

Minutes of Development Coll (DC) meeting held at An Cridhe on 15th August 2012

1. Present: Directors Seonaid Maclean-Bristol (Chair), Di McDonnell, John Wheeler-James, John Fraser, Lavinia Maclean-Bristol (Treasurer) and Colin Scott: also present Fra MacIntyre (book keeper) and George McConnachie as Business Development Officer (BDO). Emma Grant (An Cridhe Project Manager) for point 10 only
2. There were 10 members of the public also there.
3. No Directors registered an interest in the proceedings and the meeting began. The Minutes of the meeting on 4th July were agreed and signed off.
4. Company business: this has now entered a new phase since An Cridhe is up and running, and there is a real need for Directors to take on more active roles. Romaine Wainwright has resigned as Company Secretary and Director, and Di McDonnell is leaving the island in September for good and so has also resigned as a Director. The Chair suggested there should be both Chair and Vice Chair, and a vice Company Secretary in addition. Three Directors have not attended meetings at all or for some time which is disappointing. The last 6 months has seen an increase in workload for the Chair and it is vital to share that workload in the future. Di McDonnell suggested that under other circumstances there should be a full time salaried manager for Development Coll which would take off a great deal of the burden from the Chair. The Chair invited more people specifically to become Directors and thus spread the work around, and it was felt that the AGM provided a useful target to work towards appointing new directors and allowing others to stand down. Directors were encouraged to consider the roles as suggested in advance on the next meeting.
5. Business Development: George then gave his report, briefly summed up as Annex A. A subject discussed at length was the grant application for harbour improvements, and a decision will be made at the end of September as to whether the money is forthcoming. We have done exceptionally well to get as far as we have, and George was particularly disappointed to receive and read out a letter from some of those who had attended an informal meeting, suggesting that they wished to have no involvement from DC. He pointed out that not only had he done a great deal of work himself already putting in for the grant, but also changing the grant application in this way would invalidate the whole process, and the funding would be lost.
6. The idea that any profit from this scheme would go into general funding for DC was entirely inaccurate: this would be restricted funding and could only be used for the harbour enhancement. The minute taker was asked particularly to record that 'those involved should make sure that the remainder of those who attended an exploratory meeting were aware that the project will be shelved if they don't use Development Coll as the vehicle for their grant'. Fra pointed out the enormous amount of work required to set up an entirely independent group, with a constitution, bank account, officials etc without the benefit of a project officer who already has the expertise required to put in grant applications.

7. After discussion from the floor George said he would call the group together again, explain the funding situation, and see if this whole harbour improvement grant application should go ahead. From the floor it was suggested that the harbour improvement should include clearing up the general appearance of the village, and much of this could be done by voluntary labour.
8. Other items discussed included the fact that an official from Dark Sky Scotland was coming out from 10-12 September to explain to local businesses how to use this scheme for their benefit. The Astronomer Royal for Scotland wants to visit Coll for the same purpose. It was pointed out that Sark is currently the only island in the world to have Dark Sky status, and it could be a real accolade for Coll and should boost tourism.
9. Business Gateway will be doing a two day marketing workshop to help local small businesses, if enough people would like to attend. They talk of 6-8 people needed. George will pursue this.
10. An Cridhe: Emma Grant then attended the meeting. Her contracted hours reduce dramatically very shortly, and she will be concentrating on giving reports to funders and supporters as well as overseeing the snagging list. There is a final bill still to be received from TSL, but both she and Fra are very hard pressed at present as they missed out on three months of administration before the Centre opened, because TSL did not hand over the building as early as hoped.
11. Management Committee: John Wheeler-James reported on the work of the Management Committee, which everyone agreed was doing an extremely good job. (Minutes available separately)
12. Accountant: she is coming out on the 27th August and hopes to have the 2011/2012 accounts in draft form, ready for the AGM in probably October. The Opening accounts are still very much in draft form and Fra will report asap.
13. Marathon: Fra reported that the group running the Half Marathon does not wish to become an autonomous organisation but remain an affiliated working group within the DC umbrella. Fra is looking into this and will send a draft around the Directors of the appropriate MO.
14. All business having been concluded the meeting terminated at 10. pm.