

Notes FDT meeting 21.04.21

Present/apologies for absence:

Present:

Luke Emerton (Chair), Iain Frazer (Treasurer), Josh Thornhill, Anne Hislop (Vice chair), David Howell, Iain MacKay, Chris Robinson (Co.Sec.), Kayt Howell (Manager), Gordon Cowtan (Consultant)

Apologies: None

1. AGM.

KH sought approval of AGM minutes by Jo from the board, but GC advised that technically, these would have to wait until the next AGM for approval. So, this was left in abeyance for now.

2. Review of the AGM.

KH advised that the AGM went off reasonably well given the Covid restrictions to which the Board agreed.

3. Finance report

Iain Fraser in his capacity as Treasurer of FDT, reported on the current financial situation based on the figures he distributed to the board earlier.

Finances look reasonably okay in line with expectations and there were no issues to discuss as most of it revolved around Balgair at present, which would be dealt with later in the meeting.

4. Balgair

The minutes relating to Balgair are held as reserved business due to personal & sensitive financial data being present.

5. Futures

KH discussed previously that we need to revisit this for a time beyond Balgair. Start introducing ideas etc for this into future board meetings as a continuation of what had been started before.

GC advised that the mortgage would be paid off in 2 years so KH said it was important to focus on what do we do with the money when that happens.

KH requested ideas from the board.

Chris requested a recap as to where we had got to – KH agreed to do this **ACTION KH**

Josh thought we could put together the broad aims in short, medium and long term goals KH advised regarding surveys we had put out previously – some interesting results came back from the community – **also put this into the recap KH will put together.**

Luke suggested this would be good to get things moving again with a plan for moving forward.

KH suggested we could use our Zoom account to start some smaller things earlier.

Luke suggested we put some time aside at each future meeting to discuss the potential Futures project. This was agreed to by the board.

6. EV tariff

The EV charger costs £1k per annum now, so it was decided that we need to start charging a tariff as we can't keep this going at the current cost to FDT.

The rate needs to be set by the board and a fair usage policy worked out, to help prevent some users hogging the facility as has happened up to now.

Anne & Luke discussed the use of it as a convenience for the community and visitors.

GC agreed with Anne that we're not looking to make a profit but, we just need to break even. Sandy could tell us what the ongoing costs are – board agreed to charge at a rate which covers the cost – Josh suggested charging a slight additional cost to cover a replacement when the charger needed to be replaced in the future.

KH suggested that there are issues with folk wanting to install on street charging for their cars and that this may become problematical.

Iain McKay suggested that EV may give way to hydrogen in the years ahead.

GC asked if there could be support from EST for installing additional chargers elsewhere in the village – there was a general discussion about this including fitting chargers on lamp-posts as Anne has seen in London on her trips there.

Chris thought that the council had previously looked at putting in charging points for EV's but there was no conclusion drawn.

Iain McK & GC discussed the provision for EV charging points - **KH will look into it further.**

7. Use of HQ at Sports centre

KH advised that HQ not being used except for storage – suggest we remove the stuff we don't need and digitise the paperwork and use our hut for storage as needed.

DH & Iain McK suggested the Bowling Club could be a better option for a base for FDT, due to better internet connection etc and we could share the love between the Sports centre and the bowling club for various meetings etc.

Unanimous agreement to clear out the stuff from the sports centre. **Need volunteers to do this from the board along with KH.**

8. Sub committee

As done previously in FDT to make us quicker to react for Kayt & Gordon.
Luke & Anne will start this off to start with.

9. Best methods for board response

DH suggested the URGENT or Response required – and suggested board should respond to the stuff sent out from the staff to the board.

DH acknowledged that we are volunteers but we DO have responsibilities to respond as a board with feedback to the staff for action.

DH suggested putting a deadline on responses required from the board
GC suggested that something that the board had tasked him with when sent, didn't get any feedback – this needs to change. This was agreed.

Josh advised how his organisation deals with these things – Luke suggested that the sub com approach could help with this.

DH suggested that Josh could bring his knowledge of this type of problem into play and advise the best options. **Josh?**

10. Consultants' Report.

Report sent out by GC. Luke apologised if he couldn't fully understand some of the content. GC happy to further explain stuff as required, which other board members were pleased to note.

GC advised 2 other things.

