

NAIRN IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

MINUTES OF THE THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD in NAIRN COMMUNITY & ARTS CENTRE on 29 OCTOBER 2014 at 7.30 pm

Directors Present

Alastair Noble	Michael Barnett
Iain Fairweather	Rosemary Young
Graham Kerr	Campbell Mair
Matthew Hilton	John Hart

- 1 The Chairman Alastair Noble welcomed those present and introduced each of the directors.
- 2 The Company Secretary Michael Barnett reported he had received apologies for absence from Magnus Swanson (director) and 54 other members, whose names he read out.
- 3 The Company Secretary Michael Barnett reported that membership of the company currently stood at 1062, marginally higher than last year. A new recruitment drive is planned shortly. He summarised the Company's status as a Community Body and registered Charity under the control of residents of Nairnshire. Mindful of happenings in Nairn, NICE was well placed to establish any "trading subsidiaries" that might be required to deliver specific initiatives – NICE would be the shareholder and the directors would be autonomous charged to conduct the activities under each company's constitution. This produced the benefit of one "umbrella" charity (with funding opportunities), just one company responsible for OSCR compliance, and the umbrella company having an "asset lock" preventing any distribution of surpluses from it.
- 4 The Company Secretary presented the accounts of the company for the year ended 30 November 2013 for consideration, and explained each of the entries. The accounts had been signed by an Independent Examiner from Signpost as required by OSCR.
- 5 The Company Secretary presented the proposed RESOLUTION to add two postcodes to the definition of "community" within the company's Articles. He explained this was a technicality in that when the Articles were originally altered to comply with the statutory definition of "Community Body", Scottish Government officials had been very helpful in translating the geographical boundaries into a list of postcodes. A recent review by one of their officials had

identified that postcodes IV2 7PJ and IV2 7SQW had not been included. The proposal was to add these to Appendix 1 of the Company's Articles, and the Resolution was passed unanimously.

6 The Chairman said that under the company's constitution, it was a requirement that three of the directors stand down. Campbell Mair, Graham Kerr and Matthew Hilton were standing down and offering themselves for re-election. The meeting approved these appointments unanimously. The Chairman said that the company was always looking out for new directors, and anybody who felt they had skills to contribute should have a word with him or another director.

7 Alastair Noble delivered his Chairman's report (attached) and invited an open discussion about agenda items 8, 9 and 10 and NICE's future generally.

Comments from those present that were discussed included:

Steve Westbrook said that the Muir of Ord's success at getting grants of over £1m was in part due to the fact that at stage 2 of their Big Lottery application they had paid £40k+ to consultants to make the application very professional and comprehensive, particularly with regard to identifying potential users and the economic case.

Brian Stewart wondered whether NICE's problem was lack of expertise; lack of finance; or lack of political support.

Michael Green said that NICE had accepted HC's offer of partnership working; we are "better together"; NICE had succeeded in getting an anchor tenant and funding to proceed with the OSWB project; but unfortunately the tenant had pulled out; he hoped that a new deal could be done with CAB.

Brian Stewart wondered whether NICE was playing on a level playing field, to which Michael Green said "yes".

Alastair Noble said in his view you could not ignore the politics – he instanced HIE, Big Lottery and HC.

Steve Westbrook emphasised that for a bid to be successful there had to be a sound business plan; evidence of funding from other sources; evidence of how local groups will use the facility; an economic analysis of jobs, etc.

Michael Barnett said that whilst all those factors were recognized in the case of a big bid for £1m+, the OSWB project had not been of that size, and NICE with just its own resources had succeeded in finding funding for the project. Much credit was due to Matthew Hilton, one of NICE's directors, who as a practicing architect and town planner had given very generously of his time free of charge to working through several iterations of the building plans with

the proposed tenants, and writing a full professional invitation to tender to contractors. The meeting expressed its appreciation in the usual manner.

Michael Green said one problem is that Nairnshire doesn't have a strategic business plan. We have had a charrette, and things need to be driven forward from that.

Brian Stewart said that there needs to be a project list supported by joined-up thinking. NICE had been forced into one project because it had been told to prove its credibility and ability to deliver, HC is still taking decisions independently, and we need a joined up approach.

Michael Green said we are not in a vacuum, and we need to get together and involved in the town centre project. If we all work together, we can achieve.

Sheena Munro said that for partnership to work there has to be trust, with which Rosemary Young agreed. She wanted to see some commonsense.

Alastair Noble pointed out that Michael Green was present, and our three other elected members absent (although Colin Macaulay had sent apologies).

Dick Youngson said that Nairn was handicapped by having three community councils, albeit that Suburban and West now have joint meetings. The Chairman congratulated Dick on all his hard work in encouraging all the Nairnshire Community Councils to work together.

Derek Prior asked why HC don't offer the OSWB to NICE for £1. It was explained that NICE was presented with two possibilities. Either pay £1 which was conditional on the Assets Transfer Board approving the use and business plan – in effect determining what we do with the building. Or, to quote HC, pay the open market value and you can do what you like with it. Given the timescale and offer of freedom, NICE had opted for the latter.

Graham Kerr said it was vital that the OSWB be used as the "Gateway" to Nairn's regenerated town centre – this idea had gained widespread acceptance.

Several members observed that NICE had apparently been constrained by the fact that it had "generals" and no "foot soldiers". It is too heavyweight.

Discussion then turned to the proposal that NICE be the delivery agent for the planned Wetlands development at Sandown. Dick Youngson said that the current trustees of the Tradespark Hall fund had decided on a plan to use the money for community use. Plans would be drawn up professionally, and there would be an element of high quality social housing. The plan is to bring the delivery vehicle under NICE as Michael Barnett had explained when he had spoken about NICE acting as an "umbrella" for the delivery of various projects.

The Chairman Alastair Noble then read the following prepared statement about the recent meeting between NICE and Nairn's elected councillors at

which the parties had committed to working in partnership on the basis of mutual trust:

“Four of NICE's directors and Nairn's four elected Councillors had a frank and productive meeting on 27 October in the presence of Liz Cowie, Ward Manager. Everybody gave their full commitment to making a partnership approach to Nairn's regeneration work for the benefit of the community, and it was recognised that the most important element was the building of trust.

Highland Council officials are currently completing their review of options following the Town Centre Charrette in March, and all parties expressed confidence that the Charrette outputs point in the right direction. A further meeting has been arranged for 8 December, when it is hoped that the work of Highland Council officials can be discussed.”

In response to a question Alastair Noble added that HC has to be the lead organisation and that our elected councilors have to take that lead, and NICE should be the body that can consult with its members and the community, and with its advantages as a charity be the delivery vehicle for many projects.

There was no other business, and the meeting concluded at 9.15 pm

Michael Barnett
Secretary