

**MINUTES of
STAFFIN COMMUNITY TRUST
BOARD MEETING
SCT office
Tuesday, February 27 2018
7.30pm**

1. **Present:** SCT chairman Sandy Ogilvie, directors Angus Ross, Donald MacDonald, Dugald Ross, Gordon Higgins, Ian MacDonald, Ecomuseum programme manager Angus Murray, development officer Hugh Ross. Apologies – Martin Farquhar, Roddy Gillies, Sine Gillespie
2. **Minutes:** The minutes from the SCT board meeting on 28.11.17 were agreed as accurate by DR which was seconded by DMcD.
3. **Matters Arising:** HR said that Rabbie's and a Swiss tour company had awarded grants worth a total of £3,000 to SCT for paths and general maintenance. He had got prices from Jansvans for the delivery and purchase of an almost new 10ft container from Jans to store tools and equipment and two quotes from companies in Inverness. The Jams price was the most competitive.
4. **Storr Project:** HR shared hardcopies of the e-mail received from Highland Council's director of development and infrastructure, Stuart Black, in response to SO's letter, which had highlighted SCT's concerns at the lack of progress on the partnership project. A date for the ATR Review hearing was set for March 19 in Inverness before five Highland councillors.
HR had spoken to SB today who said he had been surprised by the SCT letter as he thought talks were progressing. SB said that he was concerned the Storr was being left behind as funding awards had been announced yesterday for the Quiraing and Fairy Pools. HR told SB that a key sticking point for SCT was the lack of security and assurances from the council. SB said his own personal intention was for the land to be transferred to SCT, after the woodland liabilities were met, but things could change in that time, and ultimately "it was the councillors who decided". SB said a Memorandum of Understanding, including a reference to "reasonable endeavours" by the council to transfer the land to SCT could be a way forward, but anything further than that was not achievable.

HR asked the board whether a mediator could be brought in to chair talks between the two parties. SO said SCT and the council were too far apart and DMcD added that could complicate matters given the ATR Review meeting date.

SO said SCT had other major projects in the pipeline like the platform, car park and housing and withdrawing from the Storr would give time to focus on their delivery. SO said the viewing platform, car park and footpaths were similar works to what SCT had wanted to do at the Storr. GH said that SCT did not have a lease and no asset in terms of ownership of the ground which would make funding bids challenging.

IMcD said that SCT had effectively come full circle, after going through a long process, and were now back at the beginning. He added that SCT had put a lot of time, effort and money into the project but it was time to let the council get on with it.

SO asked the board if everybody was content with SCT withdrawing from the Storr ATR and the partnership project with the council. There was unanimous agreement.

5. **Housing:** HR said that he had now highlighted to the four Skye Highland councillors the frustrating delay with the planning application and received a response from Councillor John Finlayson, who had thought there was no real obstacles left. It was submitted in April 2017 and no decision had been made yet. The transport planning official Jane Bridge had carried out a site visit at the start of February with SCT and its partners, plus Alan Dickson of Rural Design. The council had requested a tarred pavement or the road widened between the school and the site. However, during the visit, Ronnie MacRae, of the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust, had suggested the grass verge could be flattened. JB said that could be deemed acceptable but ultimately it was a decision for the planning service.

AD had now submitted a revised drawing with the verge levelled and JB was due to respond to that. AD said a tarred pavement could cost £100,000.

HR said he was seeing the funding deadlines for the Scottish Land Fund and Rural Housing Fund passing and the planning decision seemed to be in limbo. HR said SCT could not afford to wait any longer. He added that the District Valuer was due in Staffin to value the site and the Staffin Surgery.

6. **Slipway:** HR said that Highland Council had told Organic Sea Harvest it was intending to re-advertise the planning application and start the public consultation again. This was because of a technical error in the original advertisements. Alex MacInnes was hugely disappointed and said he had not encountered this before. The plans would come before the April 17 meeting of the council's north planning committee in Inverness instead of March 6. There was a discussion about the ownership of the Slip and SO said he would be keen to find out what the Association of British Ports would charge users with regards to tonnage and length.

7. **Ceumannan Activity Programme:** AM handed out a hardcopy with a summary of the progress. He said that the Crofters' Memorial community consultation event would be held between March 5 and 10 at Staffin Hall, with the artists Henry North and Tom Smith in attendance. Workshop involving Staffin and Kilmuir primary pupils would be held and AM said the display would include key artefacts like the factor's chair on loan from Kilmuir Museum. AM said that sessions with Staffin Primary had started in January which focused on Early Man and he had been working with the secondary school pupils who had been to Costa Roca on a short film about the Ecomuseum. AM also highlighted the work on the Gaelic in the Environment course, the Rabbie's paths works at Brogaig and the health walks and beach clean planned.

HLF mentor Jane Davies and the funding officer Jane Davies are meeting AM and HR on March 12 in Staffin to discuss the interpretation works planned for this week and the overall project.

8. **AOCB:** HR said that Jackie Gillies at Columba 1400 had asked him whether SCT would make a donation to the renewal of the battery of the 10-year-old defibrillator which is based to the building. Jackie had spoken to Staffin Community Council and the Staffin Hall Committee for donations to pay for the estimated cost. The board agreed that £50 would be donated.
9. **Ceumannan Capital Works:** HR said that three firms were expected to bid for the work and the tenders were due to be submitted by Thursday, March 1st. HR and DR had met two of the bidders, Scott MacDonald of Inverness-based MacDonald Contracting Ltd and Douglas Munro, of MacGowans in Aviemore, at the site. They had asked about accommodation in Staffin and rock,

it was explained to them that Lealt Quarry could be a potential source. Corrie Construction is also expected to bid. These firms are also interested in bidding for the car park contract. HR has got Eric Faulds, who has a house in Brogaig, to project manage the car park contract and he was working on the tender document. It was hoped to issue that later this month. HR is drafting a submission to the Department seeking permission from the factor Ewen MacPherson to use the quarry.

Next meeting: 27.3.18