# POINT AND SANDWICK POWER &POINT AND SANDWICK TRUST JOINT BOARD *

# MINUTES – 14 MAY 2024

Minute of Meeting of Joint Board of Directors of **Point and Sandwick Trust and Point and Sandwick Power** on **Tuesday 14 May 2024** at **7.00pm** in **Aros an Rubha**.

**PRESENT**:
Norman Mackenzie (Chair)
Angus McCormack (Hon President) - by Zoom
Duncan Mackay, Board Member
Eddie Macgregor, Board Member
Andrew Mackenzie, Board Member
Dan Maclennan, Board Member
Jim Allen, Board Member
Donald John MacSween, General Manager
Calum Macdonald, Development Manager
Catherine Anne Smith, Finance Manager
Matthew Smith, IT

**APOLOGIES**
Rhoda Mackenzie (Vice-Chair)
Agnes Munro, Board Member
Jane Watson, Board Member
Gordon Mackay, Board Member
Rhona Gallagher, Board Member
Chris Tom Mackenzie, Board Member
Ian Irvine, PSP Board Member
Viv Halcrow, Croft Woodland Adviser
Christina Smith, Office Manager
Stewart Wilson, Energy Support Unit
Dan Morrison, Energy Support Unit
Kenny Macleod, Energy Support Unit

## 1 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting.

## 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Donald John MacSween and Calum Macdonald declared an interest in Garrabost Mill Item.

## 3 MINUTES

The Minute of Meeting of the PSP Joint Board of Directors of 23 March 2024 was **approved**.

.

## 4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

## 5 POINT AND SANDWICK POWER by Calum Macdonald

### 1) Sales and Output and SSE Breaker

In March, Enercon finally replaced the pole shoe which had been constraining output from T1 for the previous three months. As a result, the March output was down only slightly (6%) on P50 in keeping with the wind reading.

We have now started getting REGO payments. As REGOs were previously of limited value, our contract had not included them. Recently, however, a market has developed in REGOs and the market clearing price as high as £12.60 this month. Because it was a new and unpredictable market, I fixed the price with Engie at £8 which brought in £69,177 between January to March. We can review it next year and consider whether to fix again.

We are also due to receive a compensation payment from Engie for their bad performance in 2023. This is currently estimated to be £194,000.

### 2) Wind farm subsea insurance.

No update.

### 3) Community Battery Project.

The planning application was registered on 25 April. I am meeting with Newton Residents' Association this Wednesday (15 May) and also doing a site visit that same day with the Planning Board councillors.

### 4) CPOH Meeting with SSE on the Interconnector.

You wait 10 years for the bus to come along and when it does, its already full. The Western Isles interconnector announced last year and for which community groups have been waiting so long, is a colossal 1,800MW (1.8GW) inn size, as compared to the 22MW capacity of the existing cable to Skye.

Unfortunately, a swarm of extremely well-resourced corporate giants have descended and, overnight, they have booked 1,829MW (1,718MW have firm connection offers and another 311MW have "holding offers" which will be managed by ANM). The latter group don't appear on any official register and so we were unaware of their existence until a meeting with SSE yesterday.

In other words, the grid is already over capacity and there is no space for any new community schemes except our own battery and, possibly, the 7MW Knock-Swordale turbine which has planning consent.

This is obviously a disgrace and a gigantic failure of public policy. Unless some corporate schemes drop out or shrink in size then there won't be any more community schemes in this, the region of the UK which has by far the most successful record in community energy up to now.

I despair about it all but just in case some do drop out and space is somehow opened up, I would like to submit a new 15 MW grid connection application for Beinn Ghrideag, even though we would not need to replace the existing turbines for another 10 or 15 years.

*ACTION: I would like approval from the Board to be able to employ Greenspan to submit a new grid connection application for BG for 15MW at a cost of up to £20,000. If the cost looks like it might exceed that figure, I will come back to the Board.*

**The Joint Board agreed to the above action.**

**4) Community Cable to Skye.**

No update.

**5) Hydrogen.**

I had a further meeting with the hydrogen developer, Sinclair Energy, and I will continue to explore options with them.

