



ASSYNT DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Minutes of board meeting held on Tuesday 10th December 2024 at 2pm

Present: Nigel Goldie (NG) (Chair), Marianne Hutchison MH), Catriona Maclean (CM) (until item 8).

In Attendance: Ewen McLachlan (EM), Adam Pellant (AP),

Apologies: Elaine MacAskill, (EMacA), Dougie Cunningham (DC), Heather Donaldson (HD).

1. Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September were approved as a true and correct record, subject to minor change – Caberfeidh action wording about circulating to the board the means of a community purchase noted as being in the event of the building continuing to be unused into the future.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes (not dealt with in the main agenda):

a. Caberfeidh: Noted that Community Council have reached out to owner of Caberfeidh for update on development/use of the building. Agreed to discuss further when with wider board contingent present.

b. Noted that no SSSEN grant application was made for possible Development Officer post funding.

c. Culag Park: CM updated that she has been in touch with representatives of other user groups including Games Committee and football club, and hopes to have a meeting organised soon, to discuss pitch repair and maintenance, and sharing of cost of this work.

Action: CM to meet and report back in due course.

3. Directors / office holders:

a. EM has had discussions with one potential director and another has been suggested.

Agreed action: NG/other directors seek to meet with both.

b. EM has discussed options for admin support with other DTAS representatives, with one possibility for external contracting. **Agreed action: NG to talk with the relevant contact.**

4. AGM:

a. Accounts preparation – NG noted he will try again to get earlier accounts preparation by accountant. Discussion of possibility of shared roles between different Assynt organisations, for accountancy and for admin work.

b. AGM date set for 7pm Tuesday 18th February (subject to hall availability). **Action: NG to try to book hall.** Next board meeting to be before that – 7pm Monday 13th January, online. **Action: Marianne to organise teams link.**

5. Finances:

NG reported: Cashflow has been quite tight at times due to times of significant expenditure for both glebe design work and NW2045 work in advance of tranches of grant funding receipt.

Difficulties with management accounts software noted. EM had raised the matter with DTAS, who are hopeful of a possibility of free use of xero software for DTAS member organisations in future.

6. Glebe update: AP updated – amendment files submitted by design team onto planning portal.

Ally Macleod has offered to provide advice. **Action: NG/AP to arrange a meet-up with Ally.**

MH updated that the Cruamer site, previously proposed for HC housing development but with flood risk issue, is now not expected to be developable for housing, but may be suitable for enterprise units.

7. Childcare: CM reported that she, Liam Taylor and MH had met with Colin and Tracey McNally, who will feed their input into a report on childcare issues affecting people's ability to work and live in communities, and wider related matters.

CM then had to leave the meeting. At that point it was no longer quorate for decision making.

8. EM updates:

NW2045 – croft value data gathering work hoped to be done, along with commissioning work on economic potential from renewable energy and natural capital.

Seaweed – meeting tomorrow with one of two appointed consultants, who are writing NW2045 area seaweed development business plan. Their visits to the area went well including meeting with Joe Mackay as head of HC harbours.

Some Sc Gov renewable energy advisory group involvement.

Interconnectors mainly owned by overseas interests so all income lost abroad. EM is pushing for fixed community benefit funds being brought in.

DTAS housing meeting tomorrow online.

Orbex – EM had response from Orbex regarding their postponement of Sutherland spaceport development ... MH reported on discussion of this at last Friday full Sutherland Community Partnership meeting.

John Sturrock regional better conversations project is to run in March.

Dundreggan climate advocacy training event EM attended, organised by Climate Hub.

Highland People's Power, established to press for more community-owned energy schemes and community income from renewable energy – they are seeking a Sutherland representative. MH suggested Di Alexander of Sutherland fuel poverty group may be willing.

Human Rights Commission – EM had circulated their highlands report.

9. Former HC drop-in building and community work space group

MH highlighted general in-person feedback, some against community work space use and more generally against another community owned building. Much discussion. As not quorate for decision-making, postponed until next meeting. Noted that by then Iain Macleod may have circulated more detailed information about the community work space group's most recent thoughts on use of that building, which are wider and more holistic.

Action: AP to ask Iain if the group have discussed work shed/space development with Paul of Assynt Leisure, who is keen for AL to assist at their site.

10. eBikes:

Assynt Leisure have stopped the local hire scheme of ADT's eBikes.

A suggestion was made to publicise opportunity to purchase, possibly open to offers with no stated figures. To revisit at next meeting when quorate.

11. Local Place Plan:

Suggested that work in this could possibly be funded using unused CRF admin post grant. MH noted that having a Local Place Plan is proving more important than communities had been led to believe, for example in defining 'growing' status of community areas within Highland Council. **Actions: MH to publicise the possible work opportunity on facebook to seek expressions of interest in the work, in advance of board decision on whether to try to proceed with Local Place Plan production. AP to check with CRF whether the grant could be used for that work.**

12. AOB

AP noted:

- a. North Highland Initiative grant approved for solicitors' fees for Assynt Leisure lease amendment, as required by Cludgie Project funder and still ongoing.
- b. AP and NG have been working on the Fire Risk Assessment for the mission building.
- c. Clashnessie Falls Footpath project and CRF grant – initial work has begun, towards the pathwork occurring in February.

Meeting ended.