



Held at 1.30pm on Thursday 19th December 2013
in the Liberation Room, Secretariat, Stanley

OPEN MINUTES

Present:	MLA Phyl Rendell	PR	Chairperson
	MLA Ian Hansen	IH	Deputy Portfolio Holder
	Mr Martin Slater	MS	Interim GM FIDC
	Ms Vicki Jackson	VJ	Deputy Head of Policy
	Mr Neil Judd	NJ	Senior Agricultural Advisor
	Mrs Nuala Knight	NK	RDS Co-ordinator
	Mrs Siân Nightingale	SN	Minutes

Public & Press: 1

These minutes are draft minutes until confirmed by resolution at the next meeting of this Committee.

Action

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1. Jamie Fotheringham passed on his apologies and Vicki Jackson attended the meeting in his place. Keith Padgett, Mike Evans and Paul Phillips also passed on their apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1. There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2013

- 3.1. 4.4.6. Action should have been for ME.
9.1 Second line should read "the Rural Energy Advisor should be."
12. Agenda title should have read "Peter Robertson's Email"
- 3.2. The minutes were then approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters & actions arising

- May 2012
- 4.1. 4.4.1. NJ apologised that he didn't have the concept paper on FI based practical/vocational agricultural training, but there was a fair amount of work involved. He agreed to provide a one page scoping paper for the January meeting and would endeavour to produce something fuller for the February meeting.

NJ

- 4.2. 4.4.2. MS will take responsibility for the discussion of the potential of tourism lodges and tourism development with Stephen Dickson and follow this up outside of RDSSG meeting. MS
- July 2012
- 4.3. 4.4.3. Hilary Rowland is currently out of the Islands and so will be invited to the January meeting instead. PR informed the group that Hilary gave a very informative interview on the radio about the revised system for Camp doctor consultations.
- 4.4. 4.4.4. NK said that ME had confirmed that he had undertaken some work since the last meeting on 2m coverage on West Falkland though she didn't have the details for the meeting. The DoA confirmed once again that they would be happy to produce and circulate a map displaying the extent of 2m coverage across Camp in due course. KP advised at the previous meeting that he would obtain the mobile coverage information from Sure and circulate around the group. ME, NJ, KP
- 4.5. 4.4.5. This can be removed from matters arising as vacancies can be discussed with the PR & Media Manager when the situation arises.
- October 2012
- 4.6. 4.4.6. The need to identify suitable replacement parts for the failing parts in the satellite dishes could be carried over to the January meeting and tied in with 4.4.9 (a more general discussion on spares in general being needed for the satellite dishes). ME, NK
- February 2013
- 4.7. 4.4.7. PR said that Rural Enterprise Zones would be discussed during the MLA away day so could be taken off the matters arising.
- July 2013
- 4.8. 4.4.11. NK had re-vamped the article for the Penguin News and sent it through for publication.
- 4.9. 4.4.12. PR suggested that as freight costs would be discussed during the budget cycle, this item should be removed from the matters arising. PR
- 4.10. 4.4.14. On the agenda.
- August 2013
- 4.11. 4.4.19. NK would bring a draft 3 year action plan for the RDS to the January meeting. NK
- September 2013
- 4.12. 4.1. NK informed the group that PWD had some used furniture available for use at the key workers house at Fox Bay. NK would see if the items were fit for purpose and if necessary, draw up a list of other items needed for the house and then it can be decided who would be required to pay for any additional furnishings. NK
- 4.13. 4.2. NK said that the possibility of developing an existing property at Fox Bay into single unit flats would be fed into the Fox Bay development plan. IH commented that the Village Agent needs to be kept informed and NK confirmed that she had already spoken to Mark Jones about this.
- 4.14. 4.3.(8.2) NK and PR have met with Mr Owen Summers. PR said that the three Camp elected MLA's are looking to visit to Fitzroy in the New Year and will meet with the Fitzroy Social Group then. NK will also be invited to attend. MS said that he had been doing some work on Fitzroy and will update PR prior to PR, MS

