



SCT portacabin
Tuesday, August 25, 2015
7.30pm

1. **Apologies:** Sine Gillespie, Angus Ross. **Present:** SCT directors Dugald Ross, Donald MacDonald, Sandy Ogilvie Ian MacDonald, Roddy Gillies and Gordon Higgins (from 7.50pm) SCT member Martin Farquhar, local development officer Hugh Ross.
2. **Minutes:** DMcD approved the June minutes which was seconded by DR.
3. **Matters Arising:** DMcD asked HR if the pension requirements for the LDO salary had been arranged. HR said he and AR had discussed situation, with November the proposed start date. HR agreed to take update back to next SCT meeting
4. **Staffin Slipway:** HR said that Skye Sea Harvest had met HIE officials in July to discuss the potential funding of the project after the meeting of various public agencies in Portree in June which SCT had organised.
GH entered the meeting.
 SO discussed the marine engineering feasibility study. DMcD said the next phase of feasibility studies would further investigate issues regarding depth of water and access.
5. **Lealt Quarry:** DMcD had requested that the quarry be discussed as a stand-alone item from the Slipway so HR had requested information from Highland Council planner Mark Harvey and Kilmuir Estate factor David MacVicar. The quarry is outwith crofting tenure and classed as Reserved Area Land (in hand to the estate) and the last formal planning consent for extraction/quarrying of rock expired in 1998. HR said Mr MacVicar had intimated that Scottish Ministers *would* be prepared to enter into a lease of the quarry which would be dependent on the Staffin Trust obtaining all necessary planning consents, insurance, aggregate tax and operating licences etc. The terms of any potential lease would require SCT to pay an annual base rent, plus a royalty on each tonne extracted.
 IMcD said the quarry had huge potential for SCT as it was effectively going to be the only source of rock in north Skye, with Drumuie and Kingsburgh reaching the end of the line. DR said the cost could be very expensive in terms of extracting it for the Slipway.
 IMcD said the quality of the rock at Lealt was very good and both he and DR thought it was potentially a great opportunity for SCT to generate income for the community. He described it as "a no brainer" and thought the key issue was the level of royalties.
 HR said that the other community organisations which owned quarries were Storas Uibhist and the Gigha Heritage Trust. IMcD said finding out their royalty payments would be key. GH asked about a purchase price and what it would be based on.

DMcD said SCT should lobby the local MSP/MPs to make the case that a community organisation should not have to pay royalties for the Slipway and also find out from the HIE Land Unit about a potential community buy out.

Action Point – HR to contact Gigha Trust and Storas Uibhist to find out more about their quarry operations. Hr to contact HIE land unit re purchase.

6. **Storr:** HR described his findings from his Cairngorm research visits to Spittal of Glen Muick and Loch an Eilein near Aviemore. He had written a report about the annual income sourced by the organisation at Glen Muick and e-mailed it to all the directors. There were 125,000 visitors at Glen Muick, which is comparable with the Storr’s estimated 100,000 people but only capacity for 89 cars at present at Glen Muick – there is more room at Storr.

A major community consultation is required in Staffin if SCT was to press ahead with Storr. HR said there was 90% compliance rate at Glen Muick, which has a part-time warden but at Loch an Eilein the wardens were full-time and had barriers so compliance was 100%.

HR requested help with drawing up a business plan for the Storr and DMcD said he would assist.

HR said there was a proposed visit to Loch Lomond/Perthshire sites with Highland Council officials in October.

Action Point – DMcD to assist HR in working on business proposal for Storr.

7. **Housing:** HR said Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust c/e Ronnie MacRae is trying to arrange a meeting with Crofting Commission, SNH, Scottish Government and Highland Council senior officials in Inverness regarding the preferred Stenscholl common grazing site past the school playing field.

HR said time was fast slipping away and there were new funding streams coming up which SCT had to catch, if housing was to be secured. He would take a minute of this meeting to the crucial Inverness meeting.

The SCT board expressed its collective frustration at the delay caused by SNH at a perfectly good housing site, close to the school and local services. If much-needed affordable housing was to be secured for Staffin after almost 17 years and the school roll decline arrested, then the Staffin community’s future had to take precedence over an environmental designation which only seemed to come into play when it was hindering development in Staffin. There was discussion about setting a deadline for a decision from SNH so a planning application could be submitted soon.

HR said he also intended to attend the forthcoming Scottish Parliament’s Rural Affairs Committee in Portree so he could speak directly with the MSPs about the issue.

Action Point – housing meeting in Inverness to be attended by HR. HR to try to speak to MSPs in Portree.

8. **Ceumannan II:** HR said the paths consultation was progressing and GH explained the situation regarding HLF dragging its heels over request for an extension to the application for funding being submitted. DMcD said he thought it would be helpful for SCT to have an update about the project at next meeting. **Action Point: HR and GH to outline progress to SCT at next meeting.**

9. **Archaeological dig:** DR discussed the forthcoming excavation in September, with the funding now in place for the five-day project. He said it was potentially a very exciting site, with no Mesolithic buildings ever discovered on Skye.

Next meeting: 29.9.15