

Minutes (draft) of Community Out West Trust (COW Trust) AGM
Meeting held in person at Kinlochewe Village Hall at 7pm
Tuesday 30 April 2024

Present: Trustees - Mary Peart (company secretary), David McIntyre (Chair), Andrew Peacock, Maud McIntyre.

In addition - 25 Residents comprising 20 COW Trust members and 5 non-members.

1. Minutes of last year's AGM meeting approved, after small amendment relating to the date. Should read 2023 instead of 2022.

Jonny Petrie proposed, Andrew Peacock seconded.

2/3. Trustees' Report and Treasurer's Report

Financial report up to 31/03/2023 - items within this year included gearing up for the refurbishment of the toilets, erection of fencing around the bins within the toilets' car park and Glen Docherty, as well as various signage.

Slight deficit occurred due to timing of income for the fencing being received in the 21/22 financial year and the works being undertaken in 22/23 - deficit £3,553.

The detailed accounts had been made available to members. A minor correction to be made on Page 5. Date should read 2022 and not 2032.

Both Trustees' Report and Treasurer's reports were approved.

Proposed Kirsty McKay, Seconded Neil Green.

Proposed Eleanor Kennedy, Seconded Graham Phillips.

Annual Accounts for 23/24 are not prepared yet, but in summary, the monies from donations and from the Highland Council Comfort Scheme cover the costs well, despite electricity costs going up significantly.

Running of toilets - £8188

Donations & Comfort Scheme- £8242

Surplus - £54

Matt Webster asked if there were figures relating to the honesty box and the online donations.

Honesty box- £5015

Online and QR code £827

It was concluded that the QR code alternative way of donating is successful.

4. Special Resolutions (SR)

Two SRs were put to the members.

- i) COW Trust Area of Benefit and how it is defined. It currently follows the same boundary as TKCC's boundary and it is the intention that the same boundary remains. However, it is a requirement of many funders that the area of benefit

is identified by post codes rather than postal addresses. Therefore, the first SR is to delineate the area of benefit in accordance with post codes within the Articles of Association – IV22 2PA, 2EZ, etc. This would meet the needs of various funders.

In order to pass the SRs 75% of the membership is required to vote in favour. 17 votes and 7 proxy votes were received. 27 votes in total were required. As it fell short the first special resolution did not pass.

ii) Election of Directors

Originally, under the Articles of Association one third of directors should step down. It has been decided to request a change from our members as this is not practical in very small communities where it is difficult to encourage more directors to join. This would be in line with many other organisations and Trusts in small communities who experience the same difficulty of recruiting alternative directors.

The change proposed was that every 3 years all board members would step down but then can be immediately re-elected. There is a maximum limit of 8 directors permitted. Anyone living in the area of benefit can become a member of COW and can apply to become a director.

17 votes were counted with 7 proxy votes.

Therefore, the second special resolution did not pass as 27 votes in total were required.

Maud and David therefore were required to stand down.

There then followed a members' vote for their re-election. A majority of 16 voted and Maud and David were duly re-elected.

5. Update on Toilet Refurbishment

Refurbishment of the public toilets is going well and they should be completed on time, which is by the end of May 2024. The works are on budget. The grant received for the works was won in 2021, and therefore with works commencing in March 2024, there is a small shortfall due to inflation. Notwithstanding, the contractor, Simpsons, have been very good and COW have been sourcing some components themselves which has involved a lot of hard work by Andrew and Mary. They have been going above and beyond the call of duty to keep the project close to budget.

6. Support for Kinlochewe Community Alliance

This item on the agenda was of great interest to the members and non-members attending the AGM.

Members asked What and who is KCA? (Kinlochewe Community Alliance). Jonny Petrie explained that he and Jackie Todd were KCA with the assistance of the COW Trust. The explanation regarding this set up was explained. i.e. the fact that COW is a constituted body and therefore the vehicle for applying for any funding associated with the potential

community acquisitions. Some residents at the meeting consider there has been secrecy and non-transparency, and that people are unclear what KCA is. Jonny explained this was not the case and that following a village survey KCA had approached COW to lodge a Stage 1 funding application to the Scottish Land Fund. A frank exchange of views took place with some members asking that a vote to ask members for a mandate to continue to support KCA be held in abeyance at the moment as it was considered people did not have enough information. For example, no-one had seen the business plan. It was explained that the business plan had only recently been received in its finalised form and that it was KCA's intention to share this with residents in the community and to hold an open day in early course to enable people's questions to be answered. Some people at the meeting considered that KCA's communication was bad.

COW explained that as trustees we would have to be satisfied the project had the support of the community, and today COW were only seeking from its members whether this was a viable option. COW will do its due diligence.

At the forthcoming open day, the Business Plan consultants would make a presentation and would answer questions. Survey information, business plan & feasibility study would be available, and the Stage 1 & 2 process would be explained.

It was concluded that it was premature to have a vote on continuing to support KCA. It was explained by COW that a way forward may be to have an extraordinary meeting after the open day once everyone has seen all the information.

An alternative vote proposal was then suggested.

COW hold off on that ordinary resolution until KCA has its open day.

A couple of members who do not live within the village of Kinlochewe considered that they would have abstained in light of the comments from some of those attending the meeting, who felt that the decision should be made by the residents of Kinlochewe only

A question from a member queried why is it KCA and not just COW Trust?

Jonny suggested that if after the open day the proposal is to go forward, then it would be likely that KCA and COW trust would merge.

Another member queried the quality of the business plan and the production of a first draft. It was explained that the draft had needed some work however it had been improved, accepted and resubmitted as a finalised document.

David McIntyre concluded that COW had resolved that COW Trust needs to arrange a further opportunity for members to vote after the open day has taken place. 20 voted for this.

7. AOCB – None.

The meeting was closed.