MINUTES

Point and Sandwick Development Trust

5.30pm 14 October 2014 at Café Roo

Present: Duncan Mackay, Kenny Dan Macdonald, Andrew Mackenzie, David Taylor, Liz Chaplin, Eddie MacGregor, Donald MacRitchie, DJ MacSween (General Manager), Calum MacDonald (PSP), Eleanor Garty (Woodland Trust). Apologies: Scott Connor, Angus McCormack, Nan Morrison, Jenny Pain

1. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

Duncan Mackay took the Chair. Calum MacDonald apologised that there no minutes from the July meeting. It was agreed to take them at the next meeting.

2. **Tighean Innse Ghall Discussion.**

Eleanor Garty explained that there was a new woodland grant scheme proposed for common grazings and also for in-bye croft land for areas as small as ¼ ha. The Woodland Trust (WT) had had lots of requests for assistance from the Western Isles but the problem was that: a) the paperwork required to get grants is very onerous; and b) there was a funding gap between the initial cost outlay and reimbursement through grants.

WT was therefore looking to participate in a new scheme that would address both these issues. Their other partner was the Forestry Commission, and they were also looking to partner with local community groups such as PST. The Board asked a number of questions about how the scheme would work, what partnership support WT were looking for and how much it would cost. Eleanor replied that the core funding for tree planting would be provided by the Commission and WT but it would be helpful if communities could support in awareness raising campaigns and also in helping to fund a local project officer to deliver the scheme locally. If this post was full time it would cost around £60k including office costs.

The Board agreed that the WT project could fit well with the croft forestry objectives in the PST Community Plan and that they would be interested in providing both financial support and office space for a project officer, but that they would prefer the officer to be formally employed by WT. PST funding should be available after September 2015. They asked Eleanor to provide a costed proposal before the end of this year for the Board to make a final decision on. This was agreed and the Chairman thanked Eleanor for her presentation.

3. Point and Sandwick Power Report

Calum MacDonald gave a report on the Beinn Ghrideag wind farm. It had been decided to start work on Monday 11th August, ahead of financial close, because any delay past the 11th would have put the completion date of 20th December in jeopardy, and any slippage of completion into 2015 could have resulted in us losing the allocated turbines and having to wait till Spring 2015 for a new delivery.
As the lease docs had now been signed by both the Stornoway Trust (ST) and LWP, and as we had permission for early entry onto the site, it was felt safe to start construction ahead of financial close. It had been anticipated that the Lease docs would be delivered to us in good time for financial close on 20th August.

CM then detailed major problems which began when, on Tuesday 12th, our contractors, RJ Macleod had tried to move 3 diggers to the BG site via the old Pentland track. They were unable to do so as it was too waterlogged at the west end of the track (the end that we plan to upgrade under the lease). The site manager, Kevin Smith, therefore sent two of the diggers to the BG site via the A858 instead and kept one digger at the west end of the track creating ditches to drain the water. Notification was then received from Stornoway Trust regarding complaints from Penland about the use of the Pentland track without any co-ordination of activities. Pentland also stated in their complaint that they had no redress if their cables were damaged.

We responded to the ST that there were no grounds for this complaint as: a) we were simply exercising our rights under the lease and we were not interfering with Pentland's use of the east end of the track in any way; and b) that we were fully insured (as required by our lease) to cover any accidents, damage or loss caused by our works to any 3rd party, including Pentland.

On the 15th, Angus McCormack wrote an email to Pentland's Peter Crone to reassure him of the above and he followed it up with a phone call. As a gesture of goodwill, Angus gave him RJ Macleod's phone number so that Pentland could co-ordinate any traffic on the track with them. Despite these reassurances, all work involving use of the track had to be ceased until agreement was reached on the difficulties.

On Monday 18th August, Angus McCormack and Calum MacDonald attended a meeting at the ST office convened by Mo Murray, Chair of ST. Also attending were Iain MacIver, Factor ST, Maggie Mackay, solicitor for ST and, by conference call, Peter Crone of Pentland and Aileen McCallum, our property solicitor from HBJ. Details of the discussion at this meeting were relayed to the Board.

Having heard Calum MacDonald's report, the Board discussed the options for PSP.

It was agreed given the circumstances to accept Santander's offer to draft a new agreement and to convene another meeting of the Board after after the draft agreement was presented to Pentland.

4. General Manager Report

DJ MacSween tabled his report and answered questions on it.

5. AOB

1) Hebtember. A funding request had been received from Hebtember, a new festival to promote local arts, crafts and, foods and other products throughout the Western Isles in September in a bid to extend the visitor season for local businesses. The organisers were VisitScotland, Proiseact nan Ealan, CnES, and An Lanntair. It was agreed that this fitted within the Board's Community Plan commitment of £20k pa to island arts and culture but that it was too early to commit funding as we still did not have financial close. It was agreed to allocate £1,000 of start-up funding to the Hebtember festival but that payment would be conditional upon Beinn Ghrideag achieving financial close.

2) AGM Date. Given the delay to financial close, it was agreed to re-schedule the AGM to Friday October 24th.