Assynt Development Trust

Note of meeting – 29 July 2026, 5pm – 7.15pm, Assynt Leisure Centre

Present: Elaine MacAskill (**EMacA**) (online via TEAMS), Marianne Hutchison (**MH**), Kari Knight (**KK**), Lana Bracewell (**LB**), Alan Blakemore (**AB**), Adam Pellant (**AP**), Ewen McLachlan (**EMcL**)

Apologies: Nigel Goldie (**NG**)

Action Point	Action (arising in this meeting)	Update	Open / closed
1	**AB** to liaise with Paula with respect to taking on Treasurer duties. **AB** to investigate need to apply for a second bank card (as only one exists, in **NG**'s name). **AB** to notify Paula of our regular Board meeting schedule and request a projected cashflow report ahead of each one.		Open
2	**LB**, **AP** and **EMcL** will draw up a spreadsheet of income generation ideas to provide to HIE in support of DO grant.		Open
3	Page 3 of the DOSS grant agreement needs to be signed by **EMacA** and returned to CRF		Open
4	EMcL to ask NW2045 Coordinator to copy NW2045 meeting minutes to ADT Board.	Already actioned at time of writing these notes.	Closed
5	EMcL to approach a potential candidate within NW2045 about ADT Board membership.		Open

Action Point	Action (arising in 3/6/26 meeting)	Update	Open / closed
1	**NG** to contact Tim the accountant and ask him to liaise with Paula Watson. **NG** to provide bank statements for the CT account to Paula. **AB** to look into payment of Paula's latest invoice.	Actions completed. **AB** to check with Paula whether Tim is corresponding and whether accounts are in progress (end-2025 accounts are due to be submitted to HMRC by 30th September).	Open
2	**EMacA** to confirm with **EMcL** arrangements for managing the new NW2045 coordinator position – will ADT be the employer, does **EMcL** have enough time for this, etc.	EMcL will have initial involvement, along with Sarah and Lizzie, but the coordinator is expected to become self-sufficient.	Closed
3	**MH** to contact Games Committee and **AB** to talk with An Cala tenants about liaison during event planning.	Completed. See Item 7, this meeting. **AB** reported An Cala tenants did not express any particular desire to liaise with Games Committee.	Closed

Action Point	Action (arising in 29/4/26 meeting)	Update	Open / closed
2	Consider a drive to get more local donors to the food larder (e.g. social media appeal).	**KK** to develop a social media post in conjunction with **AP**.	Open
3	**EMcL** to investigate whether HC might be willing to take on the redevelopment of the Culag Square sheds (since they	An EoI was submitted circa 2018. Any further action is still to be determined.	Open

	already own them) as part of their proposed Culag Cottage development. Otherwise, ADT might consider submitting an EOI.		
4	**EMacA** requested **EMcL** to forward paperwork relating to DOSS application, Adam Smith Consultation Experience candidate's scope of work, and anchor fee for Summit 2 Sea project.	DOSS paperwork received. Adam Smith candidate to deliver online presentation on her work on 27/8/26. Summit 2 Sea proposal was unsuccessful.	Closed

Action Point	Action (arising in 18/3/26 meeting)	Update	Open / closed
1	NG to begin process of transferring Treasurer responsibilities to AB by signing him up as an administrator of the RBS bank account.	**AB** is now an authorised signatory on the RBS account.	Closed

Action Point	Action (arising in 30/7/25 meeting)	Update	Open / closed
4	Engage with Culag Park users to discuss Field use guidance. **MH** sent draft guidance to all users. ADT to look into potential cost recovery from users, e.g. for grass cutting, improving drainage, fixing damage. For example, users could be encouraged to make grant applications, or donate their time. **EMcL** agreed to look into potential for applying for Highland Council Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) funding for equipment and maintenance costs, since Park is used by eg. school, leisure centre.	See item 7, this meeting.	Closed
5	Mission building fire risk assessment: need to establish responsibilities of both ADT as landlord, and building users. The current fire risk assessment file is on the Google drive. Scheduling alarm tests/drills is one key thing to discuss among building users. Investigate possibility of reducing annual fire alarm service costs by scheduling them at same time as, e.g. village hall. Review of the Fire Risk Assessments should remain high priority, including review of records kept including regular monitoring, and any associated agreements which may be in place. In	AB reported that this is in hand: • Risk assessment has been reviewed and updated; • Weekly alarm testing and monthly fire equipment inspection is being carried out; • A contractor to service fire extinguishers is being sought.	Closed