**6) Community Energy Scotland.**

No further updates.

**7) Dividend.**

Santander's Risk Committee apologised last week for having failed to make a decision on our dividend application due to a major deal that they are working to close, but they have given reassurances that the decision will be taken this month.

Given the large sum still tied up in our account, I have also asked them to look into the question of paying interest but have had no reply as yet.

**8) Corporate PPA.**

MacTV is our latest customer here.

**The PSP report was agreed and noted.**

**6 CROFT WOODLAND PROJECT by Viv Halcrow**

Update for Point and Sandwick Trust Board meeting 14th May 2024
Period covered: 26th March 2024 - 14th May 2024 (7 weeks)

**Overview:**

Robin Reid left the CWP on 28th March. Iona and Doug, with input from Viv re shortlisting, are working on the recruitment of a new member of staff. Closing date was 28th April, several good applications have been received, and interviews will be held in the PST office on 15th May, with DJ and Iona on the interview panel.

Viv is dealing with urgent work (mainly to do with live FGS schemes) in Lewis and Harris until the appointment of the new staff member. Iona is sending a holding response to any new enquiries made. Eleanor Garty (involved in the early development of the CWP) has been contracted to spend a week in Lewis and Harris in July, to carry out croft visits for new enquiries and to progress some of Robin's more recent ones.

Viv: 3, and Lewis/Harris: 5 **enquiries** during the period, bringing the total so far to 799 enquiries
Viv: 2, and Lewis/Harris: 0 **site visits** in the period, a total of 701 croft visits to date.

**MOREwoods :**

All the MOREwoods trees have been delivered to crofters. Frank at Stark's Ark was very helpful in dealing with any issues that arose with Lewis and Harris schemes.
In Uist, the bulk orders arrived as scheduled and were divvied up and delivered to crofters. This took a couple of days, but Viv had some help from a contractor, and it was useful to meet the crofters again to answer any queries they had. In Barra, the bulk order from the Isle of Eigg nursery arrived on time, but the one from Alba Trees (in Lothian) was a week late due to rough weather and ferry cancellations. Viv had to call on a supportive volunteer to divvy up those trees when they finally arrived and arrange for crofters to collect theirs from Garadh a Bhagh a Tuath.
Woodland Trust is working on an article about the Isle of Eigg trees coming to Uist and Barra – Viv is helping with info and photos.

**SRDP (Forestry Grant Scheme):**

Viv has been supporting the crofter who has the scheme at Calbost, with advice.
The two applications on Grimsay and on Eilean Flodda, Benbecula, were approved at the end of March. Fencing, mounding and planting should be completed by the end of March 2025 for one scheme, and the end of March 2026 for the other. Viv has been helping the crofters with advice, info on contractors and where to source trees, etc. It was possible to access some top-up funding from WTS for these two projects, to meet the cost of fencing materials. Otherwise, the deficit in grant would have been prohibitive.
There is one new FGS scheme going to application in S Uist; a small one of approx. 0.3ha. Viv visited the croft again to discuss details with the crofter, and to begin the process of filling in forms and lodging them with SGRPID.
Viv spent a day and a half with Donald in Uist to visit these new sites, and others which have been planted since his last visit or are in the early stages of development; this was very useful.

**Free Crofting Tree packs: 2023/24 planting:**

One pack was delivered to East Camp Trust in Benbecula and planting is nearing completion. Four community tree packs were delivered in Lewis and one in Harris.

**Community events:**

In Barra, the re-scheduled community planting day was held on 3rd April and led by a supportive volunteer.

The South Uist community planting day, at Loch Aineort, took place on 10th April. Viv put out publicity and organized lunch. It went well, with 9 adults and 7 kids involved. We planted 345 trees to fill in gaps in this woodland area, much loved by the community.

**Planting totals:**

**The planting total to date is 211,420 trees spread through the Western Isles.** Jo (PST) and George (WTS) are working on a joint press release about this, with input from Viv.

**SSE Compensatory Planting**

No further info on this.

