

Kincardineshire Development Partnership
Board of Trustees Meeting – Thursday 29th April 2021 at 7.00 pm
Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Present:

Ron Sharp – Portlethen Town Association (Chair)
Mairi Eddie – Benholm & Johnshaven Community Council
Sandra Davison – Mearns Area Partnership
Marion McNeil – Crathes, Drumoak & Durriss Community Council
George Cruickshank – Newtonhill, Muchalls & Cammachmore Community Council
Bob McKinney – North Kincardine Rural Community Council
Bridget Scott – Bettridge Centre
Andrew Newton – Stonehaven Tolbooth Association

In Attendance:

Jacky Niven – KDP Development Worker
Margo Titmuss – KDP Admin

Apologies:

Isabella Williamson – Arbuthnott Community Council

1. Welcome

The Chair, Ron Sharp, welcomed all those present and thanked them for attending. Ron explained that Jacky and Margo would leave the meeting after the Development Officer's Report to allow the Trustees to discuss staff support / liaison and potential future funding sources.

Apologies were given from Isabella Williamson

AOCB

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the formal meeting of 4th February 2021 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. They were proposed by Bridget Scott and seconded by George Cruickshank. The minutes of the formal meeting of 24th March 2021 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. They were proposed by George Cruickshank and seconded by Mairi Eddie.

3. Matters Arising.

There were no matter arising.

4. Monthly Reports

Finance

The March finance report was shared in advance of the meeting. Andrew Newton advised that the annual accounts had highlighted that KDP is £3000 better off than the previous year. The first SLA payment of £3000 had been received.

Sandra queried why there were two pension payments in March. Margo explained that no payment had been taken in February, hence two Creative Pension transactions in March.

New Members

There have been no member applications received since the last meeting.

KDP is expecting nominations from Damien Dennison of Portlethen Community Council and Karen Traill of Edzell Woods Community Trust to become KDP Trustees.

5. Sub-group / Committee Reports

Governance

Andrew advised OSCR has accepted the amendment to the KDP constitution as agreed at the March 2021 AGM.

Windfarm Subgroup

Isabella was not present at the meeting. Margo provided a brief update as follows: Hillhead of Auquhirie has reopened until end June 2021.

St John's Hill received 7 applications. All were successful.

6. KDP Development Officer Report

The Development Officers' Activities Highlights were circulated in advance of the meeting.

In addition, it was discussed that Portlethen Allotments require support to arrange an asset transfer. They must first become a SCIO, before taking ownership of the land.

Also, it has been advised that Portlethen Community Larder need to move out of the Porty Cabin in June. Ron is to look into this further as the larder is still very much needed.

Jacky and Margo left the meeting at this point.

7. Staff Support/Liaison

Ron said it had been a difficult year with Covid and the loss of the office, with staff working from home in stressful circumstances and possibly feeling more isolated and uncertain about the future of KDP. He's concerned that the board needs to make sure it is carrying out all aspects of managing staff correctly and staying on top of things like:

- Production of up to date contracts of employment and job descriptions
- Appraisals and annual reviews

- Holiday arrangements and working hours requirements
- Time management of SLA's and funding development
- Up to date personnel files, contracts of employment and job descriptions etc.

He asked for someone on the board to take on the HR role and locate and review all relevant documentation and make sure it's correct. This is as much to protect the staff as it is to protect KDP. George volunteered, saying he's worked in an HR role in the past, however he may not be up to date with current legislation, so that would need to be checked.

Margo to send him all personnel files once she's back from holiday.

An HR Subgroup will be formed with Ron, Mairi and George to look at personnel issues and to make sure that everything is up to date. They will continue with the current informal method of management, having fortnightly catch up liaison meetings to ensure any staffing issues are dealt with quickly before they escalate into something more serious.

It was also suggested that some form of time writing may need to be looked at, in order to keep a record of what staff are working on and for how long, with regard to SLA work vs business development etc.

Redundancies - we need to make sure funds are ring-fenced for this in the event that the fundraising isn't successful. George will check contracts and latest rules.

Pay rise - figures to be produced for next meeting and will be decided then.

8. Funding

When the Funding Subgroup first met they looked primarily at other ways of earning money for KDP via social enterprise, business opportunities etc, however Jacky is proceeding with the view that KDP's work would be better suited for grant funding. The board agrees. However it was felt that it's not really fair to expect her to do all the fundraising herself as well as do her day job. The board is also concerned that the uncertainty over the SLA might result in losing two valuable members of staff. Sandra queried whether we have a long-term strategy for KDP. It was agreed that we have no specific plan beyond keeping going.

Ron is planning to get a face-to-face meeting with the Area Manager in June about the SLA. He's hopeful that the council will have a change of heart re funding rural partnerships & at the very least there may be more funding from the Area Manager because his priorities will be different from those of Economic Development. However we can't rely on that.

It was therefore felt that sourcing and applying for grants should start sooner rather than later, because it's normally a very lengthy process. It was also agreed that the Funding Subgroup should get more involved and take on the responsibility of securing funding.

Bridget, Bob, Mairi & Marion will be on Funding Subgroup - and there is a general invite to other board members to join the group. If enough people are involved, then that commitment shouldn't be too onerous.

9. AOCB

Bob attended the St John's Wind Farm meeting on 27th of April as the independent KDP representative. He had some observations and recommendations as a result:

1. A declaration of interest wasn't part of the meeting until Bob asked for it, although he feels that this was probably just an oversight, because it had been missed off the agenda.
2. Although every panel operates slightly differently, he felt it's important for every member of each panel to have a copy of that windfarm's rules along with application forms, so that the panel has a clear and current understanding of what is and what is not permissible for funding. This is particularly important as the chair changes at each meeting.
3. Assessment panel members must declare any interest they have in any application and not play a part in that discussion. Having said that, it may be difficult in a small area such as St John's to make sure all panel members are independent.
4. KDP needs to ensure there's a very transparent assessment process to protect the organisation and panel members in the event that a disgruntled applicant calls the decision into question. We also need to make sure our process is excellent particularly when pursuing future work administering new wind farm funds such as Rickarton.
5. The burden of responsibility is falling disproportionately on Isabella's shoulders, so we feel more support from the board would be helpful.

Sandra confirmed that in the past on another panel, there had been a case of a rejected applicant querying the assessment process. However, because of very good record keeping and careful sticking to fund criteria, over a number of years, it was possible to prove that the panel operated strictly within the rules and had been consistent with them.

The board's conclusion was that KDP should prescribe a set of words which would be standard for all wind farm groups, eg. declaration of interests and what should happen when that declaration is made etc.

It was also agreed that the independent KDP member on each windfarm panel should be the person involved in vetting applications to support Margo and take some of the burden off Isabella.

Bob volunteered to have a look at the wind farm guidance, and the topic will go on the agenda for the next KDP meeting.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting will be Thursday 3rd June at 7.30pm on Zoom.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Minutes taken by Margo Titmuss and Bridget Scott.



I, RONALD SHARP hereby confirm these minutes reflect a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed: R Sharp Date: 7/6/2021

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