

FINAL



MINUTES of the MEETING of the STRATHERRICK AND FOYERS COMMUNITY TRUST LIMITED held at STRATHERRICK PUBLIC HALL ON WEDNESDAY 6 JULY 2016

Present	Graeme Ambrose, Frank Ellam, Peter Faye, Zoe Iliffe, Ken Sinclair, Gordon McAndie,
Chair	Zoe Iliffe
In Attendance	Steven Watson (Project Coordinator),
Apologies	Stewart MacPherson, Hugh Nicol, Martin Donnelly, Sharon Ferguson. The Administrator Laura Walker-Knowles was on holiday.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and called for declarations of interest from those present. No declarations of interest from Directors relating to the agenda were intimated at this stage.

2. PRESENTATION

The Chair welcomed Ronnie MacRae, Chief Executive of the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT).

Here is a summary of Ronnie's presentation and discussion with the Board.

HSCHT is a not for profit organisation and has operated since 1998. Its main activities are the provision and development of affordable housing and land banking for future local housing developments. The work has evolved. Previously, HSCHT has facilitated self-build plots but the Trust has increasingly taken the role of facilitator, using a range of schemes and government initiatives. These have allowed people to take tenancies and part-ownership affordable new and refurbished homes, sometimes with the option to purchase some years off.

Gorthleck Site

The site at Gorthleck has been owned for some years (50% Albyn, 50% HSCHT) and as yet no houses are built thereon. The most recent plan was for two HSCHT detached homes to be built – on a *Rent to Buy* basis where HSCHT would borrow cash from Scottish Government to build the homes. The new *Rent to Buy* tenants would be decided on by HSCHT in accordance with their housing allocation policy and would agree an option to purchase the homes after a period of time (5 years) at a fixed cost. In addition, two buildings, each with two homes were planned by Albyn. These would be tenanted by people from the Highland Housing Register.

Regrettably, tenders recently received from contractors to prepare the site and build the houses had been too high. The development was not viable on the basis of the tenders received. HSCHT was looking to see how the site specification and infrastructure costs could be minimised with a view to getting a lower cost solution which would allow building to start.

Foyers

The site at Foyers below the Craigdarroch Inn was being developed by Simpsons, builders from Beaulay. They were working through the planning conditions applied to the site by Highland Council.

Funding was in place from Scottish Government for two HSCHT homes in both Foyers and Gorthleck, subject to the build cost being affordable.

Errogie Corner

Ronnie MacRae noted that the Errogie Corner / Mrs Greenaway's site was now clear and that (most of) the land was in Highland Council ownership. There was a discussion to be had should the site be reconsidered for housing, as the site had previously been the subject of a planning application.

Other Options

Ronnie appraised the directors of the range of options for his trust and local Community Trust involvement with housing for rent. This included Key Worker / Special Needs housing for local people, the purchase of properties in isolated locations which would otherwise be lost to the self-catering market and the purchase of properties by local trusts which were then leased to HSCHT. Ronnie also introduced the Self Build Loan Fund – which addresses the dramatic reduction in the numbers of self-build properties being built in the Highlands since the financial crisis by supplying the funds for self-builds to get going. Once built, these properties can then be valued and a normal mortgage loan raised from commercial sources. HSCHT also has access to Rural Housing Fund which allows them to develop projects on a similar financial basis to housing association projects.

Ronnie answered a range of questions clarifying specific points on these schemes and indicated his organisation would be very pleased to help the Trust if they were considering how the housing needs of Stratherrick and Foyers could be met.

The Chair thanked Ronnie for attending and giving such an informative presentation and for his valuable offer to assist the Trust in any housing issue in future.

3. MINUTES - JUNE MEETING

There was one change to the draft minute. Martin Donnelly should have been shown as an Apology for Absence. This would be amended. Subject to this change the Minutes of the June 2016 meeting were agreed. Their adoption was proposed for approval by Ken Sinclair and seconded by Peter Faye.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2016 were **AGREED** as a correct record, **APPROVED** and signed by the Chair.

4. FINANCE / INVOICES / EXPENSES

Steven Watson left the meeting during the course of the following item.

- a. Project Coordinator Salary review. The PC's Salary was discussed and an increase of 1.5% was agreed after his first year of employment.

Steven Watson returned to the meeting.

