



Minutes of 2023 LCCL AGM

Sunday 17 September 2023

Directors present: John Ralph; Robert Campbell; Stephen Johnstone; Frances McIlwaine

Directors' apologies: Catherine Bell; Rachel Campbell; John Currall; Carsten Kressel

Ordinary members present: Nigel Davies; Lesley Duckworth; Violet Quesnel; Angela Ralph

Guests: Amanda Davis; Colin McGavigan; Billy Steel (arrived late)

	Action
Welcome to meeting - from Chair John Ralph	
Meeting Agenda – read out by Chair with some copies available for attendees	
<p>1. 2022 AGM and matters arising</p> <p>The minutes stated there were 55 members for 2021-22. 34 can be verified (from signed membership applications). Minutes will be amended to show 34. Otherwise accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
<p>2. Annual report from the Chair followed by questions</p> <p>a. Chair's report</p> <p>Below is the full text of the pre-prepared report:</p> <p>The last year has seen considerable progress in our main project of sustainable public toilets in the village and we have taken on 2 other projects that were passed over from the Community Council. There is a lot to share today and if you want to know more details, or add anything I missed, please ask us after I have given my report.</p> <p>The Board of Directors has been quite dynamic this year. Rab and Rachel Campbell, Steve Johnstone and myself served through the year, and step down today. Alison White and Lewis Whitfield stepped out and we appointed Frances McIlwaine, John Currall, Tim McAllister, and we recently co-opted Catherine Bell to represent the young people in the village. Jackie</p>	



Sweeny contributed to our meetings as minute secretary for several months, and I would like to thank all of you, also those not present, for their supportive contributions.

Yesterday, we had 34 members of the Community Company. Today we have 44. Many thanks to you all. Last year we had hoped to arrange more public meetings, and I apologise that this did not happen. In 2022 we had a table at the Gala and at the Hopetoun Consultation. This year we wanted to be able to share our progress and consult on plans to prepare our application for funding the public toilets project. The details of negotiating the terms of the land purchase required some intensive work. Other commitments arose, and then summer came and ran away with us. Further consultation and discussion with you and the rest of the village community is essential. That will recommence soon.

We have made good progress towards acquiring the land at Horner's Place. The Heads of Terms for the purchase were signed in March. We had several visits from Scottish Land Fund (SLF). who were very positive about our plans and gave detailed advice on how to proceed. They were keen that we have a realistic business plan to sustain the project, recommending that we organise the development to bring in income as early as possible. SLF require multiple quotes from professionals that we wish to engage, so we have interviewed 3 architects, all of whom added detail to the tasks ahead of us. The chosen location for public toilets is not straightforward, but it is the best available.

This year, we took up two projects that were originally proposed to the Community Council. An area at Deneburn had been identified by the Estate for the community to plant trees to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee. So much time had passed by the time we took on the project, that it seemed more appropriate to find another name for the plantation, perhaps commemorating a Leadhills person of note. We will invite suggestions from the village. The Woodland Trust will deliver bareroot trees in November or possibly later, depending on the weather. We are grateful to the school who also applied successfully for trees. 840 bareroot trees altogether will come. We will include the school children as far as possible in the planting and care of the area. Clydesdale Community Trust have agreed to assist us in planting the trees. We will need a team of volunteers from the village to accomplish the work.

The second project we took on was to put signs around the village roads and braes with their historical names. Again, this was originally proposed to the Community Council and then offered to the Community Company. We have collected a list of old street names from Ken and from Greta and Charlie who had information from Mary Hamilton. The Hopetoun Papers



Archive confirmed some of the names for us. We thank them all warmly for their help. At the moment this project is waiting for SLC Planners to get back to us with advice on any regulatory restrictions, and what permissions we may need. The historical signs will need to be designed to avoid any confusion for delivery drivers on whom so many of us depend.

None of these projects can be funded or achieved without clear evidence of current support of the village community. The directors will need more active participation to achieve the necessary work.

The Community Company cannot achieve anything without you, and will develop its projects with you. We are doing our best to avoid asking you to put your hands in your pockets to raise funds for these projects, so we are applying for external funding as far as possible. However, there are almost no funding opportunities to cover our annual running costs, just to keep the community company going and to fulfil its legal duties – so-called revenue costs. So far successive directors have often generously stumped up the cash when a financial need arises. We are grateful for this generosity, and to the Community Council for the microgrant for admin costs and the funding for a consultant to obtain quotes for a soil analysis at Hopetoun Place to match-fund a Stage 1 application to Scottish Land Fund.

