

Assynt Development Trust Limited

Minutes of Board Meeting Thursday 23 January 2020, 7.00pm, Community Room, Lochinver Village Hall

Present

Willie Jack (WJ), Marianne Hutchison (MH), Nigel Goldie (NG), Boyd Alexander (BA),

In attendance

Adam Pellant (AP), Ewen McLachlan (EM), Clare Hawley Minutes Secretary, Roz Summers, Kat Dickson, Andy Summers, Greg Allen, Roy Champion, Carol Champion, Jane Young, Louisa Potter, Bill Badger, Jo Wright.

Apologies

Sarah-Anne MacLeod (SAM), Edwin de Jong (EdJ)

Climate Change Conversation / Climate Action – Open meeting

WJ welcomed all to the meeting and explained to the group that climate action was to be on the agenda of every ADT meeting going forward. ADT want to facilitate the conversation on climate change and hope the community will take it forward. The meeting was open for the public to discuss matters and make suggestions.

House heating – The meeting asked if the Highland Council (HC) are encouraging solar energy on domestic properties or whether it comes under the Energy Saving Trust?

Highland Council have a 'Carbon Clever' department that looks at insulation etc. and it may come under their remit. It was suggested that there might be schemes/grants available for people over a certain age to have their houses fully insulated and EM confirmed that there are not any grants but interest free loans are available. These loans may not be widely known about and it was suggested the information should be made available to the community. The meeting also discussed other ways households can save energy and heating such as switching off lights, only boiling water that is needed and wearing warmer clothes in the winter rather than relying on heating systems. It was proposed that educating the community on energy saving matters could be helpful.

Recycling – The meeting was told about the company TerraCycle that recycle hard to recycle materials. Could a community project be set up to collect and send off these items? There is a link on the TerraCycle website as to what can be recycled and where these items can be sent or collected. Currently one member of the community is collecting used crisp packets for recycling.

MH is collecting clothes for Highland Refugees and old clothes are always welcome by them.

Carbon – How can Assynt as a community reduce its carbon footprint? Two main points arose, how can we reduce our carbon emissions and secondly how can we take in more carbon?

Due the rural nature and widespread locations of housing in Assynt, reducing transportation and using public transport is not a viable option for most.

The organisation Adaption Scotland based in Edinburgh was recommended and has a Scottish Climate Challenge Programme looking at the consequences for Scotland through climate change. Their website has suggestions for communities to reduce their carbon footprint.

It was also suggested that protecting our peat bogs would be a way forward for Assynt. Damage to peat bogs can cause more carbon than transportation. Tree planting schemes are not fit for Assynt as this can damage peat bogs and causes more problems than it solves.

Transport – It was asked if the power points for the electric cars in the Village Hall car park are working and it was thought not. Because of how the parish is laid out it is hard to become carbon neutral transport wise and not practical. Can we use transport more intelligently like using lift share? There is a Facebook page that is widely used to offer car sharing. It was also asked if we can have signs in the shop windows asking patrons to switch off their engines while they are in the local shops.

Lobbying – ADT is to look at joining climate change lobbying groups for the Highlands and will connect with Planet Sutherland.

Tourism – The meeting asked if we can have a way of educating tourists and visitors to Assynt about looking after our environment. Although this does not necessarily effect climate change, it is part of the larger conversation on Environment.

Lighting – We have a lot village lighting such as the harbour and the meeting discussed if they are all necessary? The lighting the harbour is necessary for the health and safety of those working there during the night.

The Next Step - What do we want to do going forward? ADT wants to keep the Climate Change Conversation at the forefront of its work and would welcome the opportunity to work with other organizations in the area. A forum meeting with a structured agenda and guest speaker would be a good way of going forward. MH will get in touch with Planet Sutherland and talk to them about collaboration. ADT have an AGM on 18 February 2020 and the forum could be raised under AOB to take it forward. There is also an active group at Ullapool High School that involves Lochinver young people and it would be great to involve them.