

RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY STEERING GROUP

MEETING HELD in the Refreshment Room, TOWN HALL
2PM STANLEY TIME
ON WEDNESDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER 2012

*These Minutes are draft minutes until confirmed
at the next meeting of the Group*

Attendees

- | | | |
|----------------------|------|---|
| - Hon. Mike Summers | (MS) | MLA, RDS Portfolio holder (Chairperson) |
| - Hon. Ian Hansen | (IH) | MLA, RDS Portfolio holder |
| - Marc Boucher | (MB) | General Manager - FIDC |
| - Jamie Fotheringham | (JF) | Head of Policy - FIG |
| - Andrew Pollard | (AP) | Senior Agricultural Advisor |
| - Nuala Knight | (NK) | RDS Coordinator |
| - Ted Jones | (MJ) | East Falkland Representative |
| | | |
| - Kerry McRae | | Minutes |
| - Sue Faria | | Minutes |

Invited guests

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| - Louise and Carole Pole-Evans | Saunders Island |
| - Tracy Evans | Pebble Island |
| - Sally Poncet | Beaver Island |
| - Rob McGill | Carcass Island |
| - Phyl & Mike Rendell | Bleaker Island |
| - Christopher May | Speedwell Island |
| - Nancy Poole | Swan Island |
| - Adam Cockwell | Manager, Workboat Services |

1. Welcome Island Representatives and Adam Cockwell

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Adam Cockwell and the Island representatives present.

2. Apologies

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Mike Evans, Keith Padgett and Andy Pollard. Andy Pollard was able to join the meeting at 2.45pm.

3. Approval of minutes from meeting held 18th July 2012

- 3.1 The minutes were approved.

4. Matters Arising and actions carried forward

4.1 Agricultural college/training farm

- AP had offered to put together an outline of the department's position on agricultural apprenticeships. Given that the DoA apprenticeships and the RDS Steering Group Meeting – 12th September 2012

Agricultural College idea are somewhat intertwined, this paper should provide some useful clarification when received.

ACTION: AP to circulate a positioning paper on the agricultural apprenticeships/ agri-college idea.

- 4.2 MJ advised that he had received feedback regarding the 2 metre set system in Camp and undertook to forward an email he had received from Sharon Halford which provided an update.

ACTION: MJ to forward Sharon Halford's e-mail to Steering Group.

- 4.3 MB confirmed that an RDS Open Day was scheduled at FIDC for mid-October 2012.

ACTION: Marc Boucher to organise an open day to promote the RDS and the opportunities it offers to the Stanley population and business community.

- 4.4 NK reported that Manfred Keenleyside and Simon Catton have helpfully e-mailed their concerns regarding the proposed extended FIG and public use of the road-gang cabins situated in Fox Bay. NK will be working with Mark Jones, the FIG Fox Bay Village Agent to address these issues.

ACTION: NK to work with Mark Jones to address the concerns raised by Manfred Keenleyside and Simon Catton.

- 4.5 MS raised his concerns about the lack of progress on "access to water" in Camp. He suggested that Craig Paice, PWD Water Supervisor, be invited to attend the next RDS meeting to discuss what needed to be quantified and by whom, either on a short or longer term basis for both settlements and individual farms.

ACTION: NK to INVITE Craig Paice back to the meeting

- 4.6 MJ advised that the work to assess demand and support for the concept of a North Camp Community Hall was still on-going. This is already included in "actions carried forward".

5. Report back from EXCO

- 5.1 NK gave a verbal update on the August ExCo. She reported that the following had now been approved:

- The RDS Action Plan 2012-2013
- The addition of the RDS Coordinator and 2 Camp representatives to the Steering Group
- Fox Bay East as the 1st Rural Enterprise Zone under the RDS
- The Steering Group has been charged with producing a 4 year Action Plan.

6. RDS Co-ordinator Update

- 6.1 Members noted the content of the report.

- 6.2 NK reported that the £250k had been approved by the Treasury, who had advised that application to the Chief Executive or Head of Policy or SFC would be required for the release of funds for each project listed in the RDS Action

Plan. NK asked for clarification on whether the first point of contact should be KP or JF. JF confirmed that he was happy to be the first point of contact but would need further discussions with the Chief Executive.

ACTION: JF to clarify due process and respond to NK

- 6.3 NK reported that there were still gaps in some of the project plans including in the Action Plan and that these needed to be addressed. NK confirmed that further clarification, direction and definition were needed on a) Power b) Water c) Health d) Fiscal Incentives and the e) Environment.

ACTION: More direction required from the Steering Group on a) Power b) Water c) Health d) Fiscal Incentives and the e) Environment.

- 6.4 NK advised that the RDS Action Plan would be made available to the public shortly.

ACTION: NK to make the plan available publically.

- 6.5 MS advised that all RDS meetings should be made public and minutes sent to Government Committee Co-ordinator and displayed on the RDS website.

ACTION: NK to circulate RDS minutes more widely including media contacts.

