

**GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS UTS –
Urras an Taobh Sear/Staffin Community Trust
Meeting Minutes
29.4.15 @ 19.30, Portacabin**

1. **An làthair/Present:** Dougie Ross, Angus Ross, Gordon Higgins, Sìne Gillespie, Hugh Ross.
2. **Leisgeulan/Apologies:** Donald MacDonald, Ian MacDonald, Sandy Ogilvie.
3. **Geàrr-chunntas Mhàirt - Prev mins 31.3.15:** They were agreed to be accurate by Dougie & Sìne.
4. **Matters Arising: Beinn Eadara:** John Hearach will erect the plaque on the Staffin War Memorial when next in Skye.
5. **Storr:** Donald and Hugh will meet Skye councillors and officials at Highland Council ward meeting in Portree on 30.4.15. Hugh has drafted a briefing note to update councillors about the progress and it will be chance for a discussion with them. Looking to seek agreement that Staffin Community Trust is the council's preferred partner at the Storr: not clear as yet. SCT to get agreement on what a partnership would mean and draw up comprehensive development plan.
Pam Noble of HIE Assets Team + Diane Campbell Community Ownership Service are advising SCT. Hugh has forest plan from officials – native broadleaved trees are planted with much lower density than previous commercial forest. Hugh to find out what stocking densities are. SCT to probe source of economic income stream. Two reports for SCT and council have identified a refreshment kiosk, public toilets and car parking fees as possibilities. Donald and Hugh will seek a commitment that SCT is preferred partner. Donald cautioned that it would be imprudent to assume responsibility of site without a regular income stream. A concrete plan is required for the project, the board agreed.
6. **A' Chidhe/Slipway:** Marine Scotland and Highland Council would partner up in dealing with the planning application and officials Tim Roberts and Mark Harvey had met SCT and Skye Sea Harvest earlier in April. Alex MacInnes of SSH said autumn is preferred date for pre-planning. Initial Feas Study phase is completed. Issues require to be identified. Marine Scotland and council will draw up a timetable for planning process. Working towards Sept 2015.

Now looking to organise a bigger meeting next month of public agencies like Kilmuir Estate, Transport Scotland, and Marine Scotland etc in Portree on 5.6.15.

Gavin Mennie, of Breedon Aggregates, had visited Lealt Quarry with Hugh in April, Gavin is in charge of 80 quarries in Scotland and was very positive about Lealt, and hopeful that it would provide armour rock is there. Said it was also a good bit away from sea, good access from road and screened well. A geo-technical study of the quarry, to determine whether there would be sufficient rock, has been recommended in the marine report from Wallace Stone. Hugh is meeting Crown Estate officials in Staffin for first face-to-face meeting on Friday.

7. Taigheadas - Housing

Meeting had been held in Staffin with Alex Turner of SNH, Ronnie MacRae of Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust and John Lamont of housing association – which was a chance to pin down Stenscholl site as preferred location. Alex is not in favour of what he sees as potential impact on Trotternish National Scenic Area and Staffin’s ‘crofting landscape character’. He is claiming houses will spoil view of the Trotternish Ridge but this was contested at that meeting by Hugh, Ronnie and John.

SCT board thought housing would not badly impact on views of the Trotternish Ridge which is so much higher, and were concerned that housing needs should not be dismissed in favour of SNH viewpoint.

Next step is for Hugh to attend a meeting in Inverness with council’s West Highland Local plans team, the Crofting Commission, SNH, housing association and HSCHT. Recognition that Staffin is a “special case” as it has biggest population living within a NSA in whole of Scotland. Community Empowerment and Land Reform bills should assist SCT cause.

Ronnie coming over from Western Isles on Friday and asked Hugh for a 3-metre punch bar to probe the Stenscholl site.

8. Ceumannan II

SCT has a recently-appointed mentor to help with preparing the funding application – Jane Davies from Cumbria. Hugh said she was very helpful but a lot of work to do on the project. Activity Plan to be completed which is a kind of project bible to which SCT must conform.

Final Paths Report in hand. Hugh’s next task to go around the various townships in Staffin and seek their approval.

Viewing platform at Lealt – Donald Kennedy, the council access officer, told Hugh that an extra car park would be needed to cope

with expected demand. Paths consultant Chris York said it was a landscape architect's job. DK said if SCT is creating demand, it needs to accommodate it – might be 100% extra visitors to Lealt. Discussion about whether the Heritage Lottery Fund might fund a car park. Hugh has asked the council whether they might design a car park for SCT. Should be noted that it is still a shared entrance and if we lodge a planning applic, we might be on shaky ground.

Chris York says it's needed: DK says it's needed. Pre-planning request is free of charge, prior to 15.5.15. This will slow down process and will cause difficulty with our timescale. If we don't go for car park, we might not need an extension on timescale. No grant for legal fees which might be more excessive than sale. Noted that the extension would be northwards. That car park serves two paths. Nothing to lose – Hugh will lodge pre planning application.

9. Eile/AOCB

Archaeological Excavation – Dougie and Hugh spoke to UHI in March on phone. Dan Lee of UHI thought that it could be a five-day dig and a trench dig exploratory – rather than a full scale excavation. There is potential £5k from UHI. Keen to involve local volunteers and Staffin/Kilmuir schools etc. Likely it is the only Mesolithic foundation in Scotland, with thousands of tiny flints in vicinity directly above estuary. Dan Lee coming up in May for a site visit and to meet Dougie and Hugh – there could be funding from council Ward Discretionary Fund - £3k for dig. Hugh is looking into that.

Ceumannan II Wales trip in mid-June - Potentially only Hugh can make this as UTS directors have work commitments.

Superfast broadband meeting in Kilmuir – to be held on April 29.