

# NORTH HARRIS TRUST

## MINUTE OF MEETING

**TITLE** : The North Harris Trust

**DATE** : 26:09:2022

**TIME** : 7.30pm

**VENUE** : Tigh an Urrais and Zoom

Present: Calum MacKay, Barbara MacKay, D J Morrison, Robert MacKinnon, John Macdonald, Kate Lewis, Paul Russ, Kirsty MacKay, Michael Hunter (MH), Fañch Bihan-Gallic

Item	Summary and Action	Who?	When?
1.	<b>Apologies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Donald MacLeod, Finlay MacLeod (FM), Diana MacLennan, David Wake, Tim Langley, Lena Morrison, Phil Butterfield.</li></ul>		
2.	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Kirsty MacKay's name was erroneously omitted from the minutes of last meeting, this was rectified and the minutes were subsequently approved by Barbara MacKay and seconded by Robert MacKinnon</li></ul>		
3.	<b>Conflicts of Interest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>MH will attend the upcoming HSC AGM both as a member and Trust representative. DJ Morrison will attend as an additional Trust representative to ensure transparency.</li></ul>		
4.	<b>OSCR Best Practice Recommendations</b> <p><b>Induction of Directors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Induction meetings for new Directors will be undertaken as a matter of policy, an explanation of the duties of a Director will be provided and there shall be an opportunity for questions, this will include access to historical Trust documents to allow familiarisation around previous Trust progress on areas of interest.</li><li>There is currently no mention of the expectations of Directors' board meeting attendance in the Directors' Induction Pack. This shall be included with a reference to the expectation that most meetings should be attended. It was mentioned that systematic absence is a serious problem, as Directors lose the means by which to meet their duties in engaging with Trust business. It was agreed that attendance should be monitored and reviewed annually.</li><li>A Declaration Form shall be added to the Induction Pack to document acceptance of responsibilities by each Director when joining the Board.</li></ul> <p><b>Conflicts of Interest (COI):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A written NHT policy on COI is required to formalise practice. It was agreed that a section on COI is included in all NHT meeting minutes, which will record all COI arising in the meeting.</li></ul>	Michael  Minute-takers	Before the next AGM / Induction.  Immediately



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It was agreed that Jon Riach should be offered a reduced hours employment contract over the winter months to continue in his currently funded Warden role at Huisinis.</li> <li>● Deer Management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The recent helicopter count returned a total of 2538 red deer in North Harris. In order to meet our objectives, models suggest a cull of 180 stags and 220 hinds a year until we reach our target deer population. This should take around 7 years.</li> <li>○ The practicalities of who undertakes the annual cull was discussed and it was agreed that an expansion of the offer to ACL and HSC should be explored as well as looking at options with other parties. Progress shall be reported on.</li> <li>○ If ACL has the capacity and desire to undertake the majority of the cull, it was thought important that venison supply chain should be clarified with them. Michael will raise this with them at the next scheduled meeting and report back.</li> <li>○ HSC's AGM is scheduled for 13.10.22. The cull level which HSC members can reasonably meet should be ascertained and the Board expressed their willingness to agree to the resultant figure being allocated to HSC. It was also thought that HSC should be encouraged to increase their membership if interest is expressed.</li> <li>○ It was confirmed that NHT deer leases include penalties for under-culling.</li> <li>○ The possibility of contracting gillies to allow NHT to directly take sporting parties onto the hill will be explored.</li> <li>○ The possibility of revising beat areas to make them smaller and/or more suited to the final cull arrangements will be explored.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Crofting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Board agreed that the Loch Màraig fish-farm site should be resumed. The tenant was commended for his support to the Trust and it was suggested that he should be offered Honorary Life Membership.</li> <li>○ David Campbell, a special assessor for croft valuation, will visit 4 sites on the estate on 03.10.22.</li> <li>○ 17 Scalpaigh will require a Board subgroup to assess applicants for the tenancy – DJ, Lena, and Paul agreed. Benji Morrison has also been invited to sit as township clerk.</li> <li>○ Tenants have not reported concerns with croft rents being standardised at £10.</li> <li>○ Permission was granted to the tenant of 20 Kyles Scalpay to fence across an estate access strip which is not in use.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● It was suggested that the proposed HHP development on Tarbert Common Grazings should be sold for a nominal sum, assuming appropriate compensation is provided to the shareholders. The loss of income would be relatively small, and it contributes towards the key objectives of the Trust. It was highlighted that HHP originally proposed business units as part of the development, and a decision on the sale will not be made until the plans for the development have been finalised.</li> <li>● MH will meet with Comhairle representatives at the Urgha Depot to clarify terms of use of the site. No lease has been signed on its use, and the situation needs regularising.</li> <li>● Contributions of around £900/year are made to various local organisations. In addition to this, the SES Mòd's Parents Committee has asked for £500 to support travel to the Mòd this year, which was agreed upon by the Board.</li> </ul>	<p>MH</p> <p>MH</p> <p>MH</p>	<p>Next board meeting 31.10.22</p> <p>27.09.22</p> <p>Before 2023 leases are signed.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our annual Health &amp; Safety inspection was undertaken on 21.09.22. Policies have been signed by the chair and will be made available to employees.</li> </ul> <p><b>Development Officer's Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trading Company has decided to reduce its meeting frequency due to low workload, however it can easily be called upon when required.</li> <li>There was some discussion on whether greater freedom could be given to the Trading Company to expand its activities. It was thought that as land assets are usually required for projects, which sits with the Trust, the Trading Company is necessarily limited in its options.</li> <li>Various potential development activities and sites were discussed briefly. A need for greater vision and creativity in projects was identified, with reference to the example of sites in other parts of the islands. The discussion was concluded with an agreement that further work is required on potential Trust projects by all.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ranger's Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regarding Bòrd na Gàidhlig funding towards a Gaelic-medium John Muir Award at the school, FBG has reported issues in proceeded with the project. While it has been approved by JMT and is ready to begin, no sign-ups are forthcoming at the school and CnaG is having issues engaging pupils and teachers. Options were discussed on the project timeframe and the means to increase project engagement.</li> <li>A summary of the summer-season's Ranger-led walks and public engagement was provided. A total of 550 visitors were welcomed and engaged with, and £510 was received in cash donations. Based on the lessons learned, FBG suggested that the Ranger Service continue with Eagle Walks and a regular presence at the Eagle Observatory next season.</li> </ul>	Faìoch	ASAP	
8.	<b>AOCB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following a positive result on proceeding with a community buyout in the Bays of Harris Estate, Calum will write a letter of congratulations and offer of support to the Bays of Harris Steering Group on behalf of the Trust.</li> <li>Finlay MacIennan (CLOH) is representing the Western Isles community land movement in Australia at conference.</li> </ul>	Calum	October 2022
9.	<b>DONM</b>	<b>Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022</b>		