

**New Galloway Community Enterprises Ltd.
Management Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday 4th May, 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.

Attending: Sam Rushton

3. Adoption of Minutes of the Meeting of 15th April 2020

Proposed by - JN

Seconded by – SK

4. Retail Business report: Sam Rushton took part in this item of the meeting as she has been closely involved with the shop and organizing the volunteers for deliveries. Andrea Smith had completed a report from 16.03.20 to 27.04 20 which had been circulated. AS wasn't able to join the meeting, but WL reported on the current situation. WL reported that AS had everything in order and that staff including the new temporary staff are now confident working solo as the shop is now open for limited counter service. There have been no problems with customers and both staff and customers are happy with the new arrangements. AS has done all orders for the current week and the staff have check lists for ordering. Alcohol training was to be finalised this week and WL has arranged for Brian Edgar to check the completed training manuals and sign them off as a licensee.

WL said that there was sometimes difficulty on days the shop was open and orders also being taken. If there was only one member of staff present they couldn't serve customers and also prepare orders. The Board agreed that the orders could wait till next morning as it was originally said that they would be completed within 48 hours. There was also a need for a second person when the volunteers arrive at 2pm to collect orders for delivery and the one member of staff is serving customers. It was agreed that WL or MT would be there to cover for this time, they are also both calling into the shop regularly to show support.

Lynsey Kirkpatrick, a temporary staff member has finished working for NGCE as she has been able to return to her normal job. She had reported to WL that she had enjoyed working for NGCE, was impressed with the way the business was run and she felt safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SR asked if there had been any impact on orders since the shop re-opened, but they had been similar to the previous week.

It was felt that promotion of the shop and products would need to be done to increase sales. WL suggested that window displays would help and that Kirsten Ansell was keen to do this and MT will support her. MB expressed thanks of the Board to WL and MT, also particular thanks to AS and all the staff for their work during the pandemic.

5. Report re Facebook posts: SD had done a full report of the results from the Facebook posts she had put up which showed the number of people reached, number of shares and comments. The post recently about help of supplies from the shop for the firefighters at the fire near Mossdale showed over 30,000 people reached which will give a higher than normal result. SD said that she hasn't had anything to post in the last week but is prepared to take more photos and will liaise with MT, WL and staff for ideas. She will also put pictures of the upcoming window displays. MB thanked SD for the report and good feedback.

6. Treasurers report - Financial situation including Grants applied for and secured:

Financial Report including comparative sales performance and staff costs. HK explained the financial situation and report previously circulated. A graph showed the fall-off in takings due to the COVID-19 impact. The loss of income compared with expectation from last year's figures was £2,973 in the last 5 weeks. In addition, the extra costs of staffing of £2,369 plus the accommodation costs even with no visitors of £300 showed a total cost to NGCE due to COVID-19 of £4,362 in the last 5 weeks (£3,500/month). HK said that this is unlikely to change significantly, either in income or costs while we continue to pay self-isolating staff and to operate reduced opening hours.

We have received a grant for £10,000 from ScotGov which will cover the losses (ignoring the loss of income from the accommodation) to the end of June. There is also £3,275 of shop subsidy available which will see us to the end of July and it will be topped up in July with a further £9,000. This £9,000 however, might be needed to see the shop through a normal year without the COVID-19 effects.

There is £9,000 in unrestricted funds available (accommodation income to date plus reserves) but it was agreed that it would be extremely unwise to dip into this very much.

The CEW funds are in a good position. Her projects are doing very well with the Food Month 2020 having over £1,500 available of income from last year and funds also being sourced via Blackcraig Wind Farm and Galloway Glens. The CEW projects fund of £733 may be used over the next few months for COVID response but HK and SR are working to get that re-funded as there are funds available for front line support.

HK summarised that we are in an extremely fortunate position to have extra subsidy spare to cover this crisis, thanks to the shop's historical over-performance and our BLF support. The £10k from ScotGov is going to be

critical too. We are therefore secure for cashflow for another 3-4 months. This is assuming that the proposed External Audit which was agreed at the AGM is delayed until next year.

In addition, the effect on the accommodation business has been disastrous, with no view on when it might come back up. We are again very lucky that we have no debts to service, so can effectively mothball the accommodation with minimal cost, but into the medium term their role is to give us the financial sustainability that the shop might not be able to achieve on its own.

In conclusion the Board agreed that we need to find a way to get takings (safely) back up as soon as possible and that the recent partial opening will help income.

7. Next steps for the shop:

Service provision - including opening hours, delivery service and use of volunteers

MB suggested that Board members put forward their ideas regarding shop opening hours.

WL said that Andrea Smith had been looking into the possibility of opening for longer, possibly 6 days a week in order to allow staff a full day's break.

MT said that she thinks this would be possible in the near future.

MW said that the sooner this can be accomplished the better providing the staff can manage. She also queried continuing serving from the door and suggested doing as Balmaclellan shop with only one customer allowed in the shop at a time and provide them with gloves.

WL said that although being able to browse increased sales a lot of the goods can be seen from the door.

