



ASSYNT DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Minutes of board meeting held on Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 5.30pm at Assynt Leisure Centre

Present: Nigel Goldie (NG) (Chair), Marianne Hutchison (MH) (to item 8), Elaine MacAskill, (EMacA), Lana Bracewell (LB).

In Attendance: Ewen McLachlan (EM) (from item 3c.), Adam Pellant (AP) (to item 8).

Apologies: Catriona Maclean (CM), Dougie Cunningham (DC). Noted Heather Donaldson not currently available as minute-taker.

1. Appointment of new directors: The board appointed EMacA and LB as directors (in advance of potential election as directors by members at the next AGM).

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on 14th January were approved as a true and correct record, noting one item excluded from public record.

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

a. Caberfeidh: This was discussed again at last Community Council meeting, attended by MH. Noted that ADT could potentially try a community purchase if the community willed it, and that Scottish Land Fund funding is available for pubs and similar buildings as key community assets.

b. Culag Park (games field): CM not present to report further – ongoing. Noted that the 'race to the base' hill run will utilise Culag Park.

c. Fire Risk Assessment for the Mission building: NG has put draft file to An Cala tenants for comments.

Action: NG to progress further.

d. Clashnessie Path: Main path works are now completed. A financial issue to sort out still. HC footpath officer Matt Dent during recent site visit was unable to meet with local landowner who has been blocking access, but will try again.

e. Local organisations contacted about idea of shared admin staffing etc: **Action: EMacA to circulate letter as drafted to groups' contacts identified.**

f. Bank signatory changes: **Action: NG and EMacA to meet soon regarding info needed to add EMacA as new signatory.**

g. Former drop-in building: **Action: EM to draft social media post seeking expressions of interest in commercial/retail use of the building.**

h. eBikes: **Actions: EM to take up-to-date photos of all the bikes and pass them to NG/AP; NG/AP to draft social media post seeking expressions of interest in purchasing the bikes.** AP passed on another recent request for purchase of a single eBike.

4. Governance issues

a. Chairperson role and duties after AGM: NG has spoken with Gairloch & Lochewe community trust (GALE) about contracting them to take on some admin duties remotely.

General agreement to a more basic chairing role being potentially handled by multiple other directors after AGM.

Discussion of possibility of trying to establish another staff role, possibly a manager-type position, possibly tied in with other local organisations and shared duties. MH mentioned similar organisational capacity issues was Sutherland wide. She will feed back to Sutherland Community Partnership the issues ADT are having.

Also discussion of possibly revisiting attempts to establish a local renewable energy scheme for income generation.

b. AGM: Planned to be held at 7pm on 18th March in Lochinver Village Hall community room, subject to confirmation of room availability. **Action: AP to finalise notice and other files.**

c. John Sturrock regional meetings: NG had spoken with Angela Simpson of HIE and was under impression an extra meeting was arranged at Lochinver. Understood that this isn't the case and nearest to Assynt is in KLB, on 20th March. Agreed several people to try to attend from ADT.

5. Finances:

a. Management Accounts proposal: All agreed to NG's proposal that GALE take on the management accounting. All agreed. Agreed also that management accounts be moved from Freeagent to Xero backdated to start of 2025, subject to checking cost of this software.

b. Luis Gouveia Fund: E MacA had circulated two queries about use of this fund – Duke of Edinburgh gold award and travel cost associated with the planned reinstatement of the 'hill to grill' programme and similar outdoor education. The board agreed both were potentially eligible, but noted that ADT's commitment is £500 per year for the whole fund, not per application, and that the fund now comes out of ADT's own cash resources.

6. Fire Risk Assessment on Mission Building:

Actions: **NG to speak to Andy S and An Cala tenants about their involvement in regularised tests and checks such as fire alarm testing. NG to sign off the risk assessment on basis of these actions being scheduled.**

Noted that Highlife Highland (ranger service) had not had a rent increase in several years.

7. Development Officer post continuation funding:

NG reported HIE expectation of offering same grant level for a further year from April 2025, this being approx. one third of the cost. The remaining majority of the cost had come from Communities Regeneration Fund for the year to end of March 2025. Agreed to try to reapply to CRF when the next round opens (expected to be soon).

EM mentioned offshore wind energy sector working group consultation on income distribution, and his pushing for the group to hold a consultation event in the north-west, not just Inverness. **Action: EM to circulate the online consultation link.**

8. Glebe update: Planning decision expected soon.

(AP and MH left the meeting.)

9. EM update: EM updated on various projects including NW2045 matters.

10. Local Place Plan: Some discussion of LPP matters and of a presentation prepared by Lana on Drumbeg issues.

Date of Next Meeting: 18th March, in advance of AGM.