There are still other costs, such as legal services that we need to fund from other sources to complete the site purchase. A Friends of Leadhills Fund has been suggested for non-residents of the village who may wish to contribute and cover costs that we cannot cover from established funders. We are very glad to see that a Community Action Plan is under way which, among other benefits, will open access to windfarm funds that are already allocated to Leadhills. We will make a budget and record revenue costs this year so that they can be included in our annual accounts.

Having spoken to other Scottish community ownership groups this year, it is clear to me that to just keep going after COVID is difficult everywhere. Communities without a substantial income are really struggling to service their debts and find volunteers to do the necessary work. They are selling off their assets. Community ownership is not something that just happens. There is a lot of detailed responsibility to be sorted out, and foresight to avert disaster and possible bankruptcy a few years down the line.

Established funders are very careful not to offer money where there is too much risk of failure, or mismanagement. For this reason, we wanted to write Community Company governance policies to pass external scrutiny. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) advised a long list of requirements, including company risk assessment. We conducted a SWOT analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. A



Register of Risk is in preparation, and subsequent action planning is one of the first tasks for the new Board of Directors. We have already responded to the need to strengthen our Code of Conduct by trialling a compliance policy over the last few months. More policies documents need to be written.

The new directors will inherit substantial momentum in our 3 projects. I mentioned earlier that the 4 of us who are elected directors are stepping down today. Our terms of office are up. I will continue in the role of Company Secretary to assist with continuity and support the development of good governance but having no vote in future decisions.

In conclusion I would like to give my appreciation to everyone who has supported and contributed to the progress we have made this year, especially to the Hopetoun Arms for hosting our monthly Board Meetings. Finally, I would ask again this year for anyone who can help distribute our village flyers to local places where visitors will find them to please take a handful away with you. When these are all gone, more can be printed.

– John Ralph

(Chair mentioned that Tim McAllister stood down earlier this year due to work commitments after changing his job.)

b. Questions

1. Tree planting

- What work is being done to ensure ongoing access? JR – discussions are ongoing with D Noble.
- Will there be fencing? Not immediately but the tree guards provided by CCI will give protection until we can find funding for fencing. CM said we would need fencing – many of the trees planted for the earlier jubilee did not survive.
- Have we approached Silver & Rickett for help? No. It was recommended that we seek professional advice and help to ensure the trees survive.

BoD to discuss with DN

BoD to seek funding for fencing, further advice

2. Road signs

- Do we have an estimate? No. Can we give a ballpark? No – at this stage it would be pure guesswork.
- CM described the Douglas App – if we had something similar for Leadhills old street names could be incorporated into a village walk on the app. We could provide information about everything in the village.

BoD to pursue further

3. Glamping pods/toilet block

- SJ said he had received various comments that this development was mainly of benefit to the hotel. A lively



<p>discussion followed but it was stressed that for the village to thrive, all businesses including the hotel and the shop also need to thrive. The project will benefit both of these businesses which employ locals. It was also pointed out that whilst the shop rents its premises from the hotel, it is a completely separate business.</p> <p>4. Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you going to have open meetings? Yes, the Board recognised that it was a mistake not to have done this during the last year. The Board recognises that we can't make progress on anything if we don't have community support. • Do we have a Facebook page which we can use to advertise meetings? Yes, but we need someone who could look after it. CM kindly offered to take it on – JR will give him access. 	<p>BoD to publish meeting dates</p> <p>JR</p>
<p>3. Financial Report</p> <p>F McIlwaine introduced the Financial Report. Until LCCL's projects culminate in an income stream, the only income sources will be membership fees, donations and grants. The HMRC penalty was explained – relates to late submission of 2020-21 accounts. The accountants accepted responsibility and reduced their fee by £100, the amount of the penalty.</p> <p>CM commented that the Accountants' fee seemed high given the current situation of the company and recommended we seek other quotes. Also, we should seek accountants who are based in the Clydesdale area (JT Rennie and Co. are based in Dumfries). We should also approach VASLAN.</p>	<p>BoD to seek alternatives</p>
<p>4. Statement on membership subscriptions</p> <p>The subscription fee will remain unchanged at £2 which attendees agreed with.</p>	
<p>5. Election of Directors</p> <p>JR explained that we need a minimum number of 3 directors, to conduct business. If we have 2 elected directors and 1 co-opted, then elected members will form the majority. Only 2 people seeking election – FM and CB. Carsten Kressel had earlier agreed to continue as a co-opted director.</p> <p>F McIlwaine and C Bell were both elected.</p>	



6. Presentations on current projects Progress on projects was dealt with in open floor discussions and Chair's report, minuted under item 2.	
7. Open floor discussion This took place after the Chair's report and is minuted under item 2.	
Outgoing Chair's closing remarks John Ralph stressed that the Board of Directors works democratically, but the democracy of the community as a whole has to override the democracy of directors. JR thanked everyone for attending.	

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