- the visit.
- 4.15. 4.3.(8.5) On the agenda.
- November 2013
- 4.16. NK informed the group that she hadn't produced the usual RDS Co-ordinators' Report as all the items would be covered on the matters arising.
- 4.17. 6.1. NK commented that there was now a six month lease agreement in place, which would be signed between the Fox Bay Village Agent and the Education Department.
- 4.18. 6.1.2. Already discussed.
- 4.19. 6.1.3. & 6.1.4. NK had re-worked the Mechanic's advert and arranged for its publication.
- 4.20. 6.4.6. The Director of Central Services would be invited along to the January meeting so that the Steering Group could offer some input into discussions about the contract at an early stage. NK
- 4.21. 6.4.12 NK had emailed everyone on her East & West Falkland distribution list regarding the opportunity to add tourism symbols to the road signs that PWD are installing around East and West Falkland. This should be "pinned down" by mid-January. NK
- 4.22. 8.3. On the agenda.
- 4.23. 9.1. & 9.2. NK has spoken to Glenn Ross about the possibility of the Rural Energy Advisor being situated at the Power Station and had sent him the job description. PR offered to raise this with the Director of Public Works and it would be brought back to the January meeting. It was agreed that whilst the Rural Energy Advisor's primary role was to provide advice to the Camp community, the RDS would not object to (and would welcome) the advice being provided to the whole community, provided the focus was not taken away from Camp. PR
- 4.24. 10.2. NJ had already had some discussions regarding water consultation/domestic bores and will be in a position to bring a more substantial report back to the February meeting. NJ
- 4.25. 12.1. On the agenda.
- 4.26. 13.1. On the agenda.
- 4.27. 14.2. IH queried why the Lands Committee had been in the position previously, to refuse the lease of Old Manager's House, where the RDS office was situated. PR replied that it was because FIG owns the land. NK informed the Group that there had been a private proposal put forward for the Old Manager's House building which mirrored the Steering Groups' own ideas around the creation of a hub – these will be fed into the Fox Bay development plan in due course. NK will forward the proposal to everyone and it can be discussed at the January meeting. NK
- 5. Peter Robertson's Email**
- 5.1. NK had spoken to the Tax Office who had said that the standard rate of 20% of fuel consumption being applied for personal use is negotiable if a farmer can satisfy them otherwise.

5.2. IH said that he had only found out that a percentage of farm fuel was being considered for personal use when completing his tax return one year. IH said that he thought that sometime after he had bought his farm, the Tax Office had come along to Farmers Week and told farmers that the rate was always going to stay the same (all fuel consumption can be claimed for farm usage).

5.3. IH was keen to understand the provenance of the apparent change in policy (from 100% fuel usage being an allowable business expense to it becoming 80% allowable usage). It was agreed that IH would speak to the MLA who holds the tax portfolio to find out when the system had changed and enquire if an explanatory note on how this change arose could be produced for farmers. IH would also consult with Peter Robertson. It was agreed that this issue, which was originally raised in an email to MLAs, could be investigated outside the RDSSG meeting.

IH

5.4. NJ noted that many aspects of “hauling your own stock” could be considered allowable expenses in terms of tax. Wear and tear of vehicles and equipment can be included as depreciation, fuel consumed on the journey is an allowable expense and labour can be included as drawings or wages.

5.5. NK said that for the personal consumption rates not to apply, the machinery had to be “wholly and exclusively” used for that business.

5.6. PR thanked NK for her work on this.

6. Import Substitution

6.1. NK brought this agenda item to the table for general discussion. She said the programme had originally been established by FIDC to help make the Falkland Islands more self-sustainable in the production of vegetables and eggs. The purpose of the discussion was to review the scheme, its purpose, its objective and its success.

6.2. For background, NK said the scheme was established by Executive Council in August 2011 and £250,000 was set aside for this purpose. There had been seven applications approved to date and £150,000 remained in the budget for utilisation. When questioned how the success of the applications was measured, NK said that a requirement of the funding is for annual production statistics to be sent to Michael Betts at FIDC.

6.3. NJ said that he had looked at the application process, which he thought was very efficient, but there are one or two areas where technical support could be suggested in the planning stages, especially for the larger applications. He added that the DoA is able to assist if this is desirable.

6.4. When asked by PR if the DoA already have input, NJ said that they do, but if more technical support could be given to the business in the planning stage, the application would have the best possible chance of succeeding.

