

Development Coll

MINUTES

Meeting held on 9th June 2014 at 6.00pm

(closed meeting to discuss mobile phone mast)

Present: Lavinia Maclean Bristol (Chairman),
John Fraser,
Nic Smith,
George McConnachie
Huw Roberts

Apologies Juliette Summers
Jen Royston

Declaration of interest: Seonaid Maclean Bristol

The decision to go ahead with the project was taken at the end and passed unanimously, after considerable discussion. There were three scenarios to consider:

- a. If we did nothing, did not sign any lease and aborted the whole project. This would mean handing back £K165 to the Scottish Government and covering any expenses ourselves from DC funds. These were estimated to be around £K9, including George's time already to date, and fees from our lawyers and Seonaid's lawyers.
- b. If we signed the lease and then did not go ahead, the expenses would be the same.
- c. If we signed the lease and then went ahead, we could be as much as £K10 down, but we would have a mast which we could then use to defray the costs.

It was decided that **Point c** was the one we should follow. There was however misgivings from Nic about the advisability about going ahead, and a general feel that there was important lessons to learn. These could be sorted out at a later date when the project was further ahead.

In the meantime LMB was asked to go ahead and let everyone know the position. She talked to Seonaid after the meeting and went through the relevant points with her. It was plain that if Seonaid could have been more involved as a Director and not as the mast owner, communications would have been more clear and a easier. However governance dictated she should declare an interest and not be present at meetings until the leases were all signed.

Defraying the potential £K10 deficit:

A large amount of the deficit is caused by the VAT: it was not realised until after the budget was produced that DC could not get the VAT back unless it could be proved that DC was getting money in. The accountants suggested that we should be looking for about £5,000 plus VAT to prove that this was a commercial venture and then we could hope to get the VAT back.

LMB had talked to Robert Sturgeon about getting another company to piggyback on the mast. He suggested EE and then began to think of marine commercial companies which could be interested. He said he would help with ideas and drafting an email to them all. LMB accepted this gratefully, and at the meeting suggested that this could be something best done by George during his one day

a week being paid for out of the administrative fee from the SG. Robert would need the spec for the mast: John Fraser has one.

ACTION: LMB to talk to Robert: John to email the spec to Robert (Robert.sturgeon@gmail.com)

We discussed what the market payment value would be for such a mast, a figure we would need to know when we were approaching third parties.

ACTION: Derek to advise.

Huw asked how far back can we roll the VAT?

ACTION: LMB to talk to Fra or to the accountants.

Defraying the island costs of installing the mast:

John said that he thought we could save a lot of money if he could know how much kit needed to come to the island. LMB had talked to Derek about this, who talked about an artic being needed. John was surprised as he has knowledge of getting his turbines to the island for a very low price, as an artic cost cost £1,000. He will talk to MacMotors about how to do this once he knows what is involved.

ACTION: LMB to find out an email address from Derek for who is responsible for getting the mast to Coll, to pass to John who will investigate.

Accommodation, excavation costs etc.

Once we have dates we can do something about this, but we need to know as soon as possible because the bunkhouse could be full. It is possible that Project Trust might have accommodation available at low cost, but again, we need to know. Getting excavation could be done on the island at cost.

ACTION: Derek to liaise with whoever is doing the work and get dates to us soonest.

Exterior fundraising:

This is something George could undertake, investigating who might possibly be able to help. HIE has already been approached and would not help with cash. It is difficult for DC to know what could be fundraised for, and George should liaise with Derek.

ACTION: George to speak to Derek.

Lawyers' fees:

There was much discussion about whether or not we could get these down in any way. Brodies have already lowered their fees considerably and have capped them at £5,400 inc VAT. Johnny could be approached to ask, in the nicest possible way, if he felt able to lower his fees any more. No more could be done other than this, but it was felt that this was a lesson which has to be learnt for the future. Cornerstone's lawyers had increased Brodies' fees by bringing up various matters after the whole issue seemed to have been sorted out, but it was not felt that DC could do anything about this.

ACTION: LMB to approach Johnny most tentatively to ask about fees as no one seemed to know whether his fees had been capped and what they had been capped at.

Electricity costs:

We already have pledges from Argyll & Bute, NHS, Huw (a personal pledge of £10 a month) and Project Trust. We need more. We talked about Cal Mac using the mast for their own communication system, John to approach them. Huw will be trying Scottish Water again, with advice from Olvin. John is still trying Fire & Rescue.

ACTION: John for Cal Mac and Fire & Rescue, and Huw for Scottish Water.

Leases

We went through the various points which had been emailed to us by Johnny and felt OK with them all, having noted what we have to do. LMB was instructed to ask Johnny to get the leases ready for signing etc.

Seonaid had already asked us to consider several points, most of which were covered by Johnny, which we did. After the meeting LMB went through them with Seonaid.

ACTION: LMB to get in touch with Johnny to tell him to go ahead with preparing leases to be signed.