

LCR AGM 2024 Minutes of Meeting held in the Village Hall, Ullapool on 7th October

DRAFT

The period covered refers to 31st May 2023 to 31st May 2024.

Present: Rob Gibson, chair LCR, Alex Cochrane, acting treasurer, Sandy Osborne board member, Seori Burnett, board member and Paul Copestake, volunteer. Kathleen Donald, board member attended by Zoom. Also, six shareholders attended in person, two others attended by Zoom.

Apologies: Andy Kay and eight other shareholders gave notice. The chair declared the meeting quorate.

1. Welcome and Chair Report

Broompower's clean electricity output benefits from our wetter weather. This year has been one of our best. Paul Copestake will explain the details. Appendix 1.

We have forwarded £15k to the Community Benefit Fund which has indicated that two rounds of payouts will take place. In June the independent panel awarded £8,814.16 to six local bodies. Another round for the remainder will take place in the late autumn. This is one of the prime aims of the community hydro which we are proud of.

The delays in assessing parts of Laal Forest adjacent to our hydro footprint for possible affordable house building has been very frustrating. These were due to Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) seeking onsite meetings to explain the difficulties of using slopes already clear felled. They indicated that there would be no replanting. They also sought various strict rules for the digging of trial pits on the site which our contractor Caintech has, just last week, informed us looks ready to go ahead.

Affordable housing is the prime demand in each survey conducted in Loch Broom community area. We still have hopes to progress this on a site we would buy. Seori Burnett will explain.

Regards the working of the LCR Board, we require volunteers to take posts which are now to be filled. For example, the retiral of Andy Kaye as Treasurer and Alison Parsons as Company Secretary are essential to proper business functions. We hope that members of Lochbroom and Ullapool Community Trust will take up their allotted places on the Board. My sincere thanks are recorded to Alex Cochrane and Sandy Osborne who have handled the finance since last May and to other board members such as Kathleen Donald who is standing down. Treasurer Report Extract Appendix 2.

On a wider note, the passage of the Great British Energy Bill through the House of Commons is at Committee Stage. An amendment likely to be debated tomorrow (8th October) in the name of Wera Hobhouse has cross party support. It calls for "measures

to increase low carbon and renewable energy schemes owned, or part owned, by community organisations.”

“This amendment includes community energy schemes in the objects that the Great British Energy company will be restricted to facilitating, encouraging and participating in.”

While this is welcome, in Scotland there are many such schemes in place such as Broompower. What is urgently needed is the right for local clean power production to be sold locally to add resilience for consumers, such as those of us in the Scottish Highlands plagued by extortionate electricity bills.

Broompower sells our output to the National Grid but cannot sell it locally. We need to press for change.

Rob Gibson 7 October 2024

2. Approval of Minutes of LCR AGM held on 23rd September 2023.

Proposed R Gibson, Seconded S Osborne.

3. Generation Report

Paul Copestake’s PowerPoint presentation detailed the history of Broompower generation with comparison to nearby official measurements at Loch Droma by SEPA . He offered a guestimate of future rainfall patterns. In short it has been one of our best years yet. See Appendix 1 as published in the Ullapool News. A full version will be posted on Broompower website.

4. Treasurer’s Report

See Appendix 3. Andy Kaye handed over the post last May, due to ill health. Acting treasurer Alex Cochrane has produced an excellent report which will be finalised when accountants reach agreement. However, the profit and loss account showed a healthy year’s work. The meeting approved the report.

5. Share interest and member’s capital repayments.

It was agreed by the meeting to seek a greater payback rate with a target increased from a notional £45,000 to £100,000 which Sandy Osborne will manage circulating all shareholders with the shares withdrawal form. The interest rate of 4% was confirmed.

6. Land Purchase plans and community woodland report.

Seori Burnett explained our frustration with the snail’s pace of Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) to approve the sinking of pits at a site near Allt a’ Bhraighe was shared by the board, our contractor and his digger driver. We cannot proceed to a preapplication for outline planning permission for possible affordable homes on the slope without this work. This has taken over two years to this stage.

FLS had visited the site earlier in 2024 and assured us of their cooperation. A piece of good news emerged as the clear-felled land would not be replanted through a change of policy regarding previous criteria for safety on site and for personnel. This should reduce the purchase price if our scheme proceeds.

7. Community Benefit Fund update.

The CBF panel met to discuss and make awards from the fund. They decided to split this year's funding hence there will be a second round in the late autumn. A list of projects funded will be in next week's Ullapool News and we will also post this on our website, but I have listed these below, plus a note of the available funds and there make up. All recipients must sign that they agree to the terms of the grant before any awards are paid out, we anticipate making payments over the next two weeks.

CBF panel met on June 24th 2024. Available total funds £16,351.46

Being £15,000 from LCR - income from Broom Power, £251.46 of donated dividends and gift aid and £1,100 from the sale of items donated to the CBF.

The panel made awards of £8,814.16 in total leaving £7,537.30 in the CBF account. Gill noted that there should be additional individual donations and receipts from sale of donated items which will boost this sum before the Autumn funding round.

The following awards were agreed by the panel:

Ullapool Museum: Geikie Centenary Exhibition -£1,000

Ullapool Village Hall: all access pathway to Youth Space - £1,731

Ullapool Flower & Produce Show- £1,070

Scoraig Community Centre Group: defibrillators for the peninsular - £2,000

Lochbroom Sailing Club: Scio asset transfer costs - £1,700

Ross & Cromarty Citizens Advice Bureau: Ullapool Outreach Project - £1,313.16

As reported by Gill Wilson, The New Broom Hub Manager.

8. Election of Board members including Company Secretary, Treasurer, Chair and other members.

Rob Gibson offered to remain for this year as Board Chair. Agreed unanimously.

Alex Cochrane proposed by RG seconded by SB as Treasurer. Agreed unanimously.

Sandy Osborne returned as Board member to cover shares issues. Agreed unanimously.

Paul Copestake confirmed as a Board member. Agreed unanimously.

No volunteer agreed to become Company Secretary. This post must be filled very soon.

9. **AOCB.** Members present agreed that it was a fruitful evening. The meeting closed at 8.45pm.