

Notes of the working group looking at the idea of a community shop/stores and post office

15th June 2023

Present

Andy, Peter, Donald, Brona, Katy, Robert. Apologies Tony

- 1) Group met with the intention of becoming an interim management group for a community enterprise. The demands of the role were recognised and some members of the initial working group opted not to continue due to other commitments.
- 2) There were strong concerns expressed about the Trust's digital community empowerment survey approach intended to establish quickly and easily communities' views. The digital survey was looking at issues associated with how contributors got their information along with views about committing to a community enterprise, community share buying and relocation. The digital survey however only had 91 responses which was short of the target of 120. (120 was in excess of any other survey response on Lismore.) While the chair considered the view that 85% of 91 overall responders and 85% of 68 island residents responding digitally were in support a community enterprise was a clear mandate it was agreed a paper copy would be produced for circulation and collection in the shop and on the ferry and the deadline for consideration would be extended for another week so the 120 may be reached.

Action

2.1 Andy to get a printed copy of digital available to give people at the shop, on the ferry and folk Peter comes into contact with, for returning to ferry, shop or by hand to Peter.

- 3) The aim of the group was agreed.

“ To develop a community enterprise to run the shop/stores and post office on Lismore”

The formal establishment of an interim management board would be delayed until action 2.1 was completed but there was discussion about potential additional members to cover tasks and complement recognised skills. Posts needed - chair, vice chair, treasurer and secretary. Chair offered to continue but no other posts were filled from members of the group.

- 4) The process and support for the creating a community enterprise was discussed in the light of what people knew, what people had been saying and initial discussion the chair has had with the support service from Community Shares Scotland. There was significant external support available including potential access to a grant of £5000. Discussion identified the priority of valuing to business.

Actions

4.1 Brona to identify and get quotes from 3 potential firms that could provide a valuation for the business.

4.2 Andy to contact Laura seeking agreement to use an independent valuation of the business to inform the approach to be taken regarding a potential community purchase.

4.3 Andy to explore possible involvement of others known to have skills.

The risks associated with these actions from both the community perspective and the sellers position were recognised and the implications need to be considered carefully.

- 5) The business plan and share offer need developing and the following issues were identified
 - a) In a close-knit community shareholders might want to maintain anonymity regarding the amount they invest. **Agreed** – the amount of investment each shareholder makes should be outsourced.
 - b) The current board needs to identify key posts (Treasurer, secretary, chair and vice chair) Andy was nominated as chair but there were no further proposals. Suggestions were made for other potential members on the group.

Action

4.1 Andy to approach some for the suggestions for key roles on an interim board.

Date of the next meeting.

Thursday 29th June 7:00 in the Hall

Proposed agenda.

- 1) Notes from meeting of the 15th June
- 2) Outcome from digital and paper surveys.
- 3) Suitability of governance arrangements
- 4) Content of business plan
- 5) Share offer arrangements
- 6) Time lines