7. Goose Green Housing

- 7.1 IH noted that FLH had enquired if the RDS Steering Group felt there would be any clashes in their plans if they were to sell some land at Goose Green to make it known. The Steering Group made no objection.

ACTION: IH to report back to FLH.

8 AOB

- 8.1 There was no other business so the chair opened the floor to questions & discussion.

MS opened the meeting to the Island Representatives for a public discussion

As Chair of the RDS Steering Group, MS stated that the previous meetings have been attended well and had provided useful and constructive food for thought. This led to a discussion with Islands representatives on the RDS and the development of Camp generally.

Water

- Water on Islands farms was discussed. It was acknowledged by all present that there is a water shortage which is likely to cause problems in the longer term.
- It was suggested that investigating best practise occurring in drier climates would provide useful information in terms of mitigating potential problems. Other suggestions included damming, digging livestock ponds and ditching.
- Another respondent noted that some individuals had tried over the years to improve their spring and had ended up losing them, causing a real issue. It was agreed by the floor that drilling existing water sources posed a real threat. If drilling was to be seriously considered, someone with specialist knowledge would be required. Attendants were reminded that the recent survey of the Camp community on water had not listed the drilling of new water sources as a priority.
- One respondent said that in their opinion water loss was mainly due to the age of pipes and other pieces of infrastructure. It was noted that this mirrored the opinion of Craig Paice, PWD Water Supervisor.

- It was confirmed that the DoA was investigating damming, ditching and other mechanisms for conserving water in agriculture.

Purchase of an Island-based livestock crate

- The Island representatives explained the difficulties of getting cattle from the islands onto the Concordia Bay via the sea truck. An Islander felt that a larger box would be beneficial, and would reduce loading time. Other Islanders in attendance agreed that this would be beneficial. MS suggested that the best way forward was to first approach the Livestock Working Group. AP also agreed to take this to the FIMCO Oversight Board.

ACTION: AP to communicate with the relevant parties regarding Island transportation issues, reporting back to the next RDS meeting.

Purchase of an Island-based digger

- An Islander said that he felt that some getting some assistance for capital works on Islands would be a help. For instance, given that the Concordia Bay only visits the Islands every 6 weeks, hiring machinery can be a problem because machinery needs to be hired for a minimum of 6 weeks. As some hire companies will only provide day rates, the costs quickly become prohibitively expensive. It was suggested by MS that the purchase of a digger which could service the Islands and that could move from one Island to the next might be a way of addressing this problem. It was noted that the dimensions of a new digger would need to fit with the dimensions of the WBS sea truck.

ACTION: MB is to investigate the demand for the digger and potential usage, the limitations of the sea truck, and options re. the management and operation of the equipment.

- It was suggested that a digger such as this would be able to dig new rubbish dumps and address the visual pollution caused by rubbish dumps on many Islands.
- Saunders Island noted that they already have their own digger.

Internet

- A respondent discussed the issues of internet service around the Islands. It was felt that the poor quality of internet services would be a major impediment to the development of Camp. MJ stated that he understood that C&W were due to make an announcement about improvement to the internet system and that work to improve the internet across the Islands was in hand and on-going. It was accepted that the internet in the Falklands would probably never compete with the service received in the UK but upgrades would be warmly welcomed.

Power

- Island representatives raised the issue of power supplies. MS commented that everyone living in Camp should have access to 24-hour power. A respondent said that solar energy had applications across the Falkland's and not in Camp. MS told the meeting that it had been agreed at a previous meeting that this would be discussed in more detail at a "power summit" in which those involved in renewable energy in the Falklands would be invited to attend. A date for this discussion would be set in due course.
- Access to spare parts for wind turbines in Camp was raised. An Islander said that most farms now had wind power but there did not appear to be any backup for replacements. It was noted that both Powersense and Cable and Wireless

- provided after care services and replacement parts. MS suggested that this should be one of the areas discussed at the power summit.
- Many turbines are grant funded. As a result, these items cannot be depreciated. This meant that funds normally offset as depreciation were not available to cover the costs of capital replacements. Given the absence of allowable depreciation, no funds were earmarked. This was raised as an issue. MS requested that NK and MB contact the tax office to discuss this issue and to assess options.
 - **ACTION:** NK and MB to contact the tax office for feedback on this issue.

FIGAS

- The cost of baggage allowance on FIGAS was discussed in the context of getting labour to the islands. MS noted that Simon Fletcher was dealing with the issue of FIGAS costs for residents, rates for labour to islands and excess freight charges. MS asked JF to chase this up with Simon.
- **ACTION:** JF to speak to Simon Fletcher for an update

Camp Lodges

- A respondent registered some concern that his proposal to build a lodge on his island had not been supported or encouraged because, in his opinion, FIDC was focused on “luxury lodges”. MS said that the whole issue of Luxury Lodges was being reviewed. MB added that FIDC had no firm idea of the types of lodges that would be built but said they would not be “Taj Mahals”. MB added that the market for these lodges had not yet been identified and that further work was required. MB confirmed that FIDC do not have a specific budget for building lodges and that the only funding available is FIDC’s normal loan finance.

TV spare parts

- There was some concern that replacements for the LMB (the electrical component of Camp TV satellite dishes) are difficult to source and purchase. MS said that although this was not strictly an RDS matter he would be happy to review this to help find a solution.
- ACTION:** MS to speak to Lyn Brownlee

WBS

- Islanders confirmed that they were happy with the 6 week service provided by the Concordia Bay, however on the suggestion of Adam Cockwell, there was general agreement that a more regular service, every 4 weeks would be welcomed.
- ACTION:** NK to discuss implications and costs of this with WBS and Simon Fletcher.

Saunders Track

- A respondent asked whether there is likely to be support for capital works such as the work required on settlement roads/tracks on Islands. NK responded saying that the RDS was not likely to set up a scheme (aimed at helping businesses with road building) unless it was open to all Camp businesses facing this issue. If, however, it was deemed appropriate it was unlikely to happen in the short term. However, MS disagreed that a “scheme” would be required and that cases could be assessed on their merits. MS suggested that the interested party submit an application to FIDC so that the business case could be assessed and the case reviewed.

Fiscal Incentives

- The need for tax breaks and other fiscal incentives for new businesses or projects were raised. JF advised that this work was on-going. JF confirmed that a he had drafted a paper on this subject which had been reviewed by the Treasury. Work on this paper was on-going although other more pressured commitments had prevented redrafting of the paper to date. Draft Legislation would be required to implement the proposals in the paper and he would discuss the how and when of these proposals, further, with relevant colleagues.

Other/general

- One Islander thanked the RDS Steering Group for providing an opportunity to attend the meeting and to raise concerns and issues. He added that he felt that the Outer Islands are often an “unheard” minority and that it was important that they had an opportunity to feed into the process and raise concerns.

There being no further business the meeting closed 16:15 pm

Actions carried forward from previous meetings:

5th March 2012

1. **Action:** JF to redraft REZ paper to reflect comments from the Steering Group.
2. **Action:** JF to continue work on an “RDS Immigration System” which would facilitate foreign investment and increase immigration into Camp.

12th April 2012

3. **Action:** NK to discuss this with retailers such as Lifestyles. NK to also contact Paul Barnes as he may have a contact for sourcing low cost alkathene pipe.
4. **Action:** WL was tasked with speaking to Neil Judd and Peter Johnson to assess how problems are addressed in drier climates.
5. **Action:** WL was also tasked with contacting Jim Gerrish to discuss water solutions for livestock and crops.

31st May 2012 (Goose Green)

6. **Action:** NK - A catch up meeting is to be arranged with David Jenkins and Tom Hill to review actions falling from the meeting on the 7th of May
7. **Action:** ALL RDSSG members - Timescales are required for ALL actions, members are asked to review actions, attach timescales to their own actions and pass on to Kerry McRae.
8. **Action:** JF to consider the following two points in his immigration review a) whether employers could have the opportunity to note “renewal of work permits” on adverts for renewal posts b) the possible economic benefits in Camp of relaxing the rules for seasonal labour
9. **Action:** AP to review dams as an option for addressing access to water in agriculture as suggested by AE
10. **Action:** NK and MJ to try to assess interest and re-establish the North Camp Community Hall Working Group if support is found.
11. **Action:** NK. Power and renewable energy to be added to the RDS agenda

12. **Action:** AP to review the suitability/value of the agriculture apprenticeship in the Falkland's farming context and assess whether there is a need to modify the elements in the manner outlined by Maggie Battersby.
13. **Action:** The funding of the apprenticeship to be reviewed the DoA and the training centre. Currently the Training Centre pays 50% of the costs of the apprentice with the host farmer paying the remaining 50%. On historic agricultural apprenticeship schemes the Training Centre paid 100% of the costs. Perhaps the costs could reflect the experience of the individual e.g. the farmer pays 50% for a year 2 or 3 apprentice?
14. **Action:** MB to discuss the potential of tourism lodges and tourism development with SD

18th July 2012

15. **ACTION:** AP to discuss the Steering Group's concerns with Eileen Davies, Manager of the Training Centre and to gain some clarity on the way forward.
16. **ACTION:** IH as Training portfolio holder will also follow up the concerns about the agricultural college idea
17. **ACTION:** JF to work on the detail of the REZ in due course and in line with KP's comments.
18. **ACTION:** NK to review raw data collected from water surveys and to identify the RDS's role around access to water in Camp.
19. **ACTION:** KP, Tim Cotter, AP and RL are to meet to discuss this further.
20. **ACTION:** KP to discuss how to incorporate health into the RDS with David Jenkins.
21. **ACTION:** ME and TJ to assess support addressing problems with the 2m system in Camp.
22. **ACTION:** KP to investigate where the responsibility for managing the 2m masts/system lies.
23. **ACTION:** MB to organise an RDS open day at the FIDC offices in Stanley.
24. **ACTION:** NK to contact Darren Christie to assess whether the FIG website has an "employment" section