**Nursery Network:**

In Uist, volunteers gathered on 8th March to sow trays of birch, alder and rowan seed, all collected locally in autumn 2023 and held in cold storage. Birch and alder were soaked prior to sowing. We now have 2 dozen trays of very healthy seedlings. Germination rate of alder was low but we had sown generously in case – and the density of seedlings in the trays is fine. The birch however have come up very thickly, potentially competing with each other and being less strong as a result. On 22nd April five volunteers met to help with tasks including painstakingly thinning the birch; we also levelled the ground for a new outdoor storage container, moved all the equipment from the Tagsa Volunteers shed to the storage box, cut and attached netting to keep rabbits out of the holding boxes and lopped a willow tree encroaching on the area.

Viv has been using some underspent budget to purchase necessary equipment for the nursery (irrigation hardware, biosecurity needs, etc). Work continues on the detailed recording necessary for the nursery to meet forestry regulations, and the biosecurity requirements.

**Woodland Survey:**

Viv had a very useful meeting with NatureScot and RSPB staff in Uist, to gather existing information on the location of native trees. Maps were produced by NS as a guide. Viv will begin the work in May, once trees are in leaf, aiming to do one or two survey days per month till September, to fit in with croft advisory work. In Lewis and Harris, we will look at appointing a contractor to keep this part of the work going.

**Promotion:**

Viv hopes to have a stand at the N Uist Show in July to promote the Croft Woodland Project in Uist as the number of enquiries has fallen. Barra continues to be busy in terms of enquiries. Fb pages: 'Western Isles Trees on the Croft' post and 'Croft Woodland Project' posts.

**Training:**

Viv is still to progress 'how to look after your young trees' event; this would be held in the autumn. The Croft Woodland Project has now been active for eight years, and many of the early plantings will benefit from some maintenance.

Viv will attend the 50th anniversary field meeting of the Native Woodland Discussion Group, to be based in Kingussie, in early May. This is useful CPD and networking. Woodland Trust Scotland spring team meeting will be held at Dundreggan, Trees for Life's centre. Particularly useful will be the opportunity to find out more about the practical aspects of managing a tree nursery.

**General:**

Woodland Trust Scotland: monthly recording update.

**The Croft Woodland Report was noted.**

## 7 ENERGY SUPPORT UNIT: PROGRESS REPORT by Stewart Wilson

### 1.0 General Summary

We have now dealt with 407 referrals (366 households, 41 year two) and so far helped over 259 eligible households with grant assistance, distributing £255,000 in the period from around 1st January 2023 to the mid-May 2024. Since the previous board report at the middle of March we have seen a continued flow of new referrals into the Energy Support Unit but a high demand for year two assistance. Most clients we have encountered in the last quarter, have been eligible households. The year two assistance is re-evaluating customers' details and applying the changes including updated income and expenditure.

### 1.1 Referrals

The referral rate has been steady over the winter with new households continuing to present themselves and year 1 clients seeking additional support as they began to experience colder outside temperatures. This did tend to focus the mind as the heating season moved into full swing and increased the need for assistance. In addition, OFGEM announced that the energy bills Price Cap would be moderately reduced, as of Apr 1st 2024 with a further review due on the 24th May for the period 1st July 2024 -30th Sept 2024 (the OFGEM announcement of course is refers to a 'UK average' and is deceptively low for electrically heated island homes. However, it should be noted that electricity prices for standing charges have risen a further £6.28 p/a as of April 1st (or a further 2%) (a 149% increase on 2021). It should be noted that 'average' prices stay 60% (or c.£600pa) more than they were three years ago with energy debt at an all time high.

### 1.2 Processing

Over the winter months we have managed to clear most of the outstanding cases on the earlier part of the database while continuing to raise awareness and reaching those not on digital media. We have worked with a variety of agencies including TIG, CnES, the carer network to identify clients and have continued to market on social media and this has helped take us over the £250k mark as a total distributed.

### 1.3 Partnership Working

At the end of April 2024 as we reviewed the criteria for assessing households for the ESU we met by TEAMS with NHS public Health officers, Colin Gilmour-Head of Health Improvement and Martin Malcolm- Head of Public Health Intelligence & Information Services with the aim to better align our data collection with their strategic aims.

