

Minutes of the Kilfinan Community Forest Company Board of Directors, held at the Company Office 5pm on Monday 17th December 2012

Attendees:

David Blair (Chair)
Robert Borruso
Rob Blair
Andrew Graham-Weall
Eamon King
Willie McAllan
Eve McFarlane
Steve Williamson

Apologies

None

Welcome from David

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed as correct by WM and seconded by SW.

Matters Arising

Wood fuel: Sales continue to increase month on month. Board volunteers are keeping pace with supply but chainsaw training for Craig and others is a pressing need.

Health & Safety: SW is currently installing lighting outside office.

Vacancy - Operations Manager: Re-advertisement attracted a good response. Interviews to be held on 7th January. Interview panel is SW, RBO plus an external person (to be identified). Panel will short-leet on Friday.

Phase Three Administrator: Nikki Woolf starts on 7th January 2013.

Community Payback: WM reported Community Payback manager emailed to confirm they will support KCFC operations. WM will take forward in January. It was agreed they will be asked to help construct the access path. Further use of the service will be dependent on the satisfactory conduct of the Community Payback workers.

Job Centre Plus: EK reported Job Centre Plus interested in locating a trainee(s) with KCFC and a meeting has been arranged for 15/01/13. It was agreed this could be beneficial to both KCFC and local unemployed people. However, there may be conditions e.g. supervision of trainee which may be problematic or incur costs to KCFC. EK is aware of issues and will ensure no costs to KCFC arising from any service provided to Job Centre Plus. WM has some previous experience in this area and will attend meeting if possible.

Reservoir: EK is in discussion with Community Energy Scotland to elicit their support to fund the hydro study and perhaps costs associated with the purchase of the reservoir.

Awards for All: EM, SW, EK and WM reported back on their proposals to progress this £10,000 grant.

Housing Project

DB met with A&BC Planning Officer and outlined the proposal for a multifunction building for the company constructed using the 'massive timber' method. Feedback was very positive regarding location, design and use.

Felling Contract

EK has progressed this initiative and will circulate the draft contract in preparation for the first phase of felling. Issues raised at the meeting included load sizes and

concerns about extraction during school hours and haulage routes. All directors were asked to read and respond asap.

Rhododendron Clearance

EK is leading negotiation with the contractors. There can be long delays in reclaiming expenditure from the Forestry Commission which creates cash flow issues for KCFC or, alternatively, requires the contractor to wait for payment. It is hoped this issue can be resolved to allow work to clear rhododendron to start in January 2013. DB walk the line of the proposed road and it was agreed clearance work should start with this area.

Budget / Cash Flow:

As previously acknowledged cash flow challenges are a major impediment to KCFC operations. The £15,000 contract advance from timber sales will be hugely helpful but insufficient. There also needs to be a buffer in the event of late payment of grants etc. WM circulated a draft project management spreadsheet which he and Michaela are developing to assist with budget management and control of cash flow. This was seen as a practical way forward and SW and EM agreed to support WM and Michaela in developing the spreadsheet further. The decision was also taken to seek a local community benefactor prepared to lend KCFC sufficient funds to ease cash flow difficulties. The proposal is that this loan would provide an overdraft type facility and at the end of the period the loan amount would be intact. KCFC would have to fund any interest liable as with any other form of loan. Work is underway to identify the KCFC benefits and achievements with a view to using these 'headlines' to support approaches to benefactors. EM offered to support the work to recruit a benefactor(s) and it was agreed she and Michaela should meet after Christmas to progress issue.

Letter of Complaint

The Board received a letter of complaint alleging EK had communicated inappropriately with complainer and his partner and more general accusations that KCFC is not being managed effectively. EK had previously advised the Board of the communication issues. The Board's strong view is that directors and staff must at all times show respect in all dealings with each other and with members of the public and this includes courteous communication. Further, the directors and staff also have the right to be treated with respect by others. The Board should be informed in the event that anyone feels they have not been treated with respect and directors and staff should not take matters into their own hands. It was agreed that separate written responses should be sent to the complainer and his partner even though she has not formally complained. SW agreed to write to the complainer and WM will write to the complainer's partner. EM will raise communication issues with EK as part of his annual appraisal.

Christmas Get together

SW's house on 21/12/12 from 5.00pm. All attending to please bring nibbles. Craig, Eamon and Nikki are also invited.

Date of next meeting

7th January 2013 at 5.00pm at the KCFC office.