

Fernaig Community Trust

Minutes of Open Meeting – 13th June 2017

Achmore Hall

Present: Colin MacAndrew, Georgie Grimson, Duncan Gibson, Lizzie Bird, Kate Bulloch, Callum Bulloch, Martin & Karen Irving, Mary MacBeth, Neil MacRae

Apologies: Dave Mockett, Phil Game.

1. Colin welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that he would run through the work in progress with regard to the SDRP Footpaths project including:-
 - The application process to SDRP and consents/no objections from SEPA, Crofting Commission
 - The planning application process to Highland Council and its public notifications.
 - Sourcing a contractor for the works – Highland Conservation were appointed and their quotation was accepted by the FCT Board (Highland Conservation are very experienced having done work over many years for bodies such as FCS and SNT.)
 - Contact with SNH Rural Payments regarding the payment process. The budget for the works is protected (year end is February 2018). The FCT can submit claims when a tranche of work has been completed. Once documentation is received and checked by a case officer the money for that tranche should be in the FCT bank within ten days. Highland Conservation confirmed the tranche to be a payment half way through the project and at the end
 - Highland Conservation has given a project time of 6 to 8 weeks using their own team and working to the SDRP specifications. Their working window would be September/October this year.
2. Colin then informed the meeting that despite the success of getting the grant, the issue of VAT, circa £12K, on the total grant sum would also have to be met by the Trust. As we are a charity Colin had been in touch with various bodies for advice including the Footpath Trust, which is now defunct and called Paths for All, and had written to HMRC two weeks ago but has not heard anything back to date.
3. Colin asked those present their feelings on whether the Trust should scrap the project because of the VAT that will have to be paid. The general feeling was that the Trust would be highly unlikely to get such a grant for the footpaths in the future and to go ahead with the project and fund the VAT.
4. A discussion was had about the options open to the Trust to fund the VAT content of the quotation from Highland Conservation
 - Mary MacBeth mentioned that the now defunct Achmore & Stromeferry Community Council had funds in their account and as these were monies received from the community perhaps contacting Robbie Bain, HC Ward Manager might help.
 - Various other suggestions were made such as:-

- Public Fund raising appeal
- Events
- Sale of Trust assets
- Crowd funding
- Bank loan
- Any other sources
- Social investment programme from banks who support charities
- Sponsors
- Digital Map Sponsor

5. Members at the meeting said they would try to seek sponsors with their personal contacts but Colin will also contact banks re loans to cover the VAT element.

Colin closed the Open meeting at 9.20pm with thanks to all who attended and their support for the Trust.

Note: Following the meeting Directors briefly discussed fencing, CWA annual membership fee and co-opting a new Director. These will be brought up at the next monthly meeting on July11.