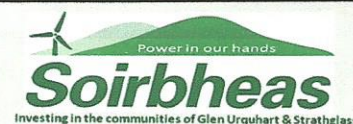


Minutes



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Balnain Hall, Balnain at 7.30 pm on

Thursday 18th June 2015

Directors

Present:

Tanya Castell (TC); Russell Fraser (RF); Suzanne Irvine (SI); Alan James (AJ), Erik Trelfer (ET), Louise MacDonald (LM), and Edward Redmond (ER).

Other Members present

Andrew, Castell (AC - director of Soirbheas Trading Ltd) Jim Barr (director Soirbheas Trading Ltd), Anne MacDonald (AM), Christine Hart, Neil MacInnes, Jenny Stirling, John Duncan, Pam Lucas,

In attendance:

Carol Masheter (CM), Mike Girvan (MG) Clare Dixon-Carter

Apologies:

Julie Parsons (JP), Donna Green (DG) Heather Redmond, Margaret Crichton, Ian Mure, Liz McAuley, Peter MacDonald

Minutes of Previous AGM: Thursday 26th June 2014 having been proposed for approval by TC and seconded by RF were approved by the meeting and signed.

SOIRBHEAS REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR

New Chairman Alan James opened the meeting with a short introduction and outlined the hard work that the Soirbheas team had put in over the last year to put some £25,000 of investment into the community. Groups who had benefitted ranged from the Drumnadrochit Piping Society to solar panels on the roof of the hall at Cannich, hanging flower baskets at Strathglass, a Christmas meal for the elderly at Cannich, Great Glen Outdoor Club – a full list of grants and recipients could be viewed on the Soirbheas web-site.

Carol Masheter the Community Development Officer had been kept very busy with a whole load of other projects such as the Home Energy Scotland energy saving visits to help reduce people's energy bills, IT training for the community, Broad Band roll out. Broadband has turned into a long haul project as we now have to wait for BT to detail how far the roll out of broadband will go as only then will we know what additional facility will be needed and how best to connect those left out by BT. Carol has worked hard running a series of focus groups to establish the needs of the vulnerable and elderly in the community and how best to go about supporting and meeting those needs. The Tattie Project has also captured the imagination and provided some fun and a great deal of interest – Alan commented his own potatoes were now through the ground and he was looking forward to harvesting two tons of them!

There have been a number of other renewable projects both micro hydro and wind and Soirbheas continues to keep tabs on all these to try and negotiate the best benefits we can for the community.

He had been impressed by the very experienced people on the board which is drawn from all walks of life and a whole range of different talents. Unlike most charities though, Soirbheas' primary source of funds is currently from a single source, Corrimony Energy's wind-farm and our main risk is how hard the wind blows. He was pleased to have Mike Girvan here (who had travelled from Orkney to be with us) and he then handed over to Mike to deliver his report on the year at the wind-farm.

CORRIMONY ENERGY (CEL) REPORT: MG outlined how the project was doing – electricity production had started in March 2013 and it had been a steep learning curve for the company since then. Last summer had severely tested him as what was a good summer for most folk meant the wind dropped right away and electricity generation slumped. Production was only 27,500 MWH compared with the 31,733 in the first year. P50 is the predicted figure of wind and how much will be generated from it. P90 is the figures that banks base their lending on, this being 10% less than the P50 figures. With a poor year for winds last year, it resulted in the wind-farm only achieving 89% of the P90 projected figures. A minimum production of 30,000 MWH is needed to meet all the loan and running costs, hence the very anxious time CEL had experienced worrying about meeting their costs.

Rather like a home mortgage, the bank pitches repayments at a level not too heavy in the first couple of years but

those re-payments are due to step up from this coming year. MG hoped they would be able to hold the payments to Soirbheas at the same level as last year. Things should then be static for the next couple of years but should eventually move up to some really significant payments to Soirbheas after that as the bank loans were paid down.

He felt that the wind-farm running costs had settled down now and with two years' experience behind them, felt they were more predictable now. One of the problems they had encountered had been with the SCADA electronic monitoring system. If there is any problem with the operation of the turbines Enercon come out from Inverness straightaway to fix them. However, when it is the SCADA system itself that goes down, monitoring is blinded and no-one can see what is going on with the turbines. This had occurred and resulted in some loss of generation for a time, but hopefully the problem had been resolved by fixing the signalling dish at a lower level where it will be less exposed to becoming damaged by the wind and weather. In all 10 days production had been lost amounting to around £50,000 although £30,000 of this had been recovered from insurance. Had the SCADA not been down the problem with the turbines would have been picked up much sooner and repairs effected straight away.