Early in May we also met with the CEO of WarmWorks at a parliamentary event in Edinburgh and as he hopes to visit Lewis again in the summer, we have agreed to meet in Point to discuss ways we can assist referrals into the Comhairle/Scottish Government's Area Based scheme.

In addition, we also met again with Donald Morrison of Home Energy Scotland to discuss what might prevent customers from receiving assistance for which they are eligible.

In particular, we discussed customers whose homes have little storage or required to be temporarily de-cluttered to allow works to proceed. We agreed to set a proposal before PST for providing temporary storage for clients in the PST area.

We recently developed further the link with a project based in Martin's memorial church recently by attending an informal meeting with other local support agencies at The Shed for an

insightful discussion on how we can collaborate, improve access and offer additional assistance to the individuals and families we serve.

**1.4 Reach of HSF Assistance & Feedback**
Of the cases closed to date we are successfully assisting with funding support 70% of those households. On average these are receiving around £900 towards their bills. The feedback from customers has been exceptionally supportive and all have welcomed the support even where they have not qualified for the HSF.

**1.5 Levels of Fuel Poverty & the Fuel Poverty Gap**
The levels of fuel poverty encountered in the PST area continue to sit very high around 83.5% although this has come down slightly as tariffs have dropped in the last two quarters. For this cohort the average spend for fuel is 26% of their net income. The resulting average fuel poverty gap (the difference between the amount you would have to spend to meet the Govt heating regime and 10% of the adjusted net income) is a staggering £2,137.

**1.6 Impact**
Given the average level of assistance being distributed being £900-£1000 the impact is self-evident meeting between 40-50% of the Fuel poverty gap. This is by far the most generous scheme nationally and exceeds any of the national or UK government assistance levels.

**1.7 Training**
Kenny Macleod, our Technician at the ESU, commenced his City & Guilds Energy Awareness Training which is an online course facilitated by Energy Action Scotland with an exam in June.

**1.8 Marketing**
We have continued to raise awareness via posters and social media and attending events. We still intend to issue a circular via Royal mail to all PST post codes but will await the autumn to do this as demand usually drops during the summer.

We have also launched our new website www.muirneagconusulting.co.uk and this highlights our work with PST along with the other services we provide.

**1.9 Customer Satisfaction**
We have created a ten question questionnaire to assess the success of the winter packs. We will begin to report on the results at the next meeting and hopefully we will be able to review feedback and tailor any future support to the needs identified.

We have also received a number of thank you cards for the assistance and the financial help given to householders across the area.

**1.10 Events**
Stewart (representing PST) is the Convenor of Scotland's national fuel poverty charity and recently attended the Parliamentary event at Holyrood: **Energy Action Scotland at 40 - Fighting Fuel Poverty for Four Decades.** He had discussions with a number of politicians and industry experts in attendance, explaining the ESU and PST. He also had a discussion with the chair of the Scottish Fuel Poverty Panel and agreed to meet with them during the forthcoming visit to Lewis in the late summer.

We have also attended the Climate Hebrides 'COP' event in Daliburgh South Uist and participated in the discussions around adaptation and mitigation strategies/actions.

Working with Jo Macleod, PR, we hope to submit an article for the Energy Action Scotland review magazine covering the work of the ESU.

### 1.11 Small Works Advice

We have seen an increase in demand for advice relating to small works and assessing homes where dampness is prevalent. We have recently assisted an elderly householder with condensation issues by rectifying some displaced loft insulation, recommending a change to the use of bottled gas portable heater and the introduction of a dehumidifier.

Combined these should address and solve a live issue. This is a typical issue encountered and is fundamentally a result of misunderstanding how to heat and use the property. We have aimed therefore to assist with information.

We have now commenced our undertaking of EPCs of the stock in the database to ensure the national database is a robust reflection of the 'on the ground' reality.

### 1.13 Fire Alarms & Winter Packs

There is still steady flow of requests for Fire Alarms and we have now exceeded 200 referrals and nearing 140 installs.

