

Appendix 1

Unst Partnership Ltd. Chairman's Report - 29th April 2015

Staffing

This year Verona Shaw went on Maternity Leave in December and Megan Burns took over. Verona is now a proud mum and Megan is working until June 2015, when her contract ends. We now have funding from June – March 2016, only announced last month, from HIE. It is likely that Verona will return in December so we will need to advertise for cover for that interim period.

In addition we received funding from the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF),(part of the Crown Estate funding) for a Tourism Development Officer and Tom Morton was appointed from April 1st for 6 months until 30 September. (Tom is in hospital at present but we hope that he makes a quick recovery and will be back at work soon.) This is a two year post and Directors will need to decide on how they progress with this post after September, in consultation with CCF, the funders.

Bridgette Thomason continues as our Admin Officer and we thank all these people (and the Directors) for their work over the past year.

Training

Megan has attended several courses and conferences on Social Enterprises and Renewable Energy. Several Directors took part in workshop training on Roles and Responsibilities in June; and also an away day to Northmavine Development Company NCDC in September for a fact finding mission on how NCDC attracted funding and supported the community there.

North Isles Community Broadband We commissioned a study by Shetland Broadband LLP (Ian Brown, Alan Longmuir) into the costs of this and they produced a report in April 2014. The cost of Broadband to the North Isles was considerable, whatever way it was done, and we now await BT 's decision on the areas they are going to serve before we can begin to bid for funding to provide a similar service to the areas they are not going to.

Waste Management

We have had support from Eriskay Associates after Paula Goddard's Waste Survey highlighted the need for a better way to dispose of waste, particularly food, paper and plastic waste. The lack of Skips was also a concern. UP received funding from SIC Community Development Fund towards skip provision and we carried out a pilot project last winter. Skips were well supported and so with consultation at Farmers Markets and through Newsletters, pledges to fund a more regular service have now been received. We have about £2500 in pledges – but the overall cost is nearly twice that. We have now (just last week) received further funding in this financial year from the SIC to continue this venture. Megan has now sent letters out to those pledging in order to start the scheme. (Thanks to Sandisons for providing an area to site the skips, which are provided by Victor Jamieson Ltd.)

Megan is also looking to fund a Food Waste processor ("Big Hannah") to produce compost for local use. Cost is in the region of £20K and two potential locations are both at Saxa Vord.

Energy Audit

We made a bid to CARES (Community Renewable Energy Scotland) for a study to look at ways of providing small scale renewables for 8 public buildings in Unst. The funding was approved and the study conducted by Ross Gazey of PURE. The various organisations (Care Centre, Leisure Centre, School, Health Centre, 3 local Halls and UP office.) could all make savings over a period of time and are now considering their options, involving solar panels or wind turbines.

Hydrogen study

In January we were approached by the SIC and encouraged to submit another bid to CARES, this time for an off-grid Hydrogen project. This would look to use a large turbine or turbines to produce Hydrogen, Nitrogen and Oxygen, with a view to providing a cheap renewable fuel for cars, buses and ferries. UP received funding of £25K and the Study is to be undertaken by PURE, a partner in the original bid, and monitored by UP and CARES' Ross Jones. The study has started now and concludes in February 2016.

Tourism

The 2014 Unst Tourist map covered its production costs through advertising. This year's map has been revised as a more traditional 2D version and will be printed shortly.

Several tourism meetings arranged by HIE and Geoparks Shetland have taken place in the past year, in conjunction with Yell and Fetlar. This is something that the TDO will follow up on.

Northern Lights Bistro

We note that a local person is now planning to open the Bistro and we wish them all success.

NTS property- Halligarth House and Grounds

UP has provided a point of contact to assist the National Trust for Scotland in taking forward the development of the Edmondston/Saxby property at Halligarth. A study by AB Associates has costed the project at £1.2 M and it was described as "aspirational" at a local public presentation by NTS' Stephen Copp. NTS have engaged Shetland Amenity Trust to carry out the project if it receives funding and are applying to Heritage Lottery Fund. They expect to hear by December 2015-Jan 2016.

Shetland Credit Union

We have had discussions with Shetland Credit Union in setting up an "outreach" service in Unst. One meeting has taken place and was useful to those who attended. A further meeting has been arranged for May. SCU will provide money advice, debt advice and runs a savings scheme whereby savers can apply for a loan of 3 times their savings.

Asset Management

Our assets consist of one wind turbine at Hagdale bringing in approx. £1500 per year, an electric scooter (needing repair), three polytunnels, gardening equipment, a trailer available for Hire, and Office premises. The last four bring in a modest income. We sold off three polytunnels this year at £200 each as the costs of repairing polythene and insurance were proving too high.

Promotion and communication

We now have a Facebook page, a website and a quarterly newsletter going out to members. Membership has increased to over 110, one of the targets set by HIE's Fiona Stirling as our Account Managers. Fiona regularly attends meetings to advise and discuss. Minutes are displayed at local shops and a report is made to each meeting of Unst Community Council as a standing agenda item. Hazel Spence is now a Co-opted Director representing UCC.

Gordon Thomson, Chairman