	line with this, review of the contracts held with commercial tenants.		
6	**AP** to contact regional modular building company to see if they are still able to tender if not design and build.	Phase 1 is the current priority.	Closed

1 Minutes and Actions of the last meeting

Minutes of 3/6/26 meeting were approved with minor edits by **AP**.
Actions as above.

2 Finances

Paula reports that she is continuing to work on better understanding cashflow and pressure points, and she is revising the payroll process (with **LB**).
AB to liaise with Paula with respect to taking on Treasurer duties, and to investigate need to apply for a second bank card (as only one exists, in **NG**'s name).
EMacA highlighted recent problems with insufficient funds being available in the bank account to pay invoices. Some grant funding seems to be missing. It's hoped that Paula's work will resolve these issues.
AB to notify Paula of our regular Board meeting schedule and request a projected cashflow report ahead of each one.
Mission office internet provider (BT/Daisy) is proving impossible to contact, and the ~£500 per year charge seems like poor value given the only occasional use of the office. It was suggested that the Direct Debit should be cancelled (if only to force them to contact us) and alternatives be looked at – e.g. a portable router with SIM card.

3 DO's updates

AP provided a written report in advance, and highlighted the following:
a. With respect to the current DO grant, we need to report to HIE, on a quarterly basis, progress on (1) income generation - identification of new deliverable income streams; and (2) Glebe housing project. The first of these was discussed and it was agreed that **LB**, **AP** and **EMcL** would draw up a spreadsheet of historical and current ideas, and progress (or otherwise) towards realising them. Examples include acquisition of buildings / land, woodland planting, establishing enterprise units, seaweed project, etc.
b. Page 3 of the DOSS grant agreement needs to be signed by **EMacA** and returned to CRF.
c. Glebe project: our engineers have told us that SEPA demands 12 months of flow monitoring of the stream into which we propose to discharge treated wastewater. This means we won't be able to go ahead with the build until that monitoring has been completed, and even then, might not be able to go ahead if the flow results mean that our proposed waste treatment method is rejected by SEPA. Also, our engineers have told us that the unexpected level of detail and complication required by HC for the Road Construction Consent is beyond what they could have reasonably expected, so would mean significant additional cost, needing additional grant-seeking to go ahead. Feedback from Emma Garry about the meeting with HC roads dept on 24/7/26 is still awaited. **MH** had heard from another source that the meeting was deemed useful, though no immediate solutions were forthcoming.
d. Local Place Plan: Boyd Alexander has proposed changes to enhance the argument that Assynt should be considered fragile and be given more leeway with NPF04. The LPP has also been amended with potential development for Achnacarnin.
EMcL reported that a 5-year Action Plan for NW2045 has been finalised for submission to the steering group and publication.
Katie Horler is now in place as the new NW2045 Coordinator.
Frances Gunn will be stepping down as NW2045 Chair to co-Chair (with Ian Ross) the Pride in Place initiative.

EMcL has an upcoming meeting with Angus Campbell, HIE Chair.
The government depopulation team will be visiting the area.
NW2045 is looking to apply for a grant from the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme to work in collaboration with Youth Highland in looking at potential opportunities for children and young people, and potentially developing a NW2045 Young Crofters group.
EMcL has been invited to join the board of Scottish Rural Action.
The Highland Regional List MSP Kristopher Leask will be visiting on 11th August. Board members are encouraged to attend.

