

ASSYNT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Note of Board Meeting held in The Lochinver Mission Meeting Room on 13 February 2017

Present:

Nigel Goldie (Chair)
Marianne Hutchinson
Boyd Alexander
Trish Bangor-Jones
Madeline Macphail
Brendan O'Hanrahan
John Venters

1 Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Stuart Gudgeon.

2 Minutes of Meeting 13 January 2017

The minutes of 13 January 2017 were **AGREED**.

3 Matters Arising

The website was now at a stage that required more technical expertise before going live. Members thanked Boyd Alexander for his excellent work on the website.

Boyd Alexander confirmed that he had spoken to the Scottish Land Fund with a view to possible funding, which included funding for a Feasibility Study.

The use of the football pitch as a landing area for the emergency helicopter was causing the grass to be disturbed and mitigation measures might be required.

4 Development Work Programme

4.1 and 4.2 The Chair spoke to his comprehensive paper Future Opportunities for Development of Visitor Services within the Mission Building.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- the significance of tourism to Assynt was not to be underestimated and the need to be aware of the continued community expectation of the ACA to play a positive role in the future of tourism within Assynt;
- the need to proceed with caution with regard to the storage of items from the present visitor centre. Furthermore, the sheer quantity of objects to be stored highlighted the need for careful planning and consideration of possible rationalisation of items. It was also suggested that it was not clear who was legally responsible for any items removed from the current visitor centre. It was **AGREED** that the Chair would seek a meeting with Discover Assynt;

- the need to form lasting and productive partnerships with other organisations;
- following on from the above it was **AGREED** that any rental space within the Mission Building should be leased at commercial rates;
- there was unequivocal support for Andy Summers, the Highland Council Ranger based in Assynt;
- it was **AGREED** that the ACA should not be involved in the negotiations between VisitScotland and the Bonham Cozens;
- Members commented on the need for a Business Plan. After further discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Chair would discuss with Leigh Sedgley the possible use of profits from the Green Toilet at Stoer Head towards funding a Business Plan;
- it was essential to promote and sustain engagement with the wider community;
- with regard to the Mission Building, Members **AGREED** it was essential that the vacant spaces within the building must be developed to generate revenue. Members were wholehearted in their praise for the current tenants of café and bunkhouse.

4.3 Members **NOTED** the correspondence from HIE, which included an offer of assistance with regard to a possible visit to the Gairloch Tourist Centre. It was further understood that, HIE were keen to support ACA in future but it was vital that any future projects must be sustainable. As was discussed previously the need for a Business Plan was highlighted by HIE.

5 Communications and Profile

5.1 The need for a rebranded ACA was a priority and one which conveyed the correct message about the positive future of Assynt.

5.2 With regard to a new ACA website it was **AGREED** that Boyd Alexander would investigate costs for an upgraded website.

5.3 The Chair apprised the meeting with regard to the Assynt News. The latest position was **NOTED** by Members.

6 Governance – other matters

6.1 It was **AGREED** John Venters would undertake the role of Treasurer following a handover and training from Chair.

6.2 It was **AGREED** that John Venters would be a second signatory for the Assynt Community Trading account.

6.3 Members discussed the possible co-opting of Willie Jack to the Board. Thereafter, Madeline Macphail proposed and Boyd Alexander seconded the appointment of Willie Jack to the Board.

7 Other ACA Matters

7.1 It was **AGREED** that the Chair and Trish Bangor-Jones would meet to investigate which local organisations were formally affiliated to the ACA.

7.2 Various issues were discussed and it was thought that the archive was both an asset to the community and to tourists. It was **AGREED** that Trish Bangor-Jones would speak to Nick Lindsay of Brora Heritage Trust who had experience of running an archive combined with a Visitor Centre, with regard to a possible fact finding meeting.

8 AGM and Dates for Future Board Meetings

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting would take place in the Meeting Room, Lochinver Mission at 5.30 pm on 20 March and thereafter, on the 3rd Monday of each month up and inclusive of June.

9 AOB

The Chair thanked Members for their contributions.