



STAFFIN COMMUNITY TRUST
Board meeting minutes
SCT office
Tuesday, June 26 2018
7.30pm

1. **Present:** SCT directors Angus Ross, Roddy Gillies, Donald MacDonald, Dugald Ross, Ian MacDonald (from 8pm onwards), SCT member Calum MacDonald, development officer Hugh Ross; **Apologies:** Martin Farquhar, Sine Gillespie, Sandy Ogilvie, Gordon Higgins
2. **Minutes:** DMcD chaired the meeting in SO's absence. The minutes, from the meeting dated 24.4.18 were approved by AR and DR.
3. **Matters Arising:** None.
4. **Ceumannan Project – Capital Works:** HR said the platform and car park works at Lealt were progressing. The contractor, MacDonald Contracting Ltd, is currently building the timber section of the platform and will be installing the hand railing later this week. The path access route has been roughly formed and the long spell of dry weather has helped the progress.

The design and project engineer Geoff Freedman is visiting the site on Friday, July 6, to inspect the work carried out so far. HR had asked Geoff whether a sign citing the platform's weight capacity should be erected, like the one at Corrieshalloch Gorge, near Ullapool. Geoff had said it was not necessary, as up to 70 people could be standing safely on the platform, at one time. He suggested a sign asking people to politely give way might be better.

HR said the cash flow situation for the capital works phase was healthy so far. Both main funders, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Coastal Communities Fund, had been prompt in paying SCT, once HR had submitted claims and invoices. It was important that continued to be the case as large invoices were submitted to SCT.

Eric Faulds, the car park project manager, had identified the projected expenditure and his view was that the budget looked OK as long as there were no significant surprises.

HR said the best part of a week was spent by Staffin Groundworks breaking rock discovered in the corner of the new car park and there would be an additional charge. A complaint had been made to Highland Council's planning service by a Tote resident regarding the contractor using material from the Lealt quarry face and HR had responded to the council on behalf of SCT.

HR showed the board a sketch of the proposed, revised layout of the existing car park and asked for its views. It had been drafted with input from Eric, Donald Kennedy of Highland

Council's Access Service and Ian MacDonald of Staffin Groundworks, and had to satisfy the planning conditions, as SCT require council approval for the development to be opened. It would involve a one-way system, disabled and coach parking laybys and new signage. Having entrance at the south end gained about 4 metres width for bus and disabled parking.

AR predicted there could be drivers passing the proposed southern entry and trying instead to access the car park via the new no entry point. He added that people rarely paid attention to signs. DMcD said it also was important that SCT registered an interest to the council in submitting Asset Transfer Requests for the existing Lealt car park, and also at Kilt Rock. He believed it would be difficult for the council to turn down new ATRs, given the high-profile nature of their Storr project rejection.

HR has also sought permission from the HLF to pay for the purchase of three donation boxes to be sited at Lealt and that was approved on June 20.

IMcD arrived at the meeting at 8pm and was present from item 5 onwards.

5. **Housing, Health and Business Development:** HR said he had now submitted a second-round application to the Scottish Land Fund for £211,000 to pay for the purchase of the development land, the Staffin Surgery, legal fees, a member of staff to manage the business units and any other statutory surveys required. A decision would be made in August.

HR was meeting with the Stenscholl Township this Thursday on June 28, along with Ronnie MacRae, of Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust, and John Lamont, of the Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association. HR was seeking the tenants' agreement to the Resumption of the land and also how the township requested agricultural improvements might be delivered. HR had tried to include it in the SLF application but was told it was not an eligible cost. Kenny MacDonald, the clerk, said the tenants were unwilling to sign the Resumption form until it was confirmed how the improvements would be delivered. HR sought the directors' views.

The board discussed the matter and suggested a percentage of the land fee could be paid to all the shareholders upfront, with funds kept back to carry out the estimated cost of the improvements. An application to an agricultural scheme for assistance would be paid back to the township and the remaining costs met by SCT and its partners. The remaining land fee percentage would then finally be divided up to all the shareholders. The board agreed that this was its preferred option and HR would put that to the township on Thursday for consideration.

HR said that he has a meeting in Inverness next week with NHS Highland's Estates Team regarding the valuation and sale of the surgery.

A Project Business Plan has now been produced for SCT by HSCHT and was in draft form. DMcD offered to assist with working on it as it was very much in draft form.

HIE requires a final version so it can consider the level of financial support it may be able to provide for the development's business units and infrastructure costs.

6. **Slipway/fish farms:** HR and DMcD met Alan Webster, of Highland Council, at start of the month to discuss a SCT application to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. It is a major Scottish Government pot, which offers assistance to communities in fragile communities with large infrastructure projects. The council must support the application and be the named applicant so important to have them on side. The first-round application must be submitted by this Friday, June 29. It does not require a huge level of detail. However, the second-round application, likely to be in September, requires far more information. SCT needs the Wallace

Stone work to start soon but HR said it has been very difficult to get match funding so far for the £11,000 cost.

HIE said it will meet with HR to discuss the support required for the project, including the marine engineer and economic consultant costs. The cost of this work is to be finalised once HR gets the economic report quote from Steve Westbrook.

Organic Sea Harvest is now actively looking for sites in Staffin for the processing building.

Robert Gray said a 2-acre site is required, close to water and power supply, and the main road. He had spoken to a council planner called Douglas Chisholm who has been very helpful. HR said a local and public 'Call for Sites' could be made, as SCT did during the housing development, to find suggested locations.