

**Minutes of Board Meeting**  
**Held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024**  
**At Memorial Hall, Fort Augustus**

<b>Board Directors present</b>	Catriona Watson (CW) – Chair, Helen Clay (HC) – Vice chair, Lorn MacKay (LM), Chris Nelson (CN), Michael Alvey Anderson (MA), Patrick Ungless (PU), Frances Mansell (FMM), Kelvin Hill (KH), Paul McIntosh (PM)
<b>Apologies</b>	Fiona MacCormick (FM)
<b>Also in attendance</b>	Karen Edwards (KE) - Operations Manager, Donna Green (DG) – Finance Manager
<b>Minute Taker</b>	Karen Edwards (KE) - Operations Manager

Item	Minute	Action
1.	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b> CW welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies received from FM.	
2.	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024</b> These were accepted as a true record. Proposer MA, seconder FMM.	
3.	<b>Matters arising from minutes not on the agenda</b> None	
4.	<b>Cap &amp; LPP</b> KE welcomed Community Council members, Deirdre MacKinnon, Clare Levings & Claire Pegrum to this part of the meeting and introduced Nick Wright the consultant who has been developing the plans for us. Nick went through the process that had been adopted and shared his initial work on the draft document. He asked for feedback in some areas to help him flesh the document out more fully. In terms of next steps it was agreed by all present to hold an open day starting in Invermoriston and ending in Fort Augustus at a date to be agreed before the end of October. This would be an opportunity to share the draft document with the community. Any final changes will then be made before presenting the document to the Community Council at their November meeting. They will then adopt it and pass it to the Highland Council for adoption. Nick and the Community Councillors left at this point.	Deirdre/KE
5.	<b>Group Photo</b> The daylight had diminished too much by the time we got to this so needs to be done earlier next month.	

6.	<p><b>Accounts approval</b></p> <p>Janine Mansfield, Audit Manager from Rickard Luckin Ltd joined the meeting for this agenda item. Janine confirmed that they were happy with the accounts and able to issue a “clean” audit report. She then went through key points with the Directors and brought to their attention the minor recommendations that were being made. Janine confirmed that if any Directors had questions after the meeting she would be happy to answer them.</p> <p>The accounts were approved by the Directors and Janine left the meeting.</p> <p>DG advised the Board that she had been very happy with the positive and practical approach the auditors had taken in getting us ahead of our usual schedule from the previous few years. She would like to continue to work with them next year.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Finance accounts re-structuring</b></p> <p>DG explained the historic system used for designating funds and how this made it difficult to understand what funds are actually available as unrestricted She proposed redesignating the designated funds into an unrestricted general fund. She advised that this change would make it easier for Directors to understand what funds can be spent on things outside of the budgets and so can respond quickly to opportunities that arise. The board agreed to the redesignation and that it should happen at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.</p> <p>A discussion was had regarding the designation of the Legacy Fund. DG advised that SSE and OSCR are averse to charities holding large amounts of cash in high interest deposit accounts and that SSE had indicated, through Carol Masheter, that they would consider property an acceptable investment for the Legacy Fund, albeit they would ask the board to submit a robust policy for consideration. The board agreed to designate existing property as part of the Legacy Fund. It was agreed that DG would identify how much of each property’s value could be attributed to the fund.</p> <p>The board further agreed that the unrestricted cash balance would be designated for: Glentarff House, Memorial Hall; Village Hall repairs and, if enough cash remained available, the Convent Land project. Lastly, DG advised that whereas the Legacy Fund has previous been regarded as designated, the conversation with SSE had highlighted that it is in fact restricted, on the same terms as the original cash donation.</p> <p>CW added that to fully understand future funding, the Highland Council Councillors are being chased for a meeting to explain the new policy they have adopted, without consultation, for benefit funds in the future.</p>	KE
8.	<p><b>Changes to grants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Apprenticeships</b> - The Board approved the changes to the apprentice paperwork, including the new memorandum of understanding, previously circulated. It was agreed that the process should include mention of the regular follow up reports from employer and college.</li> </ul>	KE