- b. Four invoices were agreed for payment. These were
 - Hall Hire for Board Meeting (Catholic Church) £12.00
 - Payroll Service Accountancy Fee (A9) £48.00
 - Magnetic Vehicle Signs (A2Z Signs) £62.40
 - Shinty Park Sign (A2ZSigns) £156.00
- c. Project Coordinator Expenses for June of £256.90 were approved. These included photocopying costs relating to the production of the Broadband Survey.
- d. Administrator Expenses for June of £84.18 were approved, which included copying costs relating to Board information and grant applications.
- e. Chair's expenses of £321.50 were approved, which mainly included the cost of stamps for the Broadband survey return envelopes.

5. FOYERS BAY GROUP - SEED FUND

Peter Faye advised the directors of the encouraging responses and increased likelihood of improvements and facilities for community use at Foyers. The Foyers Bay Group now involved the Trust and three other local people who were interested in the wider community use of the area. The removal of the redundant fish farm has created an opportunity to work with SSE to establish a community slipway and associated infrastructure. SSE staff have been very positive. Peter intimated that to progress the plan, the Group would like to request seedcorn funding of around £2,000 to be available if the project was to engage solicitors and surveyors to progress a lease and planning application. The £2,000 figure was based on quotes received to progress a lease. The Directors **AGREED** that the Foyers Bay Group could count on the Trust to provide up to £2,000 seed corn funding, should Heads of Terms be agreed in outline with SSE.

6 ENERGY SAVING GRANT - TETLOW MACKENZIE BENTLEY

The Project Coordinator advised that no additional information for the application had been received to date. There was still the prospect of an application which could unlock funds allocated from Scottish Government. The Project Co-ordinator would keep directors informed when and if matters progressed.

7 FINANCE DIRECTOR

The Chair advised that the current Finance Director, Frank Ellam, had agreed the sale of his home at Easter Boleskine and was due to be leaving the area in mid-August. No other existing director was in a position to take up the Finance Director role. Frank

indicated he would step down as an elected director as he was unable to meet the residency qualification after mid-August. The Chair advised that Frank had offered to continue the role as a co-opted director thereafter in the interim. Frank would fulfil the role remotely and travel to the area to attend meetings. The search for a local replacement Finance Director continues. Directors thanked Frank for his offer and confirmed an item would be placed on the September agenda once Frank no longer qualified to be an elected Director. The Chair also confirmed that, as part of her next Chair's Bulletin (due imminently), she would invite Members to approach the Trust if anyone was interested in taking on the role.

8 LIASION DIRECTOR

The role as Liaison Director between the Trust and the Community Council was most recently fulfilled by Martin Donnelly. Martin intimated shortly before the meeting that he planned to step down from this role due to work and family commitments. **The Chair agreed to contact Catriona Fraser, Chair of the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council on her return from Africa.**

9 FUNDING ASSISTANCE REQUEST

Some aspects of this request related to housing issues in which the Trust could choose to become involved. These had been discussed in general with Ronnie MacRae (Agenda Item 2). Other organisations similar to Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust had chosen to invest in specific properties for rent. Examples include Kyles of Sutherland and Helmsdale. It was noted that Fort Augustus Community Company had made a substantial property investment to allow a new purpose built medical centre to go ahead after the recent fire.

The Project Coordinator also covered the current guidelines relating to hardship grants.

Directors requested additional information. **The Chair agreed to contact SSE** with a view to obtaining their attitude on the possible use of grants specifically for improvements/adaptations to individual properties on medical grounds.

10. ACTION LIST TIMELINE

The Chair checked the actions required and reminded directors of the items highlighted.

11. UPDATE REPORTS

Update Reports were provided by the Project Coordinator, Communications Team and Funders Team. The Project Coordinator highlighted the increased number of grant applications submitted in the current round. It was agreed that the Second Issue of the Stratherrick and Foyers News had been well received and that a Third Issue (September) would be produced on similar lines.

12 AOCB

NEW APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP - LUKE BURGESS, GORTHLECK

The application was **APPROVED**

GRANT AMENDMENT - MRS E MACDOUGALL

The Chair reported that Mrs MacDougall had recently contacted the Trust as, with the assistance of Frank Ellam, she had managed a substantial underspend on the Energy Saving grant approved in April 2016. She had therefore requested whether the remaining funds could be utilised to repair some defective glazing. The cost of the new glazing element was slightly greater than the residue (£89.80) and quotations were provided. **The Directors AGREED to increase the grant approval to fund the glazing works in full.** The grant approval is therefore increased as follows – Original Grant £293 plus additional grant now approved £89.30 - Total £382.30. Directors noted that the aggregate figure was still well within the annual £500 Energy Saving Grant limit per household. Directors were keen to encourage applications for Energy Saving grants.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 3 AUGUST 2016 (Stratherrick Public Hall).

The Meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

Signed by Chair

Date
