



APPROVED MINUTE OF MEETING

[Note: This public minute excludes words or sentences removed in the interests of effective conduct of public affairs.]

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ENTERPRISE – BOARD MEETING

12 OCTOBER 2023

WILSON'S FARM AND KITCHEN, COWBOG FARM, MOREBATTLE, KELSO

<p>Board Professor Russel Griggs OBE (Chair) Viv Cockburn Helen Forsyth Emma Guy Kirsten Hannay Jane Morrison-Ross, Chief Executive Lindsay McDowall</p> <p>Board members via MS Teams Jeremy Sainsbury</p> <p>Apologies Board Members: Alistair Cameron Duncan McConchie Paul Winstanley</p> <p>SOSE Senior Leadership Team Anthony Daye, Director of Finance and Corporate Resources Karen Jackson, Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Engagement Dr Martin Valenti, Director of Net Zero, Nature and Entrepreneurship</p> <p>SOSE Senior Leadership Team via MS Teams Bryan McGrath, Director of Place and Enterprise</p> <p>Scottish Government via MS Teams Scottish Government Officials – Regional Economic Development Division</p>	<p>SOSE Staff via MS Teams Melissa Gunn, Youth Programme Executive Maureen Malone, Governance and Assurance Manager Donna Marshall, Economic Infrastructure Manager Nicola McArthur, Head of Finance Services Justin Orde, Enterprise and Business Manager Arthur Rennie, Enterprise and Business Manager Chris Richardson, Economic Infrastructure Project Development Manager Ed Shoote, Economic Infrastructure Development Specialist Eilidh Todd, Community Development Specialist Paula Ward, Economic infrastructure Development Specialist</p> <p>SOSE Attendees Lucy Filby, Head of Land and Forestry Transition Mark Rowley, Strategy Manager, Tourism</p> <p>Corporate Office Linsey McGillivray, Board Secretariat Jane Malloch, EA to SOSE Chair Fiona Sköller, Corporate Support Administrator</p> <p>Guests' attendance in person Representative from Scottish Agritourism Representative from Beirhope Alpacas Representatives from Hallrule Farms – Tiny Home Borders</p>
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WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1. The owner of Wilson's Farm and Kitchen welcomed the Board to Cowbog Farm, a working farm with food and venue offering. The Chair thanked them for hosting the Board and SOSE colleagues and welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.

SCOTTISH AGRITOURISM

2. A representative from Scottish Agritourism gave Board members an overview of Agritourism in Scotland (tourism on a working farm which was real farmers, real farms and growing crops and livestock) and the launch of the New Growth Strategy for Agritourism in Scotland in 2021. They spoke of the Agritourism monitor farms programme and succession farming.
3. Internally SOSE were working on the customer journey to make the process clearer and more transparent for farmers. SOSE were looking internally to new people key contacts for agritourism and agriculture. The representative from Scottish Agritourism would be delighted to be involved in a workshop session with SOSE advisors and work with local farmers on opportunities.
4. A presentation was provided by a representative from Hallrule Farms spoke of their journey into tourism by developing Tiny Home Borders – an off grid eco cabin with its own lochan, circular walks and the provision of local produce. There was discussion of planning problems, lack of a local abattoir and remote rural locations.
5. A presentation was provided by a representative from Beirhope Alpacas which offered camping, walks with Alpacas, production of Alpaca yarn and spring lambing tours and farm tours via live social media.
6. Thanks were given to all guest speakers.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

7. The Chief Executive declared a note of interest in one of the businesses related to a funding application for Board approval and it was noted this was not a conflict of interest.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTION LOG

8. An amendment to the previous minute of 12 August, paragraph 22, was requested: the Audit and Risk Committee had approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23.
9. A Board member who was unable to attend the meeting had requested clarity around Action 51 (timescales) and Action 137 (the inclusion of the Fair Work aspect to our client interactions). It was agreed a member of the Senior Leadership Team would contact the Board member to discuss.

Decision	The minute of the meeting held on 12 August 2023 was approved with the amendment noted to paragraph 22.
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CHAIR'S REPORT

10. The Chair provided an update:
 - He had recently visited Caledonia Park at Gretna which employed c600 employees and highlighted the transport issues of the area.
 - Scottish Government were very much focussed on relationship with businesses and had implemented many working parties.
 - The Chair gave an update on Fair Work in that Scottish Government was acknowledging the challenge it had created re living wage and were softening the position on conditionality. SOSE could use exceptions – particularly in those areas where required.