6.5. PR asked for NJ to be included in the process right from the start.

MS, NJ

6.6. NK commented that this programme offers a real opportunity for new businesses in Camp and NJ said that it is a good topic for discussion at the Goose Green and Fox Bay meetings. NK added that significantly expanding or setting up large scale businesses such as horticulture in Camp could present a big risk but was also a big opportunity.

6.7. MS pointed out that the programme was designed to reduce the Falkland Islands' reliance on imported fruit, vegetables and eggs. PR said that Customs & Immigration have very accurate figures on imports and MS suggested that the effect of the Import Substitution programme could be monitored against these figures. MS

7. **Format of 2014 Meetings**

7.1. NK said that there had been various discussions in the past regarding holding meetings in the Camp and this item was included to ascertain whether there was an appetite for these to continue and if so, when and where they should happen.

7.2. PR said that the MLA's have monthly public meetings and it has been tentatively agreed to hold meetings at Goose Green and Fox Bay in March and suggested that perhaps the Steering Group could meet then.

7.3. IH commented that the feedback received previously was that farmers felt left in the cold if they weren't able to contribute and participate in the meetings i.e. were simply spectators.

7.4. After discussion, it was suggested that the Steering Group could hold their March meeting at Goose Green and Fox Bay in June. It was agreed to hold shorter agendas for the Camp meetings, with the normal meeting taking place, within an hour, and followed by a meeting with a more open format. NK

8. **Rural Enterprise Zones discussion**

8.1. NK informed everyone that Fox Bay had been designated as a Rural Enterprise Zone. To aid development in this area, a two pronged approach had been adopted 1) The development of physical infrastructure which would facilitate a growth in population and business activity. However, due to the significant financial cost of the infrastructure proposed, in practise, development has, to date, been restricted to the purchase of a single house and improvements to the water system as opposed to the raft of development including new housing and the creation of a hub originally mooted 2) The development of fiscal incentives- which has resulted in the production of the fiscal incentives paper produced by the Policy Unit scheduled to go to ExCo in January.

8.2. PR commented that the issue of the REZ specifics almost needs to move away from the Steering Group – a working group including those from the area needs to be set up to drive the REZ forward and the RDS Steering Group could continue to take the strategic role. Therefore, the population of Fox Bay needs to be engaged to drive this forward (with community buy-in) and build a case to attract the relevant funding.

8.3. NK said that she would be delighted to work with the group so they have ownership of the initiative, but expressed her concern that there needs to be some buy-in and commitment from the relevant budget holder and the Steering Group in terms of strategic alignment and support to allow any progress to be made. NK

8.4. IH commented that the RDS need to give the impression that they're not just concentrating on Fox Bay. PR added that she didn't want to see too much difference in incentives between Fox Bay and the rest of Camp. MS said that if the Fox Bay REZ goes forward, then this should benefit the surrounding areas.

- 8.5. NK added that she doesn't believe that the REZ concept has been publically discussed as much as it could have perhaps been as there appears to be some misinterpretation of the intention of the REZ. NK stated that the REZ's were never intended to give a step-up to established businesses or to provide one group of businesses significant advantages over others. Instead the incentives were there to attract people and businesses to a single geographical location in order to build up critical mass and to address the problems associated with having a small and dispersed population. VJ said that a clear summary and background to the REZ, including where we are currently at, will be provided to MLAs, for the MLA away days, where REZs will be discussed further. NK said she is keen to address any misconceptions that may exist.

Policy
Unit

9. RDS Co-ordinator

- 9.1. NK declared an interest in this item and therefore excluded herself from the discussion.
- 9.2. VJ presented the report from the Head of Policy and asked the group to support the continuation of the post and for the Policy Unit to work with FIDC to progress this.
- 9.3. PR suggested the contract to be brought in line with the financial years.
- 9.4. VJ said that money has previously been allocated in the RDS budget to fund the post from March until the end of June and it would then tie in with the FIDC budget process.
- 9.5. The RDSSG recommended the RDS Co-ordinator post be extended until the end of June as a minimum and discussions would take place with the current post holder regarding any extension of contract. MS would look at the HR implications of the contract extension.
- 9.6. PR thanked NK for everything she has done for the RDS.

VJ, MS

10. Date of Next Meeting

- 10.1. The next meeting is set for 1.30pm on Thursday 16th January 2014 in the Liberation Room of the Secretariat.

The open section of the meeting finished and the member of the press left the room.