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student Grants</b> - After discussion it was agreed that Student grants would be increased to £750 from the academic year 2025/26.</li> <li>• <b>Student Grants</b>- There has been a maximum of 4 grants per student allowed on this scheme. It was agreed that a further year may be approved by Directors, upon application. Where this is requested, the application must be taken to the Board for agreement. Paperwork to be updated to reflect this option.</li> <li>• <b>Grant CB-015-2023</b> – After School Club in Invermoriston. The volunteer running this had found insufficient children were attending. However, a new “Dungeons and Dragons” group had formed as a product of this. The children attending this are keen to continue and the group requested that the small amount of remaining funds could be used for this. Approved.</li> <li>• <b>Grant-G-187-2024 – Telford Centre.</b> The applicant was concerned about the conditions applied to this grant. After discussion it was agreed that whilst every effort would be made to accommodate and mitigate the concerns if the applicant felt unable to accept the conditions applied, the grant would be awarded but to a lower value, to exclude the VAT amount which they would thereby need to fund themselves.</li> </ul>	<p>KE</p> <p>KE/SC</p>
9.	<p><b>Inchnacardoch Bay</b></p> <p>KE advised that the Community Council’s solicitor is refusing to provide the information requested – identifying the burdens on the land – claiming that the purchaser must do this. This is frustrating to both parties as no decision has yet been reached without knowing what commitments are necessary for the land. It was agreed that KE would ask the Community Company solicitor for a cost to obtain the information in order to move this forward.</p>	KE
10.	<p><b>Memorial Hall – Licence to occupy</b></p> <p>After much discussion it was agreed not to proceed with this but to wait on due process to occupy formally. It was understood that this may delay work on the hall for some time as we need to wait on Scottish Canals to correct the Deeds before Highland Council can sell it to us. Pressure to be applied through Scottish Government if all else fails.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Rent review – affordable homes</b></p> <p>KE presented a comparison of our rents versus Highland Council, against whom we benchmark. As rents have not been increased for 3 years there is now a big difference on most properties. It was agreed that all rents would be increased with effect from 1/4/25 by up to 7.5% dependent upon the property. All tenants will be notified in writing.</p>	KE
12.	<p><b>AGM 12<sup>th</sup> November – Directors standing for re-election</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the following will step down and stand for re-election:</p> <p>Paul McIntosh – previously co-opted.</p> <p>Michael Alvey Anderson</p> <p>Catriona Watson</p> <p>Patrick Ungless</p>	

13.	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KE asked if 2 Directors would be available to do an assessment of a grant for the Kilchuimen Academy. CW &amp; PU volunteered.</li> <li>• KE advised the Board of a letter from the Community Council asking if the Company might want to purchase any more homes. The Highland Council Empty Homes Officer has advised them of a list of empty properties that might be available. It was agreed that this was not something to take on at this time.</li> <li>• KE invited Board members to join in an online forum run by SSE on 22/10 in Good Governance. Details to be forwarded to those interested.</li> <li>• KE advised that she had been speaking to a Support Assistant at the school about the possibility of them starting an after-school club. They were seeking funding. It was agreed that this should be pursued further and the board would be happy to consider equipment funding if the club met the criteria.</li> <li>• KE reminded Directors of the date for the skips at the end of September</li> <li>• FMM confirmed she had attended the Golf Club centenary celebrations and the Club had publicly acknowledged Community Company support.</li> <li>• HC – advised that any future fly tipping should not be removed but reported to the Highland Council. KE to notify Caretakers.</li> <li>• CN was disappointed to note that the Invermoriston shop had failed to acknowledge the support of the Community Company in their recent Ness News article.</li> <li>• CN advised that he was assessing a grant application for Community Tuesdays. As this is such a popular local event he asked if Directors would be happy to review and approve via email so that they could start sooner rather than later. All agreed.</li> <li>• LM raised concern about abuse of the community larder. After discussion it was agreed that LM would lock up at 8pm each night once the clocks change and Tarff Trading staff would be asked to open it on arrival in the morning. LM also volunteered to be a standby to re-stock the larder weekly when FM is unable to do so.</li> </ul>	
14.	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b>  <b>Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October, Memorial Hall.</b></p> <p>It was agreed that from December to April meetings would change to Wednesday evenings to accommodate those directors who volunteer their help at Community Tuesdays.</p>	