We have completed the first round of our distribution of the winter packs to eligible households and have moved onto a Phase 2. We have done this in a very targeted way utilising our database to prioritise the most needy and reach them with a complement of appropriate measures. We have shaped the scheme to try to avoid duplication with other schemes in operation. We are offering Dehumidifiers, warm over blankets and air fryers.

Clients receiving the packs have agreed to provide feedback once they have had the items for a period of time. Early indication is that each of the items are very well received. The dehumidifiers in particular are seen to be particularly effective, and the first few clients think they are "brilliant" and "just amazing at getting rid of the moisture". So, this is definitely worth continuing to support and monitor.

We have created a smart survey via survey monkey (overleaf) for those who have received goods and begun utilising this method in order to formalise the feedback into a reportable form.

| Item | Qty Purchased | Spent (incl. VAT) |
|---|---|---|
| Pro Breeze (PB-06-UK) 12L dehumifier | 50 | £ 5,774.50 |
| Statesman SKAF08017BK Digital Dual Zone Air Fryer 8L | 25 | £ 2,499.75 |
| Beurer HD 75 large (130 x 180 cm) over-blankets | 35 | £ 1,500.00 |
| TOTAL | 75 | £ 9,774.25 |
| | | |
| **No of clients** | 59 | |
| **Cases open** | 2 | |
| **Winter packs delivered** | 51 | |

| Item | Allocated | Qty remaining |
|---|---|---|
| Pro Breeze (PB-06-UK) 12L dehumifier | 35 | 15 |
| Statesman SKAF08017BK Digital Dual Zone Air Fryer 8L | 26 | -1 |
| Beurer HD 75 large (130 x 180 cm) over-blankets | 28 | 7 |
| | | 21 |

| Item | Delivered | Qty remaining |
|---|---|---|
| Pro Breeze (PB-06-UK) 12L dehumifier | 34 | 16 |
| Statesman SKAF08017BK Digital Dual Zone Air Fryer 8L | 24 | 1 |
| Beurer HD 75 large (130 x 180 cm) over-blankets | 28 | 7 |
| | | 24 |

As part of the winter pack scheme we have temporarily utilised Muirneag's mobile trailer to store the kit while awaiting distribution. This has been placed near the Aros' rear entrance.

## 2.0 Dashboard

| **Energy Support Unit Dashboard** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Measure** | **Total** | **Subset** | **%** | |
| Number of Clients referred | 407 | | | |
| No. of home visits completed | 282 | | | |
| No. of cases closed | 369 | | 91% | |
| No of cases open | 38 | | 9% | |
| Awaiting evidence from clients | 2 | | | |
| No of clients receiving funds | **257** | | 70% | of closed cases |
| Average assistance | **£ 901** | | | |
| Total Amount to be Disbursed | **£ 255,000** | | | |
| | | | | |
| No of clients fuel poor (SG def) | 111 | | 30.1% | of closed cases |
| No of clients extreme fuel poor | 197 | | 53.4% | of closed cases |
| No of clients not fuel poor | 25 | | 6.8% | of closed cases |
| No of clients with no data given | 34 | | 9.2% | of closed cases |
| No of clients -onward only | 2 | | 0.5% | of closed cases |
| Average Depth of Fuel Poverty | 26% | of Income spent on fuel | | |
| No of clients signposted | 66 | | | Some clients are signposted to more than one organisation |
| | | | | |
| No of clients not eligible | 56 | | | some clients are ineligible for more than one reason (e.g. >£28k savings plus less than 10% FP) |
| Non eligible -Savings over £28k | | 48 | | |
| Non eligible -income over £35.5k | | 32 | | |
| Revised policy eligible -10%-20% FP | | 111 | | |
| Non eligible -below 10% | | 25 | | |
| other reason for non HSF help | 3 | | | e.g. client declined or was only seeking signpost |
| Other clients from outside PST catchment area | 5 | | | |

The dashboard below gives a breakdown

| **Fire Alarm Scheme** | Total |
|---|---|
| Case Referrals | 203 |
| Homes Installed | 138 |
| Homes Advice given | 2 |
| Already Installed | 49 |
| Declined | 1 |
| Not Eligible | 4 |
| Visit Booked | 2 |
| Outstanding (Max) | 2 |
| No Response | 4 |
| Passed away | 1 |
| No of Smoke Detectors installed | 478 |
| No of Heat detectors installed | 137 |
| No of CO detectors installed | 151 |

### Other Non ESU Items of Interest

Kenny Maclean our Technician/Mechanic - in non ESU time has been asked to undertake mechanical repairs on the Model T Ford for the Garrabost Mill.

