



STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY TRUST LTD

CHAIR'S BULLETIN JUNE 2015

Dear Member

Welcome to the June Chair's Bulletin. Along with day to day items, there are two important pieces of news to inform you of since my last Bulletin in April.

Trust Funds

We have recently been informed that the Trust is going to receive a substantial payment from SSE one year earlier than expected. The payment was originally expected mid-2016, but it will now be received around July/August this year. This will make a major difference to the amount of money the Trust holds and means that we can seriously start to bring about the bigger, legacy projects that you and the wider community told us you wanted to see. Obviously we can't do that without groups coming forward with their project ideas, and that's where the Project Co-ordinator comes in, but more on that shortly. Rest assured however that we will continue to award smaller grants to groups and individuals.

Project Co-ordinator

You may recall that, in April, the Trust was about to advertise for a Project Co-ordinator. Some excellent candidates applied for the job and the Board's panel interviewed 3 candidates in June. I am delighted to inform Members that the Trust has now appointed a very experienced Project Co-ordinator. His name is Steven Watson and he will be taking up his position at the end of July. Once Steven has settled into the role, the Board will arrange an open evening so that he can be introduced to the community and to anyone interested in meeting him. The Trust has been careful to take all necessary steps to ensure they are a responsible employer, taking advice from appropriate professionals, as this is a major step forward and we are keen to make this appointment work for the benefit of all in the community.

Steven will have two main roles – firstly to help individuals and groups organise their ideas, help you draw up workable plans for your projects, advise on procedures and on funding possibilities. He will be able to give guidance and advice on possible grant funding sources, not only from the Trust but from other regional or national funders, eg. Big Lottery. His second role however will be to lead major projects on behalf of the Trust that relate to the entire community. Please see Steven as someone who will help and guide, but remember that the initiative and work towards putting together your projects/ideas and thereafter the running of any successful project will stay with the groups/individuals.

Keep an eye open over the next few months for notices and adverts about open days or possible meeting dates where Steven will be introduced to Members and the community.

Grants

Guidance is available on our website to anybody considering applying for funding. Even if you haven't been successful in the past for any reason, don't let this put you off. Now that the Project Co-ordinator is about to start, there will be even more assistance available. The Board considers grant applications quarterly so if any groups or individuals are thinking about applying for a grant but want to discuss their ideas or need assistance, please do get in touch with us and we will be happy to help.

There have been some discussions and comments over the last few months about the Trust's inability to support groups on an ongoing basis. There appears to be a general assumption within the community that, while the Trust can give start up grants or fund, for example, the purchase of equipment, it can't provide ongoing support to groups. Let me assure you that that is not correct. The Trust is able to fund ongoing costs for projects, however we can only commit to provide those funds one year at a time. The group involved would simply have to submit a grant application each year. Provided the group still meets grant conditions and can demonstrate how money has been spent in the previous year, annual applications can be made for revenue costs. Indeed Members will be aware that the Trust awarded funds to the Community Council on those very terms. I would recommend any one considering applying for a grant for revenue funding to contact the Trust for guidance.

The Trust is also reviewing the grant system to look at permitting more than one application from groups per year. This will assist groups in making applications for revenue but will also allow subsequent applications for other unexpected or unplanned funding.

Communication

Communication is key to the community and the Trust working together. While the Trust sends bulletins to Members (which will of course continue), we felt that communication with groups could be improved. In the past, the Trust had always relied on groups coming to us; we'd like to change that. We've therefore began putting together some ideas for better communication and we're starting by compiling a Group Directory. This will include contact details and any other information groups ask to include. Once we have this, we can ensure that we all work together and provide as much help to groups as we reasonably can - maybe a special page on our website for event notices, maybe (with their agreement) we could publish the Directory so that everyone can access the information. We are also still trying to find the best way of providing a community newsletter. That may comprise both electronic (eg. a Facebook page) and paper versions. If you have any ideas about how we can maximise our communication or are interested in helping the Trust with this, please do contact us; we want to hear from you.

That's it! To summarise, the Trust is about to receive a substantial amount of money, the Project Co-ordinator has been appointed, the grants system is being reviewed and we are looking to improve communications with groups. Thank you for your continuing support for the Trust and please do contact us to let us have your comments. We appreciate feedback from the community and if you have any questions or, even better, would like to be involved with the Trust in any way at all, please do contact us.

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