It was agreed to continue with the current method until the Government ease the lockdown.

SR suggested morning opening with afternoons for phone orders and deliveries.

MB concluded that the priority is to work out the best timing for the shop, staff and volunteers to be agreed with AS and the Board over the coming weeks.

8. CEW report [non-shop related issues]: SR said that she had been very busy due to the COVID19 pandemic but had a good response to activities and working with the Community Council, Dalry and other Glenkens communities. Supported by HK and MW, SR had organized a litter picking event which had been very successful. It had received good publicity and was something she will work on in the future.

Thanks were expressed to SR for managing the volunteers and the inter-village dynamics all working together as the Glenkens. An example of this was the "Easter Bunny" which had made an appearance delivering gifts around the area.

SR said that a lot of different people were coming forward to help and this could potentially provide future volunteers.

Regarding funding SR said that she was working on Food Month funding for 2020. MB recorded thanks to the Prince's Countryside Fund for their recent grant.

SR said that the oil price is good at present and the group is working well. She asked if anyone else would be interested in maintaining this group now that it is all set up.

During the current week there are challenges for window displays in the villages including the 75th anniversary of VE day.

MB thanked SR for her continued work for NGCE and the community.

SR then left the meeting.

- 9. Staffing - future requirements and self-isolating staff:** Part time shop assistants Jacqui Morton and Mari Burton, have been self isolating since mid-March, and it has already been agreed to pay average earnings until the end of May. Both have been informed that this is not an open-ended arrangement and understand the situation. MB explained that the BLF had expressed support for award-holders using funds flexibly at this time. We could only expect further funding however if reserves were used up which is something we are committed to avoiding.

It was agreed that MB would consult with Sarah Lane, our honorary HR adviser, and then consult the Board by email.

[This Minute has been edited to protect staff confidentiality]
- 10. Accommodation and preparation for return of bookings:** MB said that we are committed to staying with Discover Scotland until June 2021 but that it is good to consider ways of proceeding after that in order to get better bookings. The amount of work involved if bookings were all done through the shop would be too great for staff and this is a concern for AS. Ideas for re-starting bookings were proposed. HK said that Visit Scotland are suggesting not taking back to back bookings in order to allow time for extra cleaning in between. It was suggested that as there is unlikely to be international travel for some time this would be a good opportunity to promote the accommodation. MW suggested sending a letter to clients who had to cancel explaining our regret and saying we will be in touch with them and hope to be able to re-instate their bookings. MB said that it was good to have all ideas ready.
- 11. AF&R Committee appointments:** MB said that the appointment of 2 Board members to the AF&R committee is required and should be made as soon as possible. MW agreed to continue for another year and it was suggested that this position should rotate 2 yearly. As a second Board member is also required MB asked other members to consider going on this committee. JW agreed to continue setting up meetings and taking minutes. MB asked **HK** to send the financial report to the committee after each Board meeting in order for them to be kept up to date. Dave Briggs (former Board member on the AF&R committee) used to do occasional small stock checks and **WL** agreed to do this once the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

12. Property update - security report: A security report was provided by Police Scotland before the building was converted so another is now needed. **SK** has the experience to do this and will proceed. It will include lone workers and cash handling.

SK has received an estimate for repairs on the roof for £100. The Board agreed to have this done and **SK** will arrange it.

Fuel – as the wood chip price is currently low and it is understood that there is a delay in deliveries it was agreed that **SK** will check the level and more will be ordered.

MW had arranged for the grass to be cut a few weeks ago and it is now needed again. To save costs in the current situation and due to a number of people being out of work **MW** will look into the possibility of a volunteer on this occasion. [Later: Rex Dressler has volunteered to cut the grass in future. His offer has been accepted with thanks.]

13. Governance: Rolling review:

- a. Disclosure /whistle blowing policy: This is a standard policy and has been reviewed and checked – no mistakes were noted and it was agreed to be fit for purpose.
- b. Complaints policy: MB said that this requires a safeguarding officer and that this position has been vacant since Christine Rankin left the Board. HK suggested that this could be changed to a “Lead Trustee” for safeguarding and child protection, which is a step down from the original. The Board agreed to take advice on this from the Third Sector and **MB** and **JN** will take it forward.
- c. HK said that when Foundation Scotland were reviewing the application for NG Park improvement funds they raised some minor concerns about the Dissolution Clause in the NGCE Model Rules. This didn't affect that application but HK will hand over the details of the concerns to **MB** and **JN** for further consideration.

14. Future funding of CEW post: MB raised the point that this matter needs to be considered as the CEW post funding ends in 2 years. SD said that the Glenkens as a whole were looking at this role in conjunction with Community Enterprises, possibly as a Glenkens District Trust appointment. The matter will be discussed further at the next Board meeting.

15. Expenses reported: Reimbursement of £150.30 to MB for printing and postage re 2020 AGM

16. DoNM: Monday June 1st. If needed a meeting will be convened sooner. In the meantime, **MB** will communicate with Board members by email.