**The Energy Support Unit Report was noted.**

**POINT AND SANDWICK TRUST by Donald John MacSween**

## 1. Finance

The balance in the PST account is c£964,226, including a drawdown of £328,000 from the Insignis investment account. The balance in the ESU account is £2,600 and will require a top up of £50k in the next week.

A Report on actual spend compared to the Budget to the end of March and a draft Budget for 2024/25 had been previously circulated to the Board for information.

The uncertainly about the amount, and payment date, of the much-anticipated November 2023 gift aid has made it necessary to assess Insignis investments in May amounting to £328,000 to facilitate large grant payments falling due in the next few weeks, primarily the first payment for the office extension and the final payments for Garrabost Mill. Drawing down the Insignis investments as they mature will continue until the Gift Aid payment is transferred to PST.

It is recommended that all debts accrued are paid timeously in future to avoid continuing red flags in the Financial Model and that all debts on the windfarm account should be paid before it becomes a red flag in the Financial Model. It was stated that further efforts should be made to understand the Financial Model and improve the relationship with the Bank to avoid late dividend payments.

**The Joint Board agreed that all debts be paid timeously in future to avoid continuing red flags in the Financial Model, and that efforts be made to understand the Financial Model and to improve the relationship with the Bank to avoid delays in future dividend payments.**

**Point and Sandwick Trust: Community Support : March Update**

.

**Projects.** There has been a continuing effort to pursue project activities including the Coastal Trail, Garrabost Mill, Sandwickhill school.

**Coastal Trail**

After four months pursuing Paths for All funding for both Aird, Upper Aird to Sheshader, and the Braighe crossing, funding of £100,000 for each of the above projects was offered and accepted. This is the maximum grant for each.

Planning applications were submitted for Melbost-Aignish and Sheshader-Dun Dubh and the latter was approved recently despite the Crofters' Commission requesting the planners refuse consents. It is expected that Melbost- Aignish will be determined in June.

Tony Robson has been liaising with CNES roads department on road safety mitigation measures at Aignish and Aird which is a grant condition. Alasdair Nicholson asked Paths for All for clearance to proceed with Aird and this was agreed to. It is expected that the contractor will be on site imminently.

Monthly zoom meetings with Paths for All are in place to liaise with them. The economic significance of PST and Paths for All recent grant awards may be judged by the fact that path spend/commitments (2019-24) now total £990,612 or £1,064,954 (inclusive of path and gross e-bike spend of £74,342) all money circulating in the local economy.

An application was made to the Stornoway Trust Small Grants programme in April for £10,000 towards the e-bike project which had a successful event in Tiumpan on 27th April. Donny in

North Street also reports an uptake in e-bike loans. Post-storm clear ups were arranged for trail sections affected by sea debris from recent weather.

**Sandwickhill School**

Alasdair Nicolson encouraged the charity to pursue dialogue between them and the An Lanntair to facilitate further prospective partnership action. This has continued and seems positive. Alasdair Nicholson attended a meeting in March with Donald John MacSween. which discussed the report from the HIE consultants. It is suggested that the HIE funded report is not the way ahead and other avenues are being explored with local input.

**Garrabost Mill**

Tony Robson reports-
Wheel now painted and turning, after disconnection from mill mechanism.
New bearing fitted on one side and wooden buckets installed.
Area around wheel now tidied up with rock armour and a water sump formed in downstream lade.Drainage of site now complete with all runoff water heading to water sump; water from this sump can then be used to pump over the wheel with slow rotation for display purposes.
Fencing of feu commenced. Cattlegrid installation, fencing, floor restoration works largely completed.
Outbuilding roofs including engine room, insulated and lined.
All internal walls in outbuildings have been lime pointed, where possible.
Garage floor has a new concrete floor and BF8611, a 1922 Model T Spike lorry, imported from Michigan USA is safe inside the garage, labelled AF Morrison, The Mills, Garrabost.