1. Files missing from Sharepoint – KH just restored those that she could – 72 in total. GC not sure what happened but has turned on auditing to monitor actions to see if it happens again then we will have some info as to why it has happened.

2. The REIF loan – the loan from REIF on Earlsburn is a 10 year loan – at end of year 7 the interest rate would change from fixed to a variable rate if we wanted, GC suggested we could remain on a fixed rate to provide certainty to us for the final phase.
Can be done - fixed at 6.1% above base rate for us for the rest of the time of the loan.

GC asked the board what we wanted to do about this? Board decided to go ahead with fixed rate on a unanimous vote. **GC to now action this.**

11. Managers' report.

KH to check a couple of things – downloading of Directors pack – KH will upload again for access tomorrow.

Chris to do the return to Companies House with help from GC

Invite Hugh to stay on FCE board if he wants to KH to ACTION.

KH advised that FDT were getting lots of requests for help and advice from FDT from other community groups, however, we do not have the ability to service this need at present due to other pressing requirements.

Finbar (missed the surname) wants FDT to take part in a film about sustainability stories for Cop 26 - Board agreed to do this. KH to ACTION.

12. AOB

Iain Mck advised of an email from Nick Morgan from Scottish Hydro Engineering for cables from the new wind farm going above ground for part of the way over his land, whilst being placed underground up to his land. He questioned why they were underground from most of the rest of the way from Shellock Windfarm and yet proposed to go above ground over his land. Chris suggested that the energy distributor covers the distribution after a certain distance from the windfarm who then have no further say and that the energy distributor does have the right to overground it as they see fit, including compulsory access over peoples' land regardless of their opposition or otherwise.

Everyone thought this to be somewhat heavy handed and unacceptable.

After discussing this point, the meeting was brought to a conclusion.

Next meeting 26th May 7pm.

RESERVED BUSINESS

4. Balgair

GC waiting for HES to visit – this is holding things up, due to Covid restrictions on site visits, numbers of people on site etc.

GC reported that there had been a site visit by Calorgas but their proposals were not really a viable solution – not an easy fix due to pipework issues etc as laid out in GC's report.

GC advised that he didn't think their solutions could work due to the onsite restrictions for such an alternative installation, as itemised in his written report.

GC sent round a break-even analysis as requested by the board – he advised that it was wide in terms of scope but essentially the worst-case analysis is that we break even after 7 years or, in the best case scenario, after 7 months.

Comments requested – Luke asked about loan repayments - were they included in the assessment?

GC said we will be doing this regardless but not confident to include this in the analysis at this stage.

It was noted that the loan is up in July/August this year.

GC thanked the board for sorting the first of three payments to the park, for the electricity used over the past 5 years which had previously been unmetered due to a design oversight in the system, subsequently corrected with the recent installation of a meter.

The payments were extrapolated from the 1 year of data the meter has provided for the last year of operation to cover electricity used in the past 5 years.

GC advised that this would make things easier for his negotiations with them, going forward.

Survey out to house holders – done by GC - deadline for returns is 30th April.

Residents' response generally okay now that things are working for them albeit at £11k cost to FDT per household.

GC raised the issue as raised at the AGM by a resident about defaulting on the loan from EST - DH asked if this was really a viable option when discussing the predicament FDT find themselves in with the Scottish Government.

It was noted that Alyn Smith MP for Stirling and a Lawyer to profession, suggested arguing “force majeure” as a reason for defaulting on the loan.

DH suggested contacting Alyn again to discuss this - even if only to act as a nuclear option with the Scottish Government if they tried to wash their hands of the matter, GC said he would contact AS again to further discuss the SG position.

Luke asked re: HES, are they under the control of EST? – Kayt thought they were closely linked to the EST.

Josh suggested that it would be legitimate to say that Balgair was a large financial drain on FDT and that EST do bear some responsibility for this issue - DH agreed that this could be a route due to the circumstances that are costing us to look after 27 households at the expense of 300 householders.

KH suggested the board give feedback on the break even analysis. **ACTION by Board prior to next board meeting.**

KH stated that Alyn Smith's office got back to us to say that their letter had not been replied to by Alternative Heat as yet.

GC suggested a visit to site by the board to the site to familiarise themselves with the conditions at the site – everyone agreed that this would be useful – GC to arrange a suitable date & time for this to take place. **ACTION GC**