4 Role of ADT as anchor organisation (AO) for NW2045

EMcL today distributed a set of documents which represent the final draft of work being undertaken by Amanda Bryan on the NW2045 operating model. Board members didn't have time to read these prior to the meeting, but **EMacA** highlighted some of the responsibilities ADT takes on as AO:

- As the current anchor organisation ADT and its board hold formal responsibility for the governance and financial oversight of funded NW2045 projects.
- We will co-operate with the NW2045 Steering Group to identify manageable projects, which may include securing project funding.
- ADT assume full legal, financial, and operational responsibility (including contracts, finances, and personnel management) for projects formally agreed upon.
- ADT will maintain adequate management systems and support, incorporating a reasonable service charge/overhead into secured funding if additional resources are needed.

The Board is collectively concerned that ADT does not have capacity for this. **KK** said we need time to review and fully understand the role and the split between ADT and NW2045 duties – and ADT must be the priority. At present there is a sense that we are always trying to catch up with what is happening at NW2045. **LB** suggested we should be provided a monthly summary NW2045 report, in parallel with the DO reports. **KK** suggested we could still provide support without being AO. **EMacA** said the idea of a 'rotating' AO had been discussed, but this was considered impractical in terms of handing over systems (e.g. budget tracking) once established. **EMcL** suggested that the recently appointed NW2045 Coordinator could forward meeting minutes to the ADT Board – this was agreed as an action. The idea of asking one of the NW2045 steering committee members to become an ADT Board member was discussed, including potentially including this as a condition within the MoU. In particular there is a need for someone to take on the role of Secretary, which would include administration relating to both ADT and NW2045. **EMcL** agreed to approach a potential candidate within NW2045 about ADT Board membership.
Some discussion of seeking funding for a paid administrative role, also potentially to include facilities management. **EMacA** said that to understand the facilities management role we need an understanding of the financial position of ACT and its effects on ADT.
AP suggested that we may be able to approach HC, on behalf of NW2045, to provide an interest-free loan to ensure no negative cashflow effects on ADT between paying out NW2045/RLUP costs and receiving grant to cover them.
It was suggested that a meeting could be held in a couple of weeks' time specifically to discuss the NW2045 AO issue further, once Board members have had time to read the documentation.

5 ACT

It was agreed that Connect Assynt would be provided with the entry code to the ADT office, so they can periodically pick up post. However, they are to be told that we view this as a short-term measure, and for the longer term Connect Assynt should make arrangements that do not include them accessing our office (e.g. changing their registered address or putting up a separate post box).

6 Technology

Everyone except **AP** is now using the assyntdevtrust.scot email addresses. **AP** now has a paid 1Password account and should be able to arrange the necessary two-factor authentication through that.

Martin Davis has suggested that TEAMS is a more efficient method of exchanging messages than email, including for sharing documents. It is set up, but no one is using it yet. **AB** said a learning session from Martin would be useful, if we decide we want TEAMS to be the default communication method.

KK asked about budget for website design. There is in theory a £16k designated fund in our accounts from previous grant intended for tourism spend, which could be used – but this needs to be identified / tracked within the system – Paula is working on this.

EMcL asked for approval to purchase a new computer for £439, for which grant has already been allocated. This was approved by the Board members.

7 Culag Park

MH reported on a recent meeting with the park users' group, which was attended by representatives from the primary school, parent council, football club, Games committee, and harbour. It was agreed that the Games committee could go into the park to do work having checked with ADT in advance. The idea of 'handovers' was also agreed – there will be meetings prior to and after events (Games and football season) to agree and check on the condition of the park. The harbour has agreed to provide bins. There is a users' WhatsApp group now, which should make management easier. Identified concerns include tree roots which are getting close to the edge of the football pitch, and damage from large lorries on Games day. It has been agreed that the gates will be locked to better control access (keys to be provided to the ambulance crew).

A grant from the Ward Discretionary Fund is to be sought for buying a roller.

8 Highland Games

In view of the current uncertainties and delays with the Glebe housing project, it was agreed that this isn't something we can easily talk about at the Games. It was therefore decided not to have an ADT stall at the Games this year.

9 Next meeting

Wednesday 26th August, 5pm at Assynt Leisure Centre.

Minutes by AB