Alasdair Nicholson is exploring a landfill application to assist with completion of steps and tarring of access road. He also briefed the HIE local team, Stuart Black, HIE Chief Executive, and some of their board members on progress of the mill project at a HIE engagement meeting held recently Stornoway. Stuart Black indicated that the project could come back to their local staff for additional support when the project is ready to progress with the visitor facilities phase.

**Point Community Hut**

A draft constitution for a Community Hut was provided for the steering group.

- Other
- Point football club were provided with details of funding they could apply to.
- Tony Robson met up with Portnaguran Amenity Group to discuss building works.
- Alasdair Nicholson met up with Liz Chaplin to advise on a funding bid.
- A funding advise session was provided to Western Isles Mental Health Association.
- Tony Robson has been advising on slipway development at Bayble Pier.

**5. <u>Extension to Aros an Rubha</u>**

Work on the above project started on the 14th of April, a week later than planned, and good progress has been made. The first invoice for stage payment from O Mac to Aros an Rubha is expected soon. A programme/progess report by OMac was circulated to all members.

The final documents for the purchase of the croft land are expected for signature imminently.

## 6 VIP Visit 4th of July

A VIP visit to Point and Sandwick Trust and Aros an Rubha is scheduled for the 4th of July 2024.
Any expenditure for the visit can be met from the office budget.

It is recommended that a small, short-life Sub-Committee is formed to plan for the event, comprising the Chair, General Manager, Finance Manager plus one, together with office bearers from Aros.

**The Joint Board approved this recommendation**.

## 7 Awayday 24th September

Attendance at the Annual Awayday has been sparse over the last two years, and the programme topics have been mainly a repeat of topics previously covered at Board meetings.

Following discussions with the Chair, it is proposed that the format is altered this year.
The morning programme will concentrate on finance with input from John Moffat on 2023/24 draft Accounts, followed by a talk from Howard Whitehead, Rehan Lakhani and Ali Baloch of Santander.

This would be followed by a presentation from Jon Dobson, Greenbank, on our Financial Model, with advice on how to avoid red flags preventing the transfer of gift aid in future.

The afternoon would include a presentation session with Alex Macleod, General Manager, Stornoway Port Authority, followed by a visit to the Deepwater Port.

The final session would be a visit to the Seaweed processing plant and Ishga at Arnish.

Members' input into the format of the Awayday and guest speakers is welcome.

## 8 Storage Container Proposal

A Report from PST's Energy Support Unit has highlighted that some households who are eligible for grant assistance from providers of energy efficiency grants for upgrade works such as wall and loft insulation are prevented from uptake because of lack of working room due to the need for storage of furniture and other possessions. With the Scottish Government Warm Homes Scotland Scheme or Area Based Scheme and EC04 scheme, the contractors cannot be instructed if there is an unsafe or logistically constrained environment.

The Report from Energy Support Unit is requesting that PST funds the purchase of a 20ft shipping container which would provide a solution to the temporary storage requirement whilst works are undertaken. The container could be moved to outside the client's address if possible and provide temporary storage and the ability to move possessions from the house to that storage to free up working space for contractors.

Warmworks will fund up to £500 towards a client's enabling costs where this is either a Warmworks Scotland or an Area Based Scheme job. This could be used to fund the moving of the container from job to job or standby storage location.

The capital cost of the container will be in the region of £4,250 to £4,750 inclusive of VAT. To move the container via the hire of an HiAB trailer will be approximately £200 per move (generally funded by others - perhaps with the occasional support from PST in exceptional circumstances).

It is recommended that expenditure up to £5,000 be approved for this project from the Capital Projects budget.

**The Joint Board agreed to the purchase of a storage container as outlined above.**

**The General Manager's Report was agreed and noted.**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

25 June 2024**.**