunteer that way. I showed Davey how to generate a QR code that links to the website.

Leadership Residential – I applied for and was awarded a place on a Leadership Residential with Social Enterprise Academy which is for people working in Community Development in Highland. Hopefully I'll learn lots of things I can bring back to Strathnairn.

Stratherrick and Foyers – contacted staff there to network and learn from them, also to hopefully collaborate on projects. Meeting in Feb,

Community Café – ongoing