

# Minutes

## STEERING GROUP MEETING



7.30 pm 21st December 2011 – Balnain Hall, Balnain

### Attendees:

Andrew & Tanya Castell, Erik Trelfer, Mary Brook, Robin Sproull, Anne MacDonald, Mike Girvan, Mhairi Gordon, Pierre Lebrun, Francis Jones and Norman Ross (as observer) **Apologies:** Neil MacInnes, Bruce Nelson, Bill McDermott, & Peter MacDonald

## Agenda topics

### Minutes of Meeting 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011

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

#### Current Situation

MG

**Project Progress** –MG outlined the progress: Mike reported last time that the Co-op Bank loan had now been approved by the Preliminary Committee. No questions have come back from the final approval committee – but he thinks it may not have gone forward to them yet due to pressures on other projects. Chris Rodgers is chasing up.

Way-leave agreements have all been sent out. The RSPB lease is still awaited – BP have to sign off on the agreement. Although Mike had alerted them prior to the documents going to them, this did not seem to get any urgent attention and the key person is apparently away on holiday. Construction cannot start until finance is in place and the leases signed. The road through the RSPB reserve cannot be completed before February so will now have to be done in September instead.

Negotiations with contractors are going well and keen quotations have been received – hopefully this will result in some reasonably substantial savings on budgeted figures. Mike has negotiated a free first year's cover on the Enercon EPK agreement.

Query raised as to what will happen if the Euro collapses as turbine contract is in Euros. If Germany go back to the Mark the relative cost will most likely increase sharply (as the Mark is likely to remain a very strong currency) whereas the Euro is currently weak and continuing to weaken as the EU financial turmoil continues. This will be added to the risk register.

#### Finance

TC

**Social Investment Scotland (SIS)** – our application for funding has been approved at the figures we discussed (subject to due diligence, satisfactory documentation etc). They have issued their high level Terms & Conditions which have been circulated to the Board. The Community Project is now financially viable (though debt levels will be high), assuming the Coop Bank debt approval is received, and the community will then participate in the windfarm as planned. It needs to be clarified exactly when the conditions precedent for the money need to be met. **Action: AC/TC clarify legal process**

**Inner Moray Firth (IMF)**– A lot of information was requested but this has now all been submitted

**Ward Discretionary Fund** – application was made and written response received that they would not be providing funding. This seems inexplicable given that it was Councillor Davidson's invitation that we apply. We understand she was away at the time the other ward councillors made this decision. AM is writing to ask for some feed-back on the decision. **Action: AM to clarify rationale**

**Leader** – an off-cycle application would not be accepted. Next round will be March (though the deadline for submission is end of January) which could be too late (as funding will not be approved towards the build if

construction has already started). However the question was whether a later cost of the project could be separated out for Leader funding. **Action: AM to investigate whether part of the project could be Leader funded**

**Highland Opportunities** – this is a small business loan (5% interest) from local authority. However the amounts were small (up to £5,000). It was decided not to pursue this yet. This may have Leader money within it so will need to be aware if Soirbheas submit a formal Leader application.

**CARES – Community & Renewable Energy Loan** – for project development only (not capital costs) - to be considered depending on what other funding is available. Interest rate is 10% so it is expensive funding. However it would have to be spent by March 2012 – it will depend on whether IMF funding is received probably. Community Energy Scotland (CES) had asked for a time line for the use of the remaining CRESF funds and had indicated it had to be used by the end of March which was news. **TC to suggest a time-line for CES once the Coop Bank approval had been received. AM to confirm the time-line for use of the CRESF funds.**

**SCVO** – funding via Preference shares – TC was waiting for CES to revert **ACTION: TC- SCVO and CARES follow up if necessary.**

**Private Donations** – Draft letter produced by AC. Options to donate or subscribe to Debentures which are very tax efficient for us and the donor. **ACTION: AM and MB Compile lists of names and addresses and send letters in January.**

**Bank Balance** – Mary advised CES drawdown now received and balance was currently £1,063.36 before payment of outstanding invoices.

**VAT** – Scholes charges seemed reasonable and it was agreed they should undertake the VAT re-claim for us. **ACTION: MB to liaise with AJ Scholes on this.**

#### Legal Representation

AC

Davidson Chalmers have flagged some issues that need to be resolved in the share infrastructure agreement with Corrimony Energy Ltd (CEL) – it was felt we needed to discuss these with MG first so that we can have agreement between ourselves before involving the lawyers. In that way we hope to direct the lawyers work rather than have them all pulling in different directions. **ACTION: Board and MG to meet at HIE on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2.00pm**

#### Community Engagement

**Membership:** 258 members.

**Events:** Involvement of the local schools suggested with the planting of a time capsule at the turbine site and Naming the Turbine. The Second Newsletter to be prepared in the New Year once financial close had been achieved.

**Website** – ET has supplied minutes for all 2011 meetings in pdf format. Some further minutes from 2010 also need to be added ET to work on this. TC would be working with Jim on improvements to website though the priority had to be to focus on the financial close.

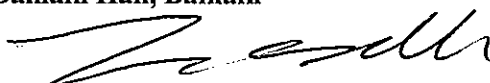
#### Matters Arising and Any Other Business

Norman Ross attended as an observer and possible applicant for ST director. Norman has an accountant background and is finance director of Highlands Airport. **ACTION: NR asked to supply a summary of c.v.**

#### DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS:

Steering Group Meeting Friday 13th January 2012 –7.30pm – Blairbeg Hall, Drumnadrochit & Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30 pm – Balnain Hall, Balnain

**Chairman:**



Tanya Castell

**Clerk to the Board:**

Erik Trelfer

**Date:**