



Chair: Judith Fish

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting (AGM) of
Applecross Community Company
Applecross Hall, 31st May 2016, 7.30pm
(unapproved)**

Present: Alasdair Macleod, Marion Gilroy, Judith Fish, Alison Macleod, Elodie Matthews, Phil Buckley, Ewen Gillies, Daniel McCowan, Jon Glover, Ann Fletcher, Valerie Hodgkinson, Gordon Cameron, Thomas Kilbride, Lesley Kilbride, Nick Goldthorpe, Sean Kilbride, Alistair Bruce, Jacqueline Liuba, Owen Kilbride, Megan McInnes, Ann and Tim Daplyn, Alistair McCowan, Zuzana Vojackova (notes)

1. Welcome from Chair

Judith welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for attending. She noted apologies from Jill Olsen, Fiona MacKenzie, Roger Evans, Chris and Frankie Ward

2. Approval of minutes of previous AGM on 6th March 2015

Minutes were approved by Valerie Hodgkinson and seconded by Ann Daplyn

3. Chair's report

A short report this evening, as everyone here is well informed by our recent newsletter of the amazing achievements and successes of the Applecross Community Company this year.

These included:

- The Hydro Scheme share issue raising the required investment in less than 5 weeks, ahead of schedule;
- The petrol pumps making a profit (with the help from the successful application to receive the rural fuel rebate scheme) and selling more fuel than in any previous years;
- The toilets receive lovely comments from visitors and whilst not making a profit are covering themselves. If left in Council ownership it's almost certain they would have been closed by now;
- Time and effort being spent on making the Broadband scheme more robust. This included training on Skye late last year. In addition, the local businesses who provide 'free Broadband' to their customers have agreed to limit this usage to help protect the service for the locals who do pay to use the service!

Good news travels fast and Applecross is the talk of the Highlands with all the success of our projects. I hear comments daily from locals, visitors and visiting trades about how fortunate Applecross is to have such a great community. It is very uplifting and I am personally VERY proud. That said there have been a couple of low points throughout the year. Whilst I do not wish to dwell on these I think it is important to outline what happened to the company and what was done to resolve this. The Annual Return was not submitted to Companies House in time. As a result the company was temporarily dissolved until the matter was resolved. The Company was reinstated in early April and is back to business as usual.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise- which supports ACC with funding which allows the employment of a local development officer- suggested that in order to improve governance the directors and potential directors attend a training and action planning event. This was conducted in April and a healthy number of current and prospective Directors attended, though some were prevented by work from doing so. The content was well targeted and very well received by all attendees. The end result was a report and action plan which provides confidence and guidance for the Directors to continue being involved in the running of a successful company, run by volunteers for the benefit of the wider Applecross community, nothing else!

One point I would like to make which might not be apparent to everyone is the distinction between the ACC, Apple Juice and the Trading Company, which runs the filling station, broadband scheme and public toilets (and any other future commercial activities). The Community Company is responsible for initiating the projects which will benefit the community based on community consultation. If the result of projects are sustainable businesses then they are passed over to the trading company to operate them; it has its own Board of Directors. Any profits which are not reinvested directly into the assets are passed back to the ACC. Although the Hydro Scheme was developed by the ACC (with support from trading company income) is not now owned by the Company, as we set up Apple Juice, a Community Benefit Society to raise the finance to build it. It has its own Board of Directors (currently an interim board). It will be holding an AGM over the summer and will be recruiting directors from investors in the scheme. Profits from Apple Juice will be passed over to ACC.

We are starting to see the fruits of our labour with the ACC now employing 4 local people: Anna who looks after the toilets, Sean developing the Broadband, Zuzana who is the administrator and Alison our LDO. They all volunteer time as well so thanks must be extended to them for all their efforts. In addition all directors are volunteers and fit in meetings round busy lives.

I would like to finish by saying the ACC is in a good place and lessons have been learnt. There are exciting times ahead as decisions are made about what to spend our new Hydro funds on. Please get involved if you can. This doesn't have to be as a director, volunteers on specific projects or for specific elements on projects are also welcome!

4. Election of new directors

Owen Kilbride was proposed by Judith Fish and seconded by Megan MacInnes .
He was welcomed to the board.

