

**New Galloway Community Enterprises Ltd
Management Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday 6th April, 2020 at 7.30pm by ZOOM.**

1. Apologies: ---

2. Present: Mike Brown (Chair), Sheila Dressler, Simon Kennedy, Helen Keron, Wendy Leach, Jon Nimmo, Maybelle Thomson, Joan Walker, Margaret Watson.

3. Adoption of Minutes of the Meeting of 16th March 2020: Proposed by MW, seconded by SK

4. Impact of COVID-19 to date and future developments

a. On Staff: Andrea Smith had written a report on developments to date (circulated to the Board) and WL summarised the key points. The two new members of staff, Kyle Leach and Sarah Howard, are doing well and training is in place for the temporary staff, Arthur Harfield, Kirsten Ansell and Lynsey Kirkpatrick. This is made very difficult particularly with till training due to the 2 metre social distancing required. They are working in teams of 2 in order to avoid having too many people in the shop at one time and AS is working from Skerrow for ordering and other admin tasks. The ordering system is going well and being well received but is time-consuming when calling customers for payment. Stock is being organised in the shop and photos are being taken to put on line. **SD** has been asked to take the photos. Supplies are difficult with a number of suppliers closed. Others are very busy as they are also doing home deliveries. Newspapers have been temporarily suspended but AS is looking into the possibility of re-instating them for customers with vouchers or orders, these could then be left in a box at the door or go out with orders. Possibly the Galloway News could also be re-instated. AS is waiting to hear back from Menzies. A few customers are still coming and knocking on the shop door wanting simple items and are sometimes aggressive if refused. This is upsetting for staff who should not be placed in a one-to-one facing role until the peak of the COVID-19 has passed. The Board agreed that a poster would be put on the door saying that staff have been instructed **not** to answer the door to customers. [Later: A poster was put up the next day]

b. On shop service: The possibility of re-opening the shop to customer service was discussed. It was agreed that both Staff and Board would like to re-open but it is too soon at this stage and the matter should be kept under review. At present there is too great a risk for both staff and older customers. It is understood that some customers are going by car to both Dalry and Balmaclellan shops which are still open. These shops are run by owner/managers while NGCE has a responsibility to paid staff. We are responsible for their welfare and the sustainability of the community business which could be jeopardized if we lost key members of staff. MB said that any change should only be to improve service and it was agreed that to re-open then have to go backwards would be more detrimental. HK proposed

that the Board reviews the situation in 2 weeks, when there might be a possibility of opening part time. This was agreed by the Board.

MB proposed that the Board extend thanks to all the staff and to WL and MT for their support of the shop team.

- c. On Accommodation:** HK reported that she was disappointed with the initial approach of Discover Scotland. With the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic all occupants of the self catering accommodation left. At first Discover Scotland told people cancelling that they wouldn't receive any refunds and to check their terms and conditions. A week later they offered vouchers for those wishing to re-book later this year or in 2021. There is now therefore zero occupancy but fortunately not many overheads when the flats are unoccupied. Discover Scotland also required our contract to be renewed into 2021 due to the voucher system and in the process committed us to a 2% rise in fees. Discover Scotland also said any March takings wouldn't be paid at this time. [Minute redacted in part to protect commercial confidentiality].
- d. On Community Engagement:** Sam Rushton has been very involved with the volunteering programme during the COVID-19 pandemic. She has been working with the Community Council, NGCE and LING volunteering group who have organised the delivery of orders in addition to other help for people self-isolating during the lock down. SR has also made an application to the Blackcraig Wind Farm Fund for a grant to help the community during the pandemic and started making applications for funding of the 2020 Food Month. The monthly Oil Purchasing Group order has also been completed at a favourable rate. MB said that we should find out how many extra hours SR had done over the last weeks and ensure that she is paid. It was suggested that some funding could be obtained for this from the Community Council. SD suggested that this would be a legitimate use of any surplus BLF grant money. MW will find out how many extra hours SR has done and also check the council's "resilience fund" as the work was for the whole community. The Board expressed their thanks to SR for the work she had done.
- e. On Finances:** HK had circulated a summary of the current balances and explained that the income from the shop is approximately half what it was this time last year. The co-op account (which holds the BL funding for the shop subsidy and the Community Engagement Worker) stands at £25,299 and lasts until mid-July. It includes circa £2K per month for the CEW and whatever shop subsidy is required. The next income from the BLF is due in July to cover the shop subsidy and the CEW wages for 6 months. The BOS accommodation account is at £5,750 but the only costs at present are electricity and basic cleaning. The BOS shop account is £6,519. The gross profit over the last 2 weeks is approx. half this time last year and costs are up with extra staff and training. Also there will be no extra income over the Easter holidays as there will be no visitors in the area and in the flats and no opportunity for customers to browse for Easter Eggs etc. HK has applied on NGCE's behalf to D&G Council for the Government's Small Business Support Grant of £10K. The Board agreed that Andrea Smith should staff the shop to whatever level is necessary. WL and MT will act on the Board's behalf to assist with this. Emphasis was also made to ensure AS is paid for ALL the hours she is working. Two members of staff are self-isolating due to underlying health conditions since the middle of March. After receiving a supportive letter from the Big Lottery on 19th

March (see appendix) MB in consultation with WL and HK sanctioned payment of a normal month's wages to both for March. The Board agreed to continue this for two months (April and May) and then review the situation. It was recognised that both were important members of the NGCE team and had made a significant contribution to the success of the shop to date. **MB** will get further clarification on the situation from the BLF

MB will also speak to both members of staff and explain the situation. It was agreed that the matter will be reviewed after two months. [This Minute has been redacted in part in the interest of staff confidentiality]

The situation with the housekeepers was then discussed. [*SK declared an interest and left the meeting.] Both housekeepers are on zero hours contracts. One is happy not to be working at this time. The other is continuing to keep the flats clean as they are being used by volunteers and staff. She is also doing cleaning work in the shop which comes approximately in line with her normal hours. [*SK returned to the meeting.] [This Minute has been redacted in part in the interest of staff confidentiality]

5. Property: WL reported that the damp patch above the stove in Stroan is slowly drying out.

MB and SK have checked the roof ridge where there is a problem with some tiles. **SK** will contact Joe Harper (Roofer) and ask him for an estimate. SK has tidied the boiler room and made a log of routine jobs for maintenance.

6. AOB: SD said that customers are asking questions on Facebook including ones about available products in stock etc. She suggested doing a list of FAQs as it is not easy for her to answer all the individual questions. The Board agreed to this. HK suggested that an automated message could be put on telling customers to contact the shop by email, this would be more effective for up to date information. [Later: SD implemented an automated message]

MW said that there was a proposal from volunteers for a Poster Competition for the children. The entries could be put in the shop window and prizes would be Easter eggs donated by Tesco/ Co-op.

7. DoNM: It was agreed that the current policy should be reviewed in two weeks, therefore a meeting will be held by Zoom on Wednesday 15th April at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 9pm.

Appendix. Extract from the Big Lottery letter of 19th March to NGCE

"We will support you to support your communities – we trust you to know what is best. This means that:

- *We will support you and your teams through this crisis: for example,
- continuing to pay staff salary so that you can support existing staff who need to be off sick, self-isolate or have caring responsibilities
- considering any requests for support if you experience particular financial pressures as a result of the situation*