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## STAFFIN COMMUNITY TRUST

### Board meeting minutes

### SCT office

Tuesday, November 24, 2015

7.30pm

- Apologies:** Sine Gillespie, Ian MacDonald, Sandy Ogilvie and Gordon Higgins.  
**Present:** SCT directors Donald MacDonald, Angus Ross, Dugald Ross, Roddy Gillies; local development officer Hugh Ross and Liz MacFarlane.
- Minutes:** Correction - DMcD said there was an error in the reference to the Lochboisdale Harbour Development, which should have read £10 million, not £27m. AR approved the October minutes, seconded by DR.
- Housing:** DMcD welcomed Liz MacFarlane, of 28 Stenscholl, to the meeting and said he was delighted she could attend. He outlined the efforts made by the SCT with regards to securing affordable housing for the community, which had stretched back more than two years when Marion Beaton was the SCT's local development officer. HR said it had included a major Staffin housing needs survey and report, a housing meeting with the various agencies including Highland Council, the Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association (LSHA) and the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT), a local "Call for Sites", the locations were then all visited and assessed by the agencies and debated by the SCT board - before the preferred sites were submitted to the council's own Local Plan "Call for Sites" in March 2015.

Following the last SCT board meeting, HR had met the Stenscholl township at its AGM and the tenants reiterated their support for the proposed development past the school playing field, and 28 Stenscholl, where LMcf and Iain MacLeod reside. The township would look for compensation/a new fank and was keen to help meet the community's urgent need for new affordable housing. The township said it was important IMcL was consulted as it would have the biggest impact on him as a croft tenant, living next door to the site.

HR had then spoken to IMcL and LMcf who requested more information about the site plans and designs but he had told them SCT had yet not reached that stage. IMcL and LMF later had a meeting with LSHA officials John Lamont and Iain McIvor and had offered a site to the north of the Staffin Hall/Kilmartin Restaurant, zoned in the Local Plan for "multi-use".

HR had previously asked IMcL whether that site would be available to SCT during the Call for Sites in 2014 but it was not.

On Monday (23.11) a site investigation, which saw several test pits dug, was carried out and assessed by a structural engineer. HR said that a report was not yet available but early indications were that it was a suitable site for a development, which was proposed to be six houses and a commercial unit.

DMcD told LMcf it could be problematic if the Hall site was now brought into consideration after SCT had gone through a community consultative process and had investigated other proposed sites. He said that SCT had to be fair to the owners/tenants of the other sites.

LMcf said that the main reason they never offered the Hall site in 2014 was because they were very unclear about what was planned by SCT, such as the number of houses proposed. LMcf said HR was talking about six houses tonight but it had previously been six to eight.

LMcf said there was a lack of detail and information from SCT about the process and she had looked at the SCT website but could only find minutes stretching back to February. She added that she and IMcL would be the only people in Staffin impacted by the development at the preferred site.

DMcD said he thought SCT had put a huge amount of information in the public domain in trying to get the best solution for the community. HR said the housing report's publication and the Call for Sites had received media coverage, been published on the SCT website, included in community newsletters distributed locally and highlighted at the time by posters dotted around Staffin.

LMcf stressed that they "were not against anything happening in the area and not trying to be difficult". But she said that more information on "what kind of houses would be built, what they were going to look like, if there was going to be a boundary, what provision is there going to be in terms of the road" was required. LMcf added that the water connection and pavement scheme were also issues they wanted to find out about. DMcD said all those concerns were very fair and the next steps would be to devise a plan for the site. SCT was looking to progress to development so it could secure money from a national housing fund.

He said that SCT had put a lot of effort into the process - and if a new site was now proposed at the Hall – then the board would have to take advice on whether it could be considered as it had to be a transparent process.

LMcf asked what would happen in 10 years if residents moved into the homes, the children got older and the school roll declined again. DMcD said that was a situation every rural Highland community faced but given the amount of time which had elapsed since Staffin last had new affordable housing it was vital to progress a new development.

DMcD added that although a site investigation had been carried out the community consultation had not ended. He pledged that SCT would hold a full consultation in the community, once plans were drawn up.

- **Action Point:** HR to seek advice from LSHA and HSCHT about whether the Hall site can be considered as an option and possible implications for the SCT community consultation process.
- **Action Point:** HR to keep LMcf, IMcL and the Stenscholl township updated about the situation and the next steps.

The SCT board thanked LMcF for taking the time to attend the meeting and she left at 8pm.

4. **The Storr:** HR said he was very grateful to the SCT directors including Roddy, Sandy, Sine etc who helped hand-deliver the surveys to residents. It would demonstrate to funders the board's input and reassure local residents that their community organisation was working hard to improve the site.  
HR said that 74 Storr surveys were returned so far and Friday, November 27 was the deadline. 30% was the target, which was the average in similar consultations in other communities, and that had effectively been reached. HR said he would like to push that response rate up and on and get more than 50% (128) as it would give SCT a strong community-backed mandate at the Storr.  
HR said that most of the responses so far were in favour of the SCT taking on the site and toilets but some were against a kiosk/information point.  
He added that he had also received formal responses to the consultation from the Skye MRT team and Visit Scotland.  
HR said that the next steps were to establish who was going to analyse the responses and write the consultation report. He thought there would be a lot of work in it and would speak to the council.  
HR and DMcD are scheduled to meet the council, HIE and Community Ownership officials at end of January, after the next SCT board meeting.
  - **Action Point:** Storr survey deadline on Nov 27, responses to be analysed and report written.
  - **Action Point:** work on Business Plan for Storr ahead of January meeting.
5. **Slipway:** DMcD had contacted Alister Mackinnon of Skye Sea Harvest inviting the company to the SCT board meeting. SSH had suggested they could meet DMcD in Inverness early next month. DMcD said he could come back to the board in January.
6. **Ceumannan II:** HR said the project was progressing and it was hoped to have a sub-group meeting early in December. HR said the Ceumannan planning application for the platform, extra car parking, bridge at Brothers Point and paths would need to be submitted in February at the very latest to make HLF deadline for second round bid in June.
  - **Action Point:** HR to set date for Ceumannan sub-group meeting in December.
7. **LEADER fund:** expressions of interest required by November but all SCT projects submitted. DMcD suggested possibility of townships working together in a scheme to eradicate bracken/rushes in Staffin. AR said there was provision for that under an existing rural scheme. AR added that there was a ragwort problem at the roadside in Staffin and Highland Council had a legal responsibility for controlling it.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, January 26 2016