Snow had also been a problem as it made the access road difficult to negotiate. Health & Safety issues mean that under icy conditions, repair crews are not allowed out to the site even using 4 wheel drive vehicles (the argument being that in event of injury to the crew an ambulance could not reach them as they are not 4wd). CEL will be purchasing gritters and equipment to improve winter access this year.

The other problem encountered was power outages on the grid. Each time the power came back on they sustained damage to turbine electronics probably from a power spike. More analysis is going on to find the cause. Damage by power spikes should be prevented by the equipment so the fault needs to be found and rectified.

When the wind-farm was built it had capacity to generate 11 MW but the local grid capacity available was only 9.95 MW. CEL have applied for more capacity which should be available with the Beaulieu-Denny line and with that extra capacity production in real terms should be boosted by around 100,000 KWH.

FINANCIAL REPORT

AJ commented on the huge amount of effort put in by the Treasurer DG in compiling all the figures, management accounts, cash flows and budget reports. Unfortunately she could not be here today but she was thanked for all her time and effort on this and of course in the production of the Annual Report and Accounts. Copies of the year end report and accounts were made available for members (and will be placed on the web-site for viewing).

AGM FORMAL PROCEEDINGS

A total of 6 postal voting forms had been received from members prior to the meeting.

1) Under OSCR regulation the responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts rests with the Board of Trustees/Directors who have approved and signed off the report and accounts and the meeting was invited to endorse this - proposed by Andrew Castell and seconded by Anne MacDonald.

ELECTIONS TO THE BOARD

2) The appointment of Jim Barr as a director of Soirbheas Trading Ltd was announced.

3) Under the constitution, each year one third of the Soirbheas Board must stand down by rotation but may offer themselves for re-election (always provided no more than 6 consecutive years are served). Appointments to the board made during the year by co-option to the Board must be ratified by members at the AGM. There were no new co-opted appointments during this period. Those standing down by rotation this year are Julie Parsons, Tanya Castell and Erik Trelfer. All bar Erik Trelfer were willing to offer themselves for re-election for a further term. Erik Trelfer having now served 6 consecutive years was not eligible for re-election this year.

2 Re-election of Julie Parsons— nominated by Christine Hart and seconded by Ann MacDonald

3 Re-election of Tanya Castell – nominated by Alan James seconded by Edward Redmond

After each motion a vote was taken by show of hands (and including the postal votes) and each motion was passed almost unanimously.

ET was thanked for his long service on the Board and presented with a squirrel and pine marten proof bird feeder and some vouchers for the purchase of bird feed. Although ET had stepped down as a Director, he had agreed to continue in a non-director capacity as Clerk to the Board/Company Secretary. AJ advised that additional directors

were needed to ensure Soirbheas could be well run into the future and volunteers were welcome. Anyone interested or thinking about becoming a Soirbheas director could speak with any of the Soirbheas directors initially to find out more. Previous experience is not necessary as part of the Soirbheas objectives are to help train members of the community in order to have a pool of people equipped with the skills to operate, manage and run community companies and organisations.

QUESTIONS

There being no further business Alan James invited any questions from members.

Q1 Jenny Stirling enquired if repeat grants were being made to the same groups.

Answer: Rules have been outlined in the grant guidelines (see web-site). Specifically, a Tier 1 grant is a maximum of £500 and up to two applications from the same group can be made per year (subject to a maximum of £1000 per group per year). For Tier 2, only one application per group per year can be made. In the grant guidelines and in the grant award letter provided to successful applicants it is stated that 'Soirbheas has a restricted grant budget and seeks to deploy this to deliver the optimum benefit across the widest range of community activity that might be eligible for funding. This means that we may not be able to repeat fund groups applying for ongoing or recurring projects/activity'

Q2 Christine Hart asked about grant funding for restoration of St Ninian's church building which she had heard would not be supported by Soirbheas?

Answer: When the founding group set up Soirbheas, the scope of funding support was discussed at length as the importance of taking a balanced and fair view about what projects to fund was always going to be a sensitive issue. The desire was to do things that would draw the community together and avoid anything that might be divisive. The range of acceptable projects and activities was very widely drawn and the only two things that were totally to be excluded were political and religious activities. These two activities by definition would not be inclusive of the whole community and supporting one or other political group or religious denomination would lead to dissatisfaction from those whose loyalties lay elsewhere. Sadly, in these times there may even be a majority of the community with no religious affiliation at all. This would not prevent Soirbheas supporting a church group on a specific project though, so long as the activity was not a purely religious one - for example if a church decided to run a Youth Café open to all, a youth club or a Lunch Club or other similar facility where the activity was not primarily for religious purposes and would be of benefit to the community generally.

Chair:

Clerk to the Board:

Date: 3/6/2016

Alan James

Erik Trelfer