

Minutes



STEERING GROUP MEETING

7.00 pm 7th October 2011 – Blairbeg Hall, Drumnadrochit

Attendees:

Andrew & Tanya Castell, Erik Trelfer, Mary Brook, Robin Sproull and Bruce Nelson
Apologies: Neil MacInnes, Anne MacDonald, Bill McDermott, Christine Hart

Agenda topics

Minutes of Meeting 19th August 2011

Discussion: the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed. The action log was reviewed and updates added.

Current Situation

TC

Project Progress – At the meeting with Co-op Bank in early September they indicated that only one structure would potentially work. It was very useful to have the benefit of their experience and they raised some points for Soirbheas to consider such as the board composition. Agreement was reached on the company structures, roles and responsibilities. The formal structure outline was, once approved by the board and Corrimony Energy Ltd (CEL), sent to Co-op within a week of the meeting.

CES say we can go to OFGEM for a Pre-Check for the payment of ROCs on the basis of the proposed structure – Green Cat to do this (via MG) **ACTION: TC to follow up with MG regarding instructing Green Cat.**

The agreed target with CEL and the Co-op Bank is now to close funding by the year end. TC followed up with SIS about reviewing our submission (after 14th October which was the closing date for applications) and they will try to move us up the queue in view of the urgency. **ACTION: TC to ask CES how funding will be split between grant/loan.**

Big Lottery Fund phase 1 submission made 19th September and they commit to come back within 6 weeks. Phase 2 takes 6 months. Laura at CES indicated we could chase up lottery. **Action: TC to contact BLF**
We are applying to BLF for £500,000 plus £50,000 to get us through the next stage.

Finance

Financial Projections – the figures look encouraging for the community but there are many unknowns which make it hard to determine the most likely outcome. At this stage a key factor is the level of equity grant funding available to Soirbheas.

Bank Balance – Mary advised it was currently £120.38. There were some bills awaiting payment (including c.£400 for AJ Scholes for running the financial projections) when the next draw down from CES is received. An insurance renewal is also expected shortly.

VAT – Mary has been in touch with Ivan to sort out VAT application for Soirbheas Trading Ltd.

Leader – TC raised the question of sourcing funding from Leader – BN advised it involved a lot of hoops to go through, and EU was very bureaucratic, ET shared these concerns and the long tail of reporting that it involved. AF it seems had also not been keen to go there unless we had to. If we can secure sufficient funding without it, it was probably best left.

Legal Representation

Andrew

AC outlined his research. Approaches had been made to two firms – Davidson Chalmers and HBJ. The merits of each were discussed at length. The smaller firm's closer attention and lower cost was attractive, but there was a concern they might not have the depth of experience in this field that we hoped for.

ACTION: AC to ask for more information on their experience and clients they have worked for.

ACTION: TC Change CES Allocation to reflect the level of legal costs we now envisage

Community Engagement

Membership: Now at 244 members.

Newsletter – Newsletters provided to Paul for Strathglass area. Pierre Shenval, Peter MacDonald – the Dal, Neil MacInnes – Balnain. Further Community Contact Officers are required for the rest of Glen Urquhart to facilitate distribution of information. **Action: Consider how best to find CCOs.**

Website – Jim McAuley (JM) was handling the web-site work and had very kindly offered to do this on a deferred fee basis and will provide regular log of cost being incurred. MB agreed to continue to handle news items etc to be added to site. JM has added a separate reference page so that minutes etc can still be accessed but be tidied away within the site. BN offered to do a Facebook page for Soirbheas and operate **ACTION: TC to request JM invoice on work done to date. ET to provide all this year's minutes in pdf format to JM. BN: Set up Facebook page and provide details to JM for adding link**

Matters Arising and Any Other Business

Community Consultation Conference at Carnoustie – CES asked if we could provide a speaker on community engagement and AC attending

CES 2nd Annual Renewable Conference 25-26 October – TC will speak at a workshop event on the training day, 26/10, and volunteers asked for 25/10 as we have a free place given TC's participation.

TC noted that she had been advised that the Drumnadrochit chamber had indicated that in their view improvement of broadband in the Glen and road safety should be priorities for Soirbheas.

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS: Steering Group Meeting Thursday 27th October 2011 – Cannich Hall. Directors Thursday 24th November – Venue TBA

Chairman:

Tanya Castell

Clerk to the Board:

Erik Trelfer

Date: