

**MINUTES****DIRECTORS BOARD MEETING**

**Held at Balnain Hall at 7.30 pm on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Directors Present	Jimmy Murray (JPM), Malcolm Wield (MW), Jennifer Service (JS) (online), David Cooper (DC), Alison Strange (AS)
Also Attending:	Erik Trelfer (ET), Tina Morrow (TM), Kara Scott (KS), Aron Raynor (AR)
Apologies:	Arlene Johnstone (AJ)

JPM opened the meeting. Aron Raynor, who is interested in becoming a Soirbheas Director, introduced himself. The meeting was quorate and the minutes of the last meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023, which had been previously circulated to the board were formally proposed by **MW and ET**. The signed minutes to be forwarded to KS. **Action – ET & JPM to sign and send to KS, KS to add to website.**

**New Conflicts of Interest:** None

**Matters Arising / Actions:**

**Action Log Review**

**198** – Contingency planning – Directors - ongoing. Interest from one person based in Drumnadrochit who joined the Board meeting. **Action** – All to maintain efforts to attract new directors and succession plan. KS to put ongoing spotlight articles on social media and in the newsletter.

**206** – Budget – Budget reviewed in November 2023. **Action** - Will be reviewed/revised as necessary as part of the business plan review.

**215** – Business Planning and Community Action Plans – ongoing. Strathglass – Awaiting further information from SACC. GU CAP is regularly reviewed, and actions updated by the implementation group comprised of the Community Council, GURCA and Loch Ness Hub. Soirbheas Business Plan – three-year business plan needs to be reviewed and updated. **Action** - CDM is currently looking at the business plans of other fund-giving organisations before undertaking a refresh of Soirbheas plan. CDM will share a draft with the Board for feedback.

**225** - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension – ongoing. Permission granted. Awaiting update on initial community benefit proposal pending project final investment decision in December 2024.

**227** - Policy reviews – ongoing –Review began in April 2023 by KS and TM. Lone working, annual leave, absence, sickness, disciplinary and grievance, confidentiality, cyber security, complaints. **Action** - Reviews are ongoing, there has been some slippage, but review should be completed by mid-2024.

**228** - Loch Liath Windfarm – ongoing. Update – proposal has reduced from 26 - 13 turbines (200m to tip) proposed location site Balmacaan Forest. Potential community benefit Funds at £5,000 per MW as a guide this is around £25,000 per turbine per year, over the operating period of the wind farm. All has been submitted to planning. Recent engagement online of sight broadband feasibility commissioned by developer. Feasibility study commissioned by the developer is ongoing, with input from GUCC and Soirbheas around access to broadband across the area. CDM met with the developer and their consultant in December 23. Consultant currently drawing up plan of area. **Action** – The Working Group has a meeting with Scottish Government week commencing 4th March 2024. JPM seeking uplift to promoted community benefit figure from Scottish Government.



**229** - Chrathaich Windfarm – Muirden/Corrimony –ongoing. Update – Planning application submitted in July 2023. Notification of proposed 13 wind turbines (180m to tip) capacity of up to 70MW (5mw each). Chrathaich Windfarm - Muirden Energy project in partnership with the Girvan's at Corrimony. <https://www.chrathaichwindfarm.co.uk/our-proposal>. Community benefit offering £5k mw.

**231** – Walking and Paths development – ongoing. Update in strategic initiatives.

**238** – Care at Home Services – ongoing. Update in strategic initiatives.

**240** - Cyberinsurance – ongoing. **Action** - CDM and ACDO have sourced free cyber security training.

**241** – Working Group on Grants – ongoing. After discussion at the November meeting the Board agreed to increase the maximum award under a Tier 2 grant to £20,000, to consider salary costs under Tier 2 and to consider a two-year Tier 2 award. The amount reserved for Tier 2 grants was also increased from £40,000 pa to £80,000 pa to support the changes to the funding. **Action** – KS implementing changes to documents in March 2024.

**242** – Befriending – ongoing. Update in strategic initiatives.

**243** – Community Larder – ongoing. Update in strategic initiatives.

**245** – Bank interest – ongoing. It was agreed to do some investigation into bank accounts that offered more interest than the current Soirbheas accounts offer. **Action** – CDM to investigate.

**245** - Community Information Days – end October. In September/October Soirbheas held two community information mornings in Cannich and Drumnadrochit. Both mornings offered the opportunity for community groups to come along and meet each other and the public. Both events were well attended by groups and had members of the public attending. **Action** - KS currently collating feedback from the groups who attended and will look at how Soirbheas will develop the community information mornings in the future.

**Director Hours:** JPM (10) ET (8) MW (6) DC (4) JS (6) AJ (0) AS (8) **Total: 42**

\*\*\*\*\***FINANCE**\*\*\*\*\*

**Treasurers Report –**

The report covers the current financial situation between the end of October 2023 and end December 2023.

There was no cash movement in the period (Soirbheas Trading) leaving bank balance as at 31 December 2023 of £47k (STL).

The cash surplus for the period is (£27.8k) (Soirbheas), leaving bank balances at 31 December 2023 of Soirbheas totalling £382k. Total bank balance at 31 December 2023 is £429k.

\*\*\*\*\***OPERATIONAL REPORT**\*\*\*\*\*

- **Grant Report update – for information – from beginning October to the end of December 2023**
- Total Awarded - £60,200
- Tier 1's – awarded £1000 to SACC for equipment for National Park consultation. Three expressions of interest for a second Balnain site valuation, pickleball startup and school education sessions.
- Tier 2's – awarded £10,000 to Glen Urquhart Childcare Centre to provide a childcare provision Wishlist for the centre. Nine grant interests, including Balnain site refurbishment, football club

costs, phase 2 of the Cluster Facilitator, upgrading Cannich playpark, e-bike upgrades, horse riding for disadvantaged children, hall acoustics, a polycrub, and swimming lesson transport.

- Tier 3's – awarded £28,950 to Glen Urquhart Centre towards the centre refurbishment. GURCA have been invited to full application for their Hall refurbishment.
- Apprenticeships –awarded £20,250 to Loch Ness Hotels for a Hospitality Management apprentice. Interest from two more organisations.

\*\*\*\*\*STRATEGIC REPORT\*\*\*\*\*

#### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- **Befriending** – Currently providing Befriending support to six people, two are waiting to be matched, one is awaiting assessment, and one is on hold. Currently have six active volunteers, one in training and one awaiting a match. **Action** - SS and CDM are exploring other opportunities for befriending, particularly in a group format. SS is speaking with the Manager of Scotmid, about organising an event at Scotmid.
- **Sunflower Homecare** - The service has been in operation for six months. At the beginning of February, the service was providing 46 hours of care per week to 8 service users. There are six staff members, four permanent staff and two bank staff, as well as a Co-ordinator. Staff recruitment is ongoing, and the current focus is to take on more bank staff to ensure cover is available when necessary. **Action** - Soirbheas will support Sunflower Homecare to run recruitment sessions.
- **Trail Development** - Historic Environment awarded £15,700 to develop Heritage Trails. HES has extended the delivery period until the end of May 2024 to enable us to deliver on the project. Glen Urquhart Heritage Trail is well under development. Advertisement consent applications have been submitted to Highland Council and two have been approved. All design work for the signs has been completed, with some adjustments to be made. A website for the Trail is under development. Strathglass Heritage Trail has received landowner consent for all proposed locations. ACDO is to witness signed documents then begin the advertisement consent process. Costs are projected to go over budget and Soirbheas was requested to contribute an additional £1,000 per area (Glen Urquhart & Strathglass) to cover unforeseen costs. The request was approved. **Actions** – KS to continue overseeing project.
- **Community Larder** - The larder is functioning well, supported by regular donations from the community, Soirbheas, FareShare and Scotmid. Soirbheas are seeking a Lead Volunteer to help manage the 6 volunteers, assist with rota's and topping up the larder. Soirbheas received £1,500 from Scotmid towards purchasing a bigger community larder which may feature a community fridge. ET confirms space can be used in the Glen Urquhart Church grounds. **Action** – KS to research and plan for new larder purchase and installation, and feedback details to the Board.

#### CORRESPONDENCE - none

#### Matters Arising and Any Other Business:

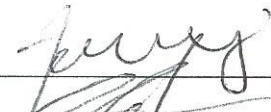
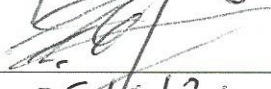
- **Confidential Shredding** – CDM asked the Board if anyone would like documents to be confidentially shredded and she will collect and dispose of at Ord Storage Solutions Ltd.



- **Tattie Day** - Happening on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 10am until 12.30pm. Will be joined by Glen Urquhart Farming Cluster who will be hosting a community food market, and Glen Urquhart Men's Shed who will be selling growing goods.

**Next Meeting:**

- Directors Meeting 7.30pm Thursday 28th March 2024 at Balnain Hall
- Board Meeting 7:30pm Thursday 25th April 2024 at Balnain Hall

Chairman:		James Murray
Clerk to Board:		Erik Trelfer
Date:	28/4/24	