**Acharacle Community Company**

**Minutes of meeting**

**20th July 2017**

**Those present**: Jimmy Gillies / Jemma Claire (via Skype) / Becky Dacre (mins)

**1 Apologies** Marie MacDonald

**2** **Directors discussion**

A BT phone box Using MM’s comments on the contract drawn up by BT, the directors discussed the potential and the problems that may be associated with ‘adopting a phone box’ Decided that we need to find out who owns the ground that the box sits on as the sale only concerns the box. The box can be moved, but need to find a good alternative site. Uses discussed and some may need planning permission. Decided to ask the community/membership. Also need to ascertain the ‘health’ of the box. Decided to ask Iain Houston as he may know best being a former BT engineer. **Action:** **BD/JC**

B Cover for Lesley while off sick. Lesley could be off work for 8 weeks. Lesley arranged for Kay to bank lunch club money while she is off. BD has arranged for lunch club (mainly Kay) to answer the phone and any other things that crop up while they are in the building at lunch club. Sharon Maclean to answer the phone while she is in cleaning on a Thursday. Jimmy will take messages for the Reuse.

C JG had been handed a rates bill payment reminder from Liz Connell pertaining to the ‘shop’ presumably at the old PO. No bills have been received for the building. BD to scan and send the reminder to Na’vi Organics and Tearoom for them to sort.

**3 Treasurers report** Lesley not present so BD read out the bank balances. She noted that since the bank statements came out, the project account has closed and all money from that account has been credited to the main account.

Project account: closing balance £3,915.12

Main account: £1,254.17

Centre account: £66,738.38

Savings account: £2,817.17

**4 Minutes from the last meeting**

These were not looked at as the meeting was not quorate.

**4 members arrived (Roy Cattle/Andrew Green/Fiona Ogg/David Kirkham**

**6 Moidart Broadband Initiative (now renamed Moidart Access Network)**

David explained in detail about the project and how it has changed from being initially publicly funded to now being funded privately. (see details from David at the end of the minutes).

At the moment there is no benefit to Acharacle, but it could possibly become another part of the project possibly using the Tearoom site. He asked ACC to consider the possibility of taking over the running of the community broadband scheme. This would need a small technical team with electrician/maintenance engineer and someone with access to phone to take calls from customers. It would be a money making project with possibly a membership fee. RC raised the issue of limitations to the system. DK said more lines could be purchased when needed, (plenty available) but that if individuals are using a very large amount of data this could be controlled by the management team.

Need to form a steering group to help run the project.

The time scale is fairly short and will be this year for the first parts of the project.

The update from David could be used in the newsletter.

**7 Adopt a phone box**

RC had brought this to the attention of ACC originally. Marie MacDonald (director) has looked through the contract with BT and raised one or two issues which were discussed between directors at the beginning of the meeting. Outcome: To find out who owns the ground that the box sits on as the sale only concerns the box. The box can be moved, but need to find a good alternative site. Uses may need planning permission – to find out if planning necessary. Also to ask the community/membership what they think – via newsletter. Also to ask Iain Houston as a former BT engineer to ascertain the maintenance requirements.

**8 News for De Tha Dol?**

As the meeting is a week later than scheduled, only a few hours remained before the deadline and as no urgent business needed to go in, decided not to put any news in. Produce market poster for next months’ market already with the De Tha Dol?

**9 Centre steering group/survey progress**

BD showed members present the survey that has been produced. One comment about name ‘Community Resource Centre’ Agreed it should be just ‘Community Centre’. Otherwise felt to be good. BD gave overview of last meeting of the steering group and that various members are progressing parts of the work needed for the asset transfer. BD has completed the first ‘expression of Interest’ form to the Highland Council and had a response giving the HC officer for contact.

**10 Events at Sgoil na Coille**

This was not discussed as Rodney not present to update on progress.

JC left the meeting

**11 AOB**

1. RC had arranged for an engineer from ‘Fischer Future Heat’ to come to the centre and give a quote for a total replacement of the heating system. The quote had been received and was £23,888 in total with a breakdown for each room. It was agreed that this information would be useful for the asset transfer. RC brought up various issues which ACC can improve upon (re the centre) and he queried why these had not been acted on. BD explained time pressures on all concerned just running centre since taking it over, not allowing time for exploration of other matters.
2. Various issues raised by AG/RC criticising ACC which could not be answered by those present. No minutes taken of this conversation.

**The meeting closed at 9.35pm**

**NEXT MEETING: 10th August**

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**Local community broadband – details from David Kirkham**

I am pleased to say that we are now making some tangible progress:-

**for Glenuig and Roshven**

A proof of concept relay mast has now been built on the Rhu peninsular and will be tested over the next few weeks.  If successful (and subject to the anticipated agreement of the Arisaig Estate owners who have kindly approved this trial) a permanent mast will be commissioned later this year.  This draws on a 100% fibre backhaul from the super-superfast fibre service installed by Edinburgh University’s offshoot ‘HUBS' into Mallaig, Skye and northwards.  Interested parties should contact Pod Carmichael for Glenuig and, for the moment contact me re Roshven until someone else volunteers.

**for Kinlochmoidart and Mingary/Dalnabreac/Dalilea/Achnanellan**

We had hoped to be able to link to HUBS Arisaig mast to service this more southerly area too, but unfortunately we have not been able to secure consent for a second equivalent relay on Eilean Shona so an order is just now being placed with Openreach to take a BT business broadband service out of the new fibre cabinet in front of the Salen Exchange in Acharacle.

We are planning to beam that signal to properties on the north shore of Loch Shiel and on and down into Kinlochmoidart, via a new relay mast to be erected on the hill above Dalilea.    With the valued support of Andrew MacLean, the first transmission point can be sited on his property immediately behind the Acharacle exchange building and will therefore involve such a small length of copper wiring that the speed we receive  be faster than local BT customers can experience (the much vaunted ‘fibre’ service only extends into the BT cabinet, not out of it and on to your house -  broadband signals degrade significantly over the distance that they must travel through the old copper wiring and we are avoiding this effect).

However our faster signal is then to be shared between multiple customers so we have a challenge ahead to manage the balancing of the capacity of the supply with customer demand at any one time.

This will be a permanent service from the start and if you are interested please contact me.  Initially it cannot be of the super-superfast standard that is being tested for Glenuig and Roshven, but it will be vastly better than what is otherwise available from BT and we are working with our partners to find another way to equalise the speeds and capacities of both parts of the network and as soon as we can - we will!

It has been an astonishingly long and difficult path to tread, but maybe, just maybe we can see the end of it now?

David Kirkham

**Moidart Access Network**

[DJK903@me.com](mailto:DJK903@me.com)