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MINUTES of Staffin Community Trust meeting

SCT portacabin

Tuesday June 30, 2015

7.30pm

1. **Apologies:** Sandy Ogilvie, Gordon Higgins, Sine Gillespie, Dugald Ross, Roddy Gillies
Present: SCT directors Angus Ross, Donald MacDonald, Ian MacDonald, SCT member Martin Farquhar, local development officer Hugh Ross.
2. **Minutes:** Correction - DMcD said the proposed £5,000 grant from the University of the Highlands and Islands for the archaeological excavation would actually come from the Scottish Government Innovation scheme, and not UHI. AR approved the minutes which was seconded by DMcD.
3. **Staffin Slipway Development:** HR said there had been a meeting on 5.6.15 in Portree involving Alex MacInnes of Skye Sea Harvest, and several public agencies including HIE, Highland Council, Kilmuir Estate, Scottish Water, and Transport Scotland. That meeting was taken up with a discussion about the planning requirements for an application, including the key Environmental Impact Assessment, and funding scenarios with a view to the estimated cost of the wave, sedimentation, geotechnical and seabed reports, which are the next stage of feasibility studies, required.

DMcD and HR had met HIE's Alison Gainsford and Eilidh Ross after that meeting and funding scenarios were discussed. DMcD said that SSH would be meeting HIE in Inverness in mid-July. IMcD raised the possibility of buying the Slipway from the council and there was a discussion about the potential community benefits and implications for SCT. DMcD said the UK Government was poised to provide a new fund for community energy schemes and suggested investigating the construction of a turbine in Staffin, which could be a potential income generator for SCT.

There was discussion about Lealt Quarry and DMcD said a potential saving for the Slipway Development was if the landlord, the Scottish Government, did not take any royalties from the rock needed because it was a community-led project. IMcD said the rock produced at Lealt was attractive. DMcD said that the planning official Mark Harvey had suggested a quarry in the north end of Skye could be a positive asset and could be kept open after the Slipway Development is built. IMcD said Skye desperately lacked a quarry and Lealt, which had once been commercially operated,

could be a vital income stream for SCT if it was taken over. It was agreed that Lealt Quarry should be added to the agenda as a stand-alone item at next SCT meeting. HR said that a legal document, called a Local Management Agreement (LMA), had been sent to him by Crown Estate for the Slipway Development. It gives SCT some protection and confidence that it has first option to develop on the Crown Estate's land and is particularly helpful for funding applications. HR suggested that he could ask Community Land Scotland if SCT, which is a member, could get free legal advice. AR thought that was a good idea as it could avoid incurring legal fees. IMcD suggested asking the former solicitor, the Rev John Murray.

Action Point – HR to seek legal help from CLS, or John Murray.

4. **Storr:** HR said no valuation for the site was currently available from Highland Council. He was currently working through an initial feasibility of project with guidance from Diane Campbell of the Community Ownership Support Service and Pam Noble of HIE. This included two documents called "Make or Break Qs" and a site options appraisal. Diane had told HR that there could be technical help provided and he said that elements of the options appraisal were proving to be quite challenging. HR said that he would be aiming to bring something back to SCT board by either August or September so a decision can be made on its priorities at the Storr and preferred solution(s).

AR said the situation at Storr regarding parking was a big concern and improvements were required. DMcD said that the Storr, along with the Quiraing, were world class and iconic attractions. He said that the objective at the Storr should be to create something befitting its status and thought a consultant could be funded to support the project. He suggested HR seek advice from HIE.

MF asked how car parking fees might be enforced at the Storr. IMcD and DMcD said it could not be enforced, which was the same situation at supermarkets, but there was evidence that if visitors knew the money was going towards the facilities/a community organisation then there was a greater compliance.

DMcD added that the building(s) could be built into the side so they were hidden, with the suggestion of a possible turf roof. MF said the Rhegaid Centre, Cumbria, was built into a hill.

Action Point – HR to seek advice/specialist help from HIE/COSS re Options Appraisal.

5. **Housing:** HR said that there had been an impasse at the Inverness meeting he had attended re the Stenscholl site. The next stage would see Ronnie MacRae, of the Highland Housing Communities Trust, lobby senior officials and the Scottish Government for support. HR said the next stage would be to have talks with Stenscholl Township and Kilmuir Estate and mark out the site so that Staffin could get a sizeable area of land for affordable housing. That would include peat probes. DMcD asked IMcD if he would be willing to help HR with project and he said he would.

HR also said that SCT would need to have talks with the different organisations about the makeup of the development - homes for rent, shared equity, purchase etc. A Rural Housing Initiative Fund is due to be launched in April 2016 and HR said it was vital SCT moved quickly, with support from HSCHT and Lochalsh and Skye Housing association.

Action Point - If site gets go-ahead then it needs to be marked out and further probes carried out to establish depth of peat.

6. **Ceumannan II:** HR said that the footpaths consultation was ongoing and taking longer than he expected. Different issues were springing up but sheep worrying was cited by several crofters – HR said there was a need to educate visitors that Staffin had no public land, it was all crofting area – and thought there was scope for it to be worked into project, perhaps through interpretation. IMcD said that Donald MacDonald had problems at Loch Cuithir, Lealt, because there were deep drains in which animals were getting stuck so was looking for outlets for sheep to escape. HR also said that a draft of the Interpretation Plan, which was incomplete and had pages missing, was submitted by consultants MacDonald Orr but he had not shared it with the Ceumannan sub-group. HR has asked for a proper draft by July 9. SCT is required by Heritage Lottery Fund to consult on the findings/recommendations with Ceumannan visitors. HR had spoken to Gavin Scott Moncrieff, who was supportive of project, and said HR could hold a consultation Focus Group with guests at Flodigarry Youth Hostel.

HR also needed to start work the on important Audience Profiles document for the Ceumannan II Activity Plan, which was a major piece of work for the funding application. DMcD suggested that HR ask HIE's Phil McCaherty for some help with Ceumannan II.

7. **Archaeological dig:** Application submitted by HR to Highland Council's Ward Discretionary Fund for almost £3,000. The Garafad crofters' consent was required for the project and HR had already got green light from Kilmuir Estate and SNH. He had also contacted Staffin and Kilmuir primary schools head teacher Jenny Kiss about pupils' involvement. HR thought it could grab the imagination and said Dougie had put a lot into it. HR keen to ensure project does not dominate his working week and takes him away from other SCT projects.

AOCB: Pensions – Angus explained that SCT has to pay 1% into statutory pension scheme for HR, as employee.

Community Development Leadership course at Columba – HR flagged up it was being held in August and he had been invited by Maggie Cunningham. AR asked him to e-mail it out to all SCT directors.