Alasdair Macleod, Ewen Gillies and Jon Glover are leaving the board this year as they served the maximum 6 years and must retire for at least one year. Marion Gilroy is also leaving the board due to work and family circumstances. Thanks to all of them for their time and effort they have put in over the years.

We will be looking to co-opt further directors to add to the capacity of the board and urge members of the community to consider putting themselves forward. We are also looking for new directors for the trading company to add to those who have already agreed to join the board (Ewen Gillies, Sean KilBride and Elodie Matthews have joined existing directors Alasdair and Alison Macleod).

5. Approval of Applecross Community Company accounts

The accounts were proposed by Phil Buckley and seconded by Tim Daplyn.

6. Appointment of accountant

David Govan at Voluntary Action Lochaber has been the accountant for the last few years and does a good job at an affordable price. It was agreed to continue with David.
Proposed by Ann Fletcher and seconded by Alison Macleod.

7. AOB

Tim Daplyn queried the following statement from the Community Company website "The Applecross Community Company, in conjunction with the Community Council, has a wide remit to promote community development on the peninsula." He explained that as a new Community Councillor he was keen to understand what the relationship between the two bodies is.

It was confirmed that the statement on the website is incorrect. ACC's Articles state that the Community Council may nominate one of their members to join the ACC board, and ACC keeps the Community Council informed about what it is doing and consults on matters of joint interest, but the two bodies do not work together to promote a joint remit. The wording on the website will be amended.

Ann Fletcher asked if the Community Company has any influence on enabling the provision of a key worker house, as there is concern about availability of housing for a new teacher. This is really more within the Community Council's remit.

Megan MacInnes thanked Judith for the clear explanation of the different roles of the three organisations as it's important that this is understood by all.

Following the conclusion of formal business, Alison provided a summary of current plans and projects for ACC.

Use of Energy from the Hydro Scheme which can't be exported:

The hydro scheme generates 90kw when operating at full capacity, which it does for much of the time, but due to grid constraints only 50kw of that can be exported. So currently 40kw is going to the flower tunnel at the campsite, which is not normally heated and so is earning nothing. A private wires scheme was designed by engineers from AECOM in 2014, which would provide heat to 2 businesses and 16 houses in the vicinity of the turbine house. Our hydro engineers expressed serious concerns about how complicated this scheme would be to install and run, and have suggested a solution which would use a proportion of the energy to better purpose and be more straightforward. ACC needs to find some funding to allow the scheme to be redesigned, before applying for grant funding to install it.

Housing on land at the GP Surgery:

We are planning to build two, two bedroomed houses in the grounds of the NHS surgery, on land that was originally put aside for a house for a GP. These houses will be available to local elderly and/or disabled people. NHS Highland is supportive of the idea and ACC will be working with Dr Duffy, NHS Highland management and Highland Small Communities Housing Trust to plan the project. We will need to apply to the Scottish Land Fund for funding to firstly develop plans for the housing and then to buy the land. An application to SSE's Sustainable Development Fund for funding towards the development and build costs was successful and resulted in an award of over £56,000. The Scottish Government has a new Rural Housing Fund which we will apply to when ready.

Housing Needs Survey: We are carrying out another housing needs survey through Highland Small Community Housing Trust to update information collected by HSCHT in 2012. This is a much broader survey than the last one, which focussed on those in current housing need. The new survey is much broader and a paper copy will go to all households; there will also be an option to respond on-line. We urge everyone to respond no matter what your own situation, so we can get a full picture. If your household does not get a survey, please let us know.

Broadband:

AppleNet is currently reliant on BT connections in Skye for backhaul. Applecross is one of the communities involved in a project run by an organisation called WHAN (West Highland Access Network) and Edinburgh University which aims to provide backhaul via a leased fibre optic line in Mallaig. There has been a delay in BT providing a connection to this line. July is the date currently being mentioned but we are not particularly confident that it will happen then.

Toscaig Pier:

We are applying for funding to carry out a feasibility study on Toscaig Pier and the possibility of reinstating the ferry service to Kyle, and hope to get this underway before the end of the summer.

Meeting closed at 8.15pm