

Minutes



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 8.00pm 23th June 2011 – BALNAIN HALL, GLENURQUHART

Attendees:

Directors: Anne MacDonald, Mary Brook, Andrew & Tanya Castell & Erik Trelfer. Apologies were received from Sandra Bardwell & Hal Skinner

The Annual General Meeting was attended by 16 members (in addition to the Board) and Councillor Margaret Davidson.

Andrew Castell opened the meeting and welcomed the Members. He directed members to the copies of the Report and Accounts and minutes for the last meeting which were available for inspection in the display area by the entrance doors and advised they were also available for viewing on our website www.soirbheas.org.

AGENDA ITEMS:

In accordance with the Articles of Association, one third of the directors must stand down but may offer themselves for re-election. Anne MacDonald had elected to stand down this year and offered herself for re-election. She was proposed by Peter MacDonald and Seconded by Kate McKinley and re-elected on a show of hands.

During the year Tanya Castell had been co-opted to join the Board and ratification of her appointment was given on a show of hands.

One proxy vote had been exercised and was taken into consideration in the voting.

Andrew concluded by advising that more directors were needed and also more members.

PROGRESS SUMMARY

Anne MacDonald summarised progress over the past year – the Steering Group met on 7 occasions and there were also 3 formal meetings of directors and a couple of meetings between directors and others such as the bank and accountants. Membership had just topped 100 now but more are needed.

The company had now paid the buy in fee to Corrimony Energy (covering our share of the costs for the project work to date e.g. wind monitoring, bird and small mammal surveys and the plethora of information required for the planning application). Planning Consent has been obtained. We had hoped to hear regarding the Grid Connection last week but it has not materialised yet.

We are now working to a target possibly as early as April 2013 for the turbine to be up and running. This is earlier than originally planned but has been advanced due to a forthcoming review of ROCS which could affect the project if it is not completed by then.

Following meetings with Co-op Bank they confirm they are still interested in funding us. We hope to fund 20% with grant and the balance by loans.

Our initial application to Big Lottery Fund (BLF) was turned down but they have left the door open to re-apply. The application failed because we have not met all the requirements – we need to refine our outcomes and make them more focused. We have not had enough community engagement, they want us to substantially increase our membership. Please spread the word and actively encourage folk to join. We also need help to sort out what projects are to be funded to meet the BLF outcomes.

SURVEY RESULTS

Tanya Castell then gave the results from the On-Line survey and drop-in meetings. We received 29 votes in all in the on-line survey. The first question covered a phrase that would encapsulate what we do – ‘Power in our hands’ was the one receiving most points.

The second question related to the key outcomes people wanted to see from the revenue generated from our project . These in order of popularity were:

Energy efficiency for homes – help with insulation etc

Better Broadband connection

More renewable energy schemes

Improvement/provision of sheltered housing and care services

Sports facilities

Tanya outlined the Board's hope to encourage involvement by young people and mentioned the recent visit to the High School by Community Energy Scotland who provided a Science Technology Engineering and Maths based interactive session made relevant to our community turbine project.

We are looking for someone to help with posting things to our web-site and someone with desk top publishing skills – let us know if you can help or know of anyone so we can ask them to help. We also need ideas on how to engage with the community and we would be pleased to hear from anyone willing to help with this. To this end Tanya would be meeting with the Cannich Youth Club and doing door to door visits to tell people about the project and ask them to join. All members were asked to spread the word themselves and encourage folk to join.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The opportunity was provided for members to ask the Board questions and some of these are recorded below:

Kate McKinley advised that the collaboration between the communities had been valuable and the spin off into other projects and community groups.

Steven Watson (CES) stated that we were 'on the crest of a wave' with this project. It is unique and a lot of folk are watching us to see how we do. There will be a lot of interest when it is demonstrated to have worked and other communities will want to adopt the ideas. Dr Colin Anderson (Perth) is available to us to give independent advice and he recommends that we get him fully involved. Anne explained that he is an independent consultant and he will do a feasibility study to help us ensure that the project is sound.

Neil MacInnes asked where we are with the finance. Andrew Castell quoting Donald Rumsfeld explained there were still some unknowns and two very material unknowns so we cannot firm up meaningful figures yet.

It was asked how long we have monitored the wind speed and what strength was it? It had been monitored over a period of 2 years and there were 18 months hard data which indicate 8.81mps – which is considered to be very good.

It was advised that the decision had now been made to proceed owning our own turbine (rather than having a 20% stake in the whole development) – this was the preference of CEL.

A question was asked about community interest in the project. This could be better. Tanya outlined the drop in meetings that had been held to date and the relatively small response. It was felt that big wind farm developments may be putting people off. We need to make the distinction between the large developments owned outwith the community and this small one with a direct community stake. Steven (CES) commented that whereas once opinion was clear cut and people were firmly for or against wind-farms, now there is a more subtle slant and folk are weighing up whether a development is going to benefit them.

Asked if we would have a stand at the Highland Games again this year, it was confirmed plans were already in hand for this and we would make more use of the opportunity this time in order to raise our profile and increase membership.

It was advised that we were also planning to issue regular newsletters – two or three times a year.

The formal business was concluded and Andrew invited people to stay for informal discussions. The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Chairman:

Anne MacDonald

Clerk to the Board:

Erik Trelfer

Date: