

NAIRN IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD in NAIRN COMMUNITY & ARTS CENTRE on 26 JANUARY 2016 at 8.00 pm

Directors Present

Alastair Noble	Michael Barnett
Iain Fairweather	Sheena Munro
Magnus Swanson	John Hart

1. The Chairman Alastair Noble welcomed those present.
2. The Company Secretary Michael Barnett reported he had received apologies for absence from directors Rosemary Young, Matthew Hilton and Graham Kerr and a large number of other members.
3. The Company Secretary Michael Barnett reported that membership of the company currently stood at 1066, of whom 1043 are eligible to vote.
4. The Company Secretary presented the accounts of the company for the year ended 30 November 2014 for consideration, and explained each of the entries. Since the year end a £10,000 grant had been received from DTAS to further the Town Centre Action Plan, and the current bank balance was £10,500.
5. The Chairman Alastair Noble spoke to his Report that had been published & circulated beforehand. There were a range of comments, some of which are summarised below. Alastair spoke about the importance of accurate local data to support locality planning; the importance of cooperation when the skills of local communities are brought into play; the importance of Nairn getting its "fair share"; the need for public and local bodies to sign up to working together; how such collaboration can be best achieved; proposed expansion of NICE Board to take in representatives from local groups; the proposed BID for Nairnshire; if local groups continue to be fragmented and competitive, then little will be achieved.
6. The Chairman introduced the subject of working in partnership with Highland Council and the Association of Nairn Businesses, and invited Michael Boylan (chair of the ANB) to outline how he and

Michael Green were working with colleagues from the business community to prepare to make a BID application for Nairnshire.

7. The Secretary Michael Barnett gave a brief report on how NICE was collaborating with the Men's Shed to acquire suitable premises at the Viewfield Stables for their use, and Sheena Munro outlined the progress she and Graham Kerr were making in discussions with users of the harbour and other water-front activities as to how the facilities could be expanded for the benefit of Nairn.
8. The Secretary briefly described a recent initiative with the regard to the Old Social Work Building. In collaboration with Highland Council and Colin Macaulay (who is working up a plan to use the building as a micro-distillery and visitor centre), NICE had applied for a Scottish Government grant of £150,000 from the TCCCF to enable the building to be bought from Highland Council for the community's benefit and thereby support Colin Macaulay's plans. Unfortunately the competition had been very fierce, and we had not been successful.
9. The Board's paper on governance issues was discussed and Magnus Swanson was able to reassure the meeting that NICE's Articles were the recommended standard for bodies like NICE, and that the clauses dealing with director appointments were drafted in a particular way to achieve, inter alia, continuity. However, as with everything the members of the company potentially had the final say and mechanisms were in the Articles to enable such control.
10. The Chairman said that under the company's constitution, it was a requirement that three of the directors stand down – Magnus Swanson, Sheena Munro and John Hart. They were offering themselves for re-election. Campbell Mair and Rosemary Young were resigning and not seeking re-election. The meeting approved these appointments unanimously.

Aside from the formal proceedings, comments from those present that were discussed included:

Who talks to members, and in particular new members?

Do we try to engage with young people?

The NICE website is a good forum with a link to a Facebook page.

Concerns about NICE's governance, and in particular that the director group was effectively closed to outsiders and should look to the example of social media sites. NICE should engage with the whole community, and in particular the deprived pockets.

Social media is not a cohesive group and people gather round the “paddling pool” type cluster.

Co-opted directors are perfectly OK – they are the norm and NICE can expand their number, and an interview process would be the norm. Any member of NICE can put forward a special resolution with sufficient support.

Being a director is not for everybody. Tonight was not about directorships, it was about enhancing process. You don't have to be a director of NICE to be involved.

NICE's organisational structure will evolve.

It is difficult to get people to team up.

Communication is an issue – just keep it simple.

The directors must have an escape route to deal with someone who is disruptive.

There were several comments about the “harbour” and the suggestion that the short term priority should be to maintain what we have so that it doesn't fall into disrepair.

The Timebank is a great idea. Nairn is a great place and we should all be happy, but what would a happy Nairn look like?

Where does Nairn River Enterprise company fit in with NICE?

There are too many brick walls and people need to see things happening. We need volunteers to say “I can contribute to that”.

NICE should work to bring together all the strands, but where are the funds, and who has the time and energy to do things?

Local volunteers keep meeting brick walls in the form of bureaucracy.

“If I want to do something who do I contact?” to which the answer was there needs to be an enabling mechanism put in place.

The meeting concluded at 9.45 pm

Michael Barnett
Secretary