

Assynt Development Trust

Note of meeting – 26 August 2026, 5pm – 7.15pm, Assynt Leisure Centre

Present: Nigel Goldie (**NG**), Marianne Hutchison (**MH**), Lana Bracewell (**LB**), Alan Blakemore (**AB**), Adam Pellant (**AP**, online, to item 3), Ewen McLachlan (**EMcL**, online, to item 3)

Apologies: Elaine MacAskill (**EMacA**)

Action Point	Action (arising in this meeting)	Update	Open / closed
1	AB to attempt first draft of a brief 'manifesto' type document that explains why ADT exists, why local people should care that ADT exists, and what benefits and responsibilities a director's role might bring. The aim is to develop a document we can use to aid our search for new directors.		Open
2	All directors to work to identify and approach potential candidates for directorship.		Open

Action Point	Action (arising in 29/7/26 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.	All completed. AB now has a debit card for the ADT bank account.	Closed
2	LB, AP and EMcL will draw up a spreadsheet of income generation ideas to provide to HIE in support of DO grant.	AP to initiate this.	Open
3	Page 3 of the DOSS grant agreement needs to be signed by EMacA and returned to CRF.	Signed by AB and returned.	Closed
5	EMcL to approach a potential candidate within NW2045 about ADT Board membership.	Done, but the identified candidate is not able to accept the role at this time.	Closed

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. Tim Wright has been informed that he can start to prepare 2025 accounts as all transactions and adjustments have been made.	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).	Action suspended due to Kari Knight's resignation.	Closed
3	EMcL to investigate whether HC might be willing to take on the redevelopment of the Culag Square sheds (since they already own them) as part of their proposed Culag Cottage development. Otherwise, ADT might consider submitting an EOI.	An EOI was submitted circa 2018. Any further action is still to be determined. EMcL will follow up with Helen Cameron as to whether HC intends to purchase Culag Cottage.	Open

1 Minutes and Actions of the last meeting

Minutes of 26/7/26 meeting were approved with minor edits by **AP**.
Actions as above.

2 Call for new directors

Following last week's resignation of Kari Knight as a director, there are now five ADT directors, with **NG** also being the sole AC(T) director. **NG** wishes to step down from his roles, and **EMacA** intends to step down as Chair. All directors agree that we need to make a concerted effort to attract new directors.

EMcL has already (yesterday) put out a call via Facebook, highlighting the need for help with both NW2045 and the Glebe housing project. So far, one expression of interest has been received in response, via email.

Approaches to attracting new people were discussed. All agreed that whilst the preference is to recruit people from Assynt, we may need to look further afield if local candidates do not come forward. It was also agreed that we need to clearly set out what we are looking for, emphasising that although director roles are voluntary, they come with responsibilities. We also need a clear recruitment process.

AB expressed the opinion that it is ADT's ownership of the Mission building and Culag Park that presents the most significant responsibilities and potential liabilities for directors – and these must be made clear to potential candidates. He also suggested that the director role is something of a 'hard sell' at the moment, because as things stand one of the Board's responsibilities is day-to-day management of the Mission building, including fire safety tasks and taking care of maintenance issues. It was agreed that, ideally, day-to-day management of a commercial operation should be assigned to a paid role. Some options were discussed:

- A grant-funded post, possibly as part of a broader ADT Manager role. Uncertainties include whether grant funding would be available for a post supporting a commercial operation; and the long-term viability of such funding. **NG** observed that funding bodies like HIE encourage broadening of income streams to enable organisations to become more self-sustaining over time.
- Using AC(T) profits to fund a part-time role, possibly a 'bolt-on' to the existing DO role, or more preferably for a local 'handyman'. **EMcL** knows someone who may be suitable. The scope of the potential role, and AC(T)'s ability to fund it, need to be determined. It is acknowledged that there are uncertainties over the division of maintenance issues between ADT as building owner and the An Cala business as lessee. These need to be clarified by discussion between the parties.

It was agreed that it would be useful to have a brief 'manifesto' type document that explains why ADT exists, why local people should care that ADT exists, and what benefits and responsibilities a director's role might bring. **AB** agreed to attempt a first draft and distribute it for development and comment.

In searching for new directors it was agreed that we should approach:

- Any suitable personal contacts.
- Possible candidates drawn from ADT's membership.
- People that have recently moved to the area and may not yet be aware of ADT and its work.

There was general agreement that the need to recruit new people is urgent, and that we should concentrate on getting people generally interested at first, without worrying too much about specific roles.

3 DO's updates

AP and **EMcL** both provided written reports in advance.

AP gave a brief update on the Glebe project – we are still awaiting responses on action points from the July HC roads / HC housing / CHT / design team meeting – mainly around any possibility of reducing scope of works for the road/footpath, to bring down overall costs and to ease logistical challenge of maintaining access during works period.

EMcL noted that the proposed NW2045 housing consultancy project should directly assist the Glebe development, if approved; and highlighted two items from his report:

- NW2045 will be applying to various funders to create a pan-Northwest young crofters coordinator; and through the Whole Family Wellbeing fund a child, youth, and young people coordinator.
- There is a meeting with the More Homes deputy director on 15th September, to discuss the various 'roadblocks' to rural housing development.

4 Any other business

AB reported that the fire alarm control panel at the Mission building was found to be without power this morning. ADT (alarms) were called and attended late this afternoon. Initial appraisal is that significant repair or replacement may be needed, which would mean the building would be without a fire detection & alarm system for several days. We may need to inform our insurers and possibly install battery-powered smoke detectors / alarms as an interim measure. To be confirmed.

MH reported that Voluntary Groups Sutherland will be at Lochinver village hall on Thursday 3rd September.

5 Next meeting

Wednesday 30th September, 5pm at Assynt Leisure Centre.

Minutes by AB