**Unst Partnership Board Meeting minutes**

**7pm, Wednesday 17th Feb 2021 by Zoom**

**Present:** Gordon Thomson, Sarah McBurnie, George Rodger, Don Craig, Di Hervey, Colin Edwards-Horton, Susan Edwards-Horton, Joan Bailey, Frances Browne, Kathleen Johnson, Peter Sandison.

**Welcome & Apologies:** Gordon welcomed everyone to the meeting, including new employee Peter. Apologies from June Harrison

**Appointment of Office Bearers**

Chair- Gordon, nominated by Don, seconded by Joan. Vice Chair: Sarah, nom. by Joan, sec. by George; Company Secretary/Treasurer: George, nom. by Sarah, sec. by Susan. Bon Accord Accountancy to continue to audit accounts.

**UP Shop report**

Kathleen said the shop had good support in December but had closed for January and February when she was placed on furlough. She was concerned about health of volunteers and customers, many of whom were over 60. Now that vaccines were being given, we felt the shop could open in March, taking goods into the office in the meantime.

Later, directors unanimously agreed to renew Kathleen’s contract until March 2022. The Shop had done well, trading from August to December and there was still a steady stream of donations.

**Recycling Centre**

Peter had started work on Monday and had met with Sarah and Gordon. He is preparing a draft community mailshot to see what people would want to see in a recycling centre. This will be circulated to Directors for comments.

The Centre needs to be sustainable, have an area for shop goods and workshop space as well as being a social hub/meeting place.

Peter had worked on various recycling/renewables projects around the world. It was important to have premises that had an income stream to keep the running costs covered.

Sarah spoke about the idea of a laundry. With over 30 self-catering properties she felt there was a demand for larger industrial-sized washing machines and a drier, possibly an ironing facility too. She had price lists from Lerwick and Aberdeen laundries and had spoken to Vic Thomas at Nesting Scrapstore. **Peter to follow up.**

NCDC were another useful contact as they are looking at agricultural waste, polycrubs, etc.

Peter thought we need to come up with a good title for the Centre, to do with up-cycling. We could ask for suggestions from the community. We would not be producing large amounts of waste, which is what a recycling centre might suggest. (Belfast called theirs the “Rediscovery Centre”.)

***We need to set up a database of local emails for newsletters/surveys****.* A postal mailshot to each home in Unst, including photocopying and stamps, was about £300. Email could save on paper and postage.

Gordon said we had over 100 members on our database but there are probably 300 households in Unst. Data protection was important so any email would need to be sent out “BCC” Blind Carbon Copy .

Once a design had been made, we would need to look at funding. One way to start could be through Crowdfunding or Community shares. Community Share Scotland (CSS) and the Plunkett Foundation were both good contacts for this **(Frances).** Toby Sandison, an ex-employee, actually works for CSS in Edinburgh. They assist communities in getting share capital.

Community shares are not like normal shares, paying out interest. Instead, the share money stays with the project. It may be 3 or 5 years before people can get their share money back, if at all. It is basically a way of getting donations and showing community support for a project rather than an investment scheme.

Food composting and “Big Hanna” came up again. We could put grass cuttings and cardboard in to make compost for raised beds or polycrubs. The secondhand “Big Hanna” machine that has been on the mainland for a while is now about 20 years old so it may be that some sort of more modern Bio-Digester may be a better option. The cost of running and maintaining such a machine needs to be investigated. **(Peter)**

A dedicated polycrub could be used to grow a cash crop such as raspberries.

**Peter** was referred to *Frances, Michael Duncan SIC, Maree Hay (NCDC Polycrubs)* and *Fiona Stirling (HIE)* to let them know about the project.

**Skip day Sat 20th February**

Next skip day was on Saturday, 11-1pm at pier. **Gordon, George, Joan** could be there, with **Peter** and **Sarah** and Chris & Gina on trailer pickups. There were still some items from last Skip day in pier container.

**Fair Food Fund**

UP had received another £4.5 K for the Food fund. It was being spent at about £1000 per month so could run until May. UP would claim 5% (£225) for admin but the rest was going in Food and Electricity vouchers. We discussed ways of assisting with fuel for these without top-up Keycards. We could pay for coal but most houses were all electric. **Gordon** to ask CAB and Graham Booth for advice about how they worked in Lerwick and Fetlar respectively.

If anyone is requiring assistance with food or electricity, they should contact Josie McMillan at Unst Community Council (711554) or Gordon at UP (up@unst.org) .

**Meeting closed at 8.05pm**