

Unst Partnership Ltd

MINUTES OF AN EXTRA GENERAL MEETING HELD IN UNIT 1, HAGDALE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE ON

Thursday 16TH October 2014 AT 6.30PM

PRESENT

Colin Edwards-Horton
Susan Edwards-Horton
Minnie Mouatt
Gordon Thomson (Chair)
Paul Thomson

IN ATTENDANCE

Verona Shaw

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

GT welcomed everyone to the meeting; apologies were noted from Sarah McBurnie, Jane Macaulay, George Rodger and Steven Swan.

2. MATERNITY PAY, MATERNITY COVER AND EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS

Bridgette supplied a breakdown of the dates and financial information relating to Verona's maternity pay and leave. It was confirmed that UP can claim back 103% of the maternity pay from HMRC and this can be in advance of payments made to Verona. Directors were given a copy of the HMRC calculated print out and those not at the meeting can access this from the UP office. GT acknowledged that this then allowed the Board to confidently arrange for a maternity cover post from December 2014 to June 2015 as sufficient funds are in place to cover this.

Discussion ensued around employer obligations and how Verona could return to work to undertake the remaining six months of her contract. It was unclear at this point whether there would be a LDO post, alternative post to offer or a situation of redundancy. Those present felt that the conditions of Employment Law were unknown and therefore professional advice will need to be taken asap. BT to enquire with Danny Cummings of ACAS for advice on this matter; VS to contact Fiona Stirling at HIE with the same information request and queries concerning the current funding agreement. It was requested by the Directors that where possible, this information should be made available to the Board before the next meeting.

The Developing Unst Tourism project (and associated Tourism Development Officer role) was then discussed in detail. Until the Directors hear if the award has been granted by the Coastal Communities Fund (December 2014) then it was agreed that it is difficult to know what employment opportunities will be available for Verona returning to work and where this post will be based.

Discussions continued around reducing overhead costs and about the lease for Unit 1 Hagdale. It was agreed to propose at the next Board meeting that the current lease is not continued beyond June 2014. Future office space will be discussed again subject to the operational options for UP being decided upon.

Short term actions were set for Verona: drafting the paperwork needed for setting up the Tourism Development Officer role, searching for alternative funding streams if the CCF application is unsuccessful and preparing the administration needed for the LDO maternity cover post.

3. FUTURE OPTIONS

Those present discussed the future of the Partnership and associated operations/services roughly based on the options presented by NCDC at the recent Directors Strategy workshop. Past consultations and projects were deliberated and some new ideas for products and services were noted.

There were three general offerings of thought for the future of UP:

- 1) Project-led funding which could see continuation of the promotion of Unst, information dissemination, business support services etc. rather than developing one sole, large business idea. This was based on the understanding that presently there is no one obvious business opportunity to take forward (or viable asset to purchase). This would likely rely on grant funding and not be self-sustaining in the near future.
- 2) Income generation via the creation of several small locally sourced products that could be built upon in time, leading to asset management and further business development/investments. This option is not dependent solely on grant funding.
- 3) Focus on developing Unst tourism, with a TDO in post and associated income generating activities/services. This option would likely combine start-up grant funding and build-up income generation in time.

These ideas will be carried forward to the next Committee meeting and discussed again.

It was felt that until the requested information above was clarified then any further operational options could not be discussed in detail at this meeting.

The next meeting is Tuesday 28th October 2014 at 6.30pm in Unit 1 (tbc).