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**Head of Planning & Building Standards
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Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness
IV2 5NX**

**Staffin Community Trust
Church of Scotland Annexe
Staffin
Isle of Skye
IV51 9JX
6.12.17**

**Planning Reference Nos: -
17/04749/FUL and 17/04735/FUL**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Applications: New organic fish farms at Tote and Culnacnoc, Staffin, Isle of Skye

The board of Staffin Community Trust (SCT) would like to place on record its full support for both of Organic Sea Harvest's (OSH) two planning applications for new fish farms designed to produce high quality organic salmon reared in north-east Skye.

OSH is a company which has a strong record of working closely with SCT and keeping the board and community fully informed about its objectives and plans as they progressed through pre-planning and now to full planning. OSH outlined the project at SCT's AGM in September 2016 and followed that up with a major consultation event in Staffin in February 2017.

The firm intend to create over 50 new well-paid jobs which we recognise as being strategically important for the economy of Skye and particularly this 'fragile' community.

The SCT, which has been actively developing projects on behalf of the community since 1993 through a voluntary board, was set up after a decline in population and school roll with the remit to create jobs, additional housing and reverse the degeneration in the community. With this in mind we have worked for the last four years with OSH to bring

forward a significant game-changing project that could, on its own, bring about a fundamental change to this area.

To demonstrate its commitment OSH have agreed to make annual payments to the SCT, which will result in at least £140,000 of income becoming available for further investment in this community.

SCT has been hugely impressed by the work ethic, determination and vast experience of OSH in relation to the aquaculture industry. We are encouraged by the approach taken through stakeholder engagement alongside well attended public meetings. The SCT has a clear understanding that its members and the wider community are supportive of this development and recognise its long-term importance.

This community wishes to retain young people and families, attract others and encourage our diaspora to return. To achieve this we need well-paid quality jobs with prospects and housing to ensure that the local economy grows. Skye cannot be overly reliant on one market, such as tourism, and the creation and diversification of our local economy into aquaculture is hugely beneficial for our community's sustainability.

As a coastal crofting community, Staffin has a rich affiliation with the sea but now we have a generation who have not relied on fishing for their livelihood. This development presents a real and exciting opportunity for the community to re-establish those ties and create sustained economic growth for years to come.

There are obvious benefits for local businesses such as retail, hotels and restaurants as well as the supply chain and transportation. And, if housing can be made available locally it will also add to the school roll which has declined in recent years.

On the strength of this project and subject to a successful planning outcome SCT propose to move forward with further development of the Staffin Slipway and surrounding infrastructure to create opportunities for marine tourism, fishing and the leisure industry. We plan to invest in services for local and visitor use and anticipate further projects, such as seaweed harvesting, moving forward as a result of this investment.

We would encourage Highland Council to consider these applications positively and empower this community to achieve its untapped potential, in the spirit of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act. That legislation sets out to empower community bodies by strengthening their voices in the decisions that matter to them and ensuring that local service providers work together even more closely with communities to meet the needs of the people who use their services.

Yours truly,

Sandy Ogilvie
Staffin Community Trust Chairman