Duncan McConchie, Board member, had separately provided his thoughts on exceptions, to the Chair, who in turn had passed these to the Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

11. The Chief Executive informed of recent activities:
 - Working well with the Rural Delivery plan.
 - Progression with the housing status.
 - Interesting interchanges with the 3rd Sector.
 - NSET would be revisited and revised to align with the new administration's ambitions for Scotland.
 - Engagement with Scottish Government on the Green Industrial Strategy.
 - Cognisant of budgetary pressures, head count was frozen, intellectual capability was more essential.
 - Preserving frontline services was SOSE's focus and SOSE continued to look at efficiencies and streamlining to ensure opportunities were not missed.
 - Worked with Chair of Audit and Risk Committee to deep dive into areas where SOSE could be more efficient.
 - Worked with Chair of POD to develop plans such as the 4 Day Working Week.
 - Good and challenging questions were raised at the Economy and Fair Work Committee evidence session on 4 October.
 - Progress was being made in Dumfries & Galloway with Business Gateway.
12. A Board member commented that it would be useful to see performance activity in relation to the Operating Plan and it was agreed this would be progressed.

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

13. Thanks were given for the provision to Board members of an update on the UCI Cycling World Championships. The Board found the presentation very interesting and spoke of the wider impacts: the benefit of the events to the South of Scotland and the need to benchmark the contribution to towns, the impact of road closures, the equity of media coverage and the relationship between Forestry and Land Scotland.

MOUNTAIN BIKE INNOVATION CENTRE UPDATE

14. The Board were provided with an update on the progress of the operational and construction elements of the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre at Innerleithen.

AGRICULTURE TRANSITION PLAN

15. SOSE's Head of Land and Forestry Transition gave a presentation on the emerging Agriculture Transition strategy and proposed that there should be a "food first" approach to the strategy. SOSE was for farming, food production and working with farms to work for regeneration. SOSE could support local food growers to reduce their carbon footprint. SOSE had held roundtables and regional workshops to kickstart collaborations and to see where SOSE could add the most value – by helping with reducing carbon footprint, supporting their transition to net zero and to look at the opportunities that lie on their land and in their area/support with diversification where requested.

FUNDING APPLICATIONS

16. The Board considered four funding applications.

“Details of projects funded, and their values are published by SOSE on a quarterly basis once all relevant contractual terms have been agreed. Please refer to the [SOSE website](#) for information on the Grant Funding that we have distributed.

AIMS UPDATE REPORT

17. The Board members noted the AIMS update report.

FINANCE UPDATE

18. SOSE’s Head of Finance Services attended Board to speak to the Finance report and the Board members noted the Finance Report.

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

19. The Board members agreed there was no change to risk appetite and noted the report provided by the Governance and Assurance Manager. The Risk Register was regularly discussed at Audit & Risk Committee, it was expected that reputation risk appetite would increase with upcoming elections, and this would be monitored.

STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS

20. The results of the latest staff survey were circulated. Peachy Mondays reviewed the results with Senior Leadership Team to help understand the context and environmental pressures. As a direct response some interventions were in place. Colleagues were working on a framework to give staff assurance, confidence and protection. SOSE’s Senior Management Team (SMT) were engaged with SLT to tackle some of the issues. SOSE would continue to work with Peachy Mondays and Monkey Puzzle to address training and development to empower people to do their jobs.
21. There was discussion around collaboration and the need for colleagues to attend offices to collaborate. Communications had been issued re hybrid working around 50% of working time and there had been discussions with Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS).

YOUTH ADVISORY FORUM UPDATE

22. SOSE’s Youth Programme Executive attended Board to give a presentation update on the Youth Advisory Forum which had recruited members and had its first meeting in Dumfries and Galloway. The launch of the forum had developed a lot of interest and an invitation was extended to Board members to attend a future meeting.

HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

23. Board members noted the report and there had been no incidents of late.

A.O.B.

24. A Board member enquired about the Cycling Infrastructure Fund and if SOSE were helping communities along the way. An Economic Infrastructure Development Specialist would contact the Board member to discuss further.

Approved at Board on 14.12.23

PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

25. The undernoted papers were provided for information:

- Minute of POD 18.05.23.
- Minutes of ARC 07.06.23 and 02.08.23.
- Minute of Just Transition Committee 11.05.23.
- Board Forward Plan.
- Board and committee dates 2024.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

26. 14 December 2023