



STAFFIN COMMUNITY TRUST
Board meeting minutes
SCT office
Tuesday, November 28 2017
7.30pm

1. **Present:** SCT directors Angus Ross, Roddy Gillies, Ian MacDonald, Donald MacDonald, Dugald Ross; SCT member Calum MacDonald; development officer Hugh Ross, SCT accountant Donald Rankin. **Apologies:** Martin Farquhar, Sine Gillespie, Sandy Ogilvie, Gordon Higgins
2. **Minutes:** DMcD welcomed CMcD and DR to the meeting and chaired it in SO's absence. IMcD proposed that the minutes from 31.10.17 were accurate and AR seconded him.
3. **Accounts:** DR presented a copy of the SCT Accounts for the year ended to 31.3.17. DR said the aim was to break even and SCT had achieved that.
 HR said SCT now had two bank accounts, a general one and a new account set up for the Ecomuseum. A £38,000 SSE grant and Rabbits's £2,000 payment was deposited in that account. The Heritage Lottery Fund and Coastal Communities Fund grants would also go into that account. HR said there were costs like Pay Roll, public liability, website etc that HIE could not fund and SCT had to pay from the main account reserves.
 DMcD said the financial situation appeared healthy but as SCT progressed the projects it needed to have a serious look at cash flows. He added that SCT needed to know when projects would be delivered, how much was needed and when those funds were needed. *DR left the meeting.*
4. **Declarations of Interest:** IMcD had indicated his business was interested in submitting a tender for the Ecomuseum platform car park construction and would take no part in the board's discussion about the project.
5. **Storr Project:** HR said that a proposal of the "partnership project" and revenue shared model with Highland Council had been sent to SCT and he shared it with the board. HR then read out the feedback from Rory Dutton, the SCT's adviser at the Development Trust Association for Scotland. RD said there was potential for SCT to achieve its primary aims for the site through this type of agreement and "it could save SCT immense work, hassle, risk, and free time/resources to get on with its other priority projects". RD asked whether SCT had any confidence that HC could/would deliver what is being promised.

HR, SO and DMcD are meeting senior council officials, including Stuart Black, on Friday in Portree. DMcD asked what the board wanted to achieve with that meeting and its thoughts on the proposal. There was discussion about the figures. The benefit of agreeing to a partnership was that the council delivered the capital works and VAT was avoided. AR said the project was unlikely to happen unless SCT entered into an agreement. IMcD said SCT had to get the best possible deal in the talks for the community and highlighted the fact SCT could effectively deliver half the funding needed through LEADER and Rural Infrastructure Fund. There was

discussion about securing a legally binding contract where SCT would submit an Asset Transfer Request after the proposed three years of managing the site.

The board agreed the key points to take to Friday's meeting were:

- Secure an agreement that there will be an ATR so that SCT can purchase the land in 2021
- The council's mooted car park capacity is not big enough
- SCT needs to have a say in the site layout

6. **Housing:** HR said planning permission had still not been secured and council officials had now requested that a tarred pavement was installed to link the site to the school.

HR and Ronnie MacRae, of the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust, met NHS Highland's Kate Earnshaw and Ross MacKenzie. There is now an agreement - in principle - that NHS would relocate the surgery to the new building, as long as the financial details can be agreed. KE said there was a recognition that the Nurse's Cottage/Staffin Surgery is not fit for purpose but the move had to be "cost neutral" for NHS. HR had explained SCT's proposal to purchase the current surgery through an Asset Transfer Request and sell it as an affordable house.

HR and RMcK had also met HIE's Phil McCaherty in Portree to outline the development and request support with infrastructure. He requested that SCT make a submission setting out how the development will work; the potential tenants - both NHS and private sector, cash flow, other funding etc. Evidencing the need and the outcomes - increased school roll, more young families, economic benefits etc is also needed.

7. **Slipway:** HR said that the organic fish farms' application was now "live" and the public can comment up until Dec 24. Organic Sea Harvest's Alex MacInnes had left a folder of all the pre-planning work – landscape visual assessments, environmental statement, non-technical summary etc – in the office for anybody in the community wishing to read it. The application is likely to be decided by the planning committee in Inverness at the end of February, or the start of March. A site visit was also a possibility.

The board reiterated that marine tourism amenities, provision for local users, water, power, parking, storage facilities were all important at the Slipway and would work hard to achieve this with public agencies and try to use the potential fish farm income as a way of realising that objective.

8. **AOCB-** HR said Rabbies' staff were going to carry out two days of work in Staffin, at the Ceumannan path in Brogaig, supervised by HC's access officer Donald Kennedy with Angus Murray representing SCT. IMcD suggested to HR that a shipping container could be purchased to securely store the tools and equipment purchased so far.

IMcD left the meeting and took no part in the following item as he had indicated an interest.

9. **Ecomuseum capitalworks:** HR said a platform Design Check had now been carried out by an engineer called Jim Auchinloss. This had been suggested by the design engineer Geoff Freedman as the platform was going to be a public facility. Additional steel bracing was recommended but Geoff said it was by no means a major redesign and the cost of the extra steel would be "negligible".

DR had highlighted the proposed wooden finish of the rails on the platform and said they could perish quite rapidly in Skye weather, DR had suggested steel instead. When GF comes to Lealt for his first site visit that will be a topic for discussion. GF has a list of contractors for the platform which is a specialist structure. It is proposed to tender the platform and car park as two separate contracts. HR is trying to organise an excavator to carry out a test hole at the site so that GF can carry out a rock assessment. The sight lines will have to be agreed.

The meeting ended. Next board meeting is 30.1.18.