

Assynt Community Association

MINUTES of Board Meeting

2.00pm Thursday 1st February 2018 Archive room, Lochinver Mission

Attendance

Willie Jack (Chair)
Nigel Goldie
Madeline MacPhail
Boyd Alexander
Ewen MacLachlan
Sarah Ann MacLeod

Apologies

Marianne Hutchison

Conflicts of interest

None noted

1. Minutes of meetings of 21st December 2017

Also meetings held on 5th & 6th January 2018

Proposed by BA, Seconded by MM the three sets of minutes were accepted by the board as factually correct

2. Matters arising (not addressed elsewhere on the agenda)

Meeting 21st December

13b "Eddie" the movie

Discussion by MM as to how we should promote Assynt through the release of the movie
EM **AGREED** to follow through on info from NG

8f SSE Funding 3rd round

WJ advised the board that ACA had not applied to the fund

13e

Fish tanks – nothing more

NG & EM **AGREED** to follow up with Charles from Urban Catch

Meeting 6th January

NG raised the issue of what do we do with the information produced at the meetings. BA suggested ranking the info from the meeting alongside the Business plan and discussing further during the April board meeting

MM suggested that those outside involved thoroughly enjoyed that participation

Suggested that we should have more involvement like this when necessary

3. AC (T) Ltd Financial Update

Financial balance £5,144 with some cheques still to clear

4. ACA Ltd Financial Update

Financial balance £4,886

Discussion on the use of the Loo at The Light money – MM, BA, NG raised the issue of what the money could be spent on. Small grants scheme – local causes or for ACA to decide upon? WJ **AGREED** to check back on the original paperwork for The Loo.

5. DTAS Meeting

WJ gave an update on new name for ACA name – Assynt Development Trust – and updated Articles of Association
OSCR approval sought for these changes on 25th January 2018 requiring 42 days notice. It was **AGREED** that if OSCR give their approval then it should be discussed at next board meeting on 16th March

7. Culag Park

a) Fencing project

Update from MH's email from 1st February. WJ & BA gave an update since SSE workmen cleared the trees along the line of the fence. There was a discussion about the fencing contractor; SAM advised the board about Donald MacKenzie (from Tain) and that she has advised Marianne. There was a discussion about the route of the boundary from the Mission to the cliffs behind the park and the board **AGREED** that the fence line should be as far back as possible within our land holding to ensure maximum usability of the ground within the park. WJ **AGREED** to write to Fiona Saywell & Jorine van Delft from CCWT about the establishment of a new fence on our joint boundary

b) Highland Council Land transfers

Verbal report from WJ, NG & MM of meeting held with Gary Cameron from Highland Council in Lochinver 31st January. The board discussed all the sites identified in the maps that BA has produced of the area around The Mission, Culag Park and Culag Gardens. WJ advised that the Asset transfer process firstly involves carrying out ownership searches at Registers of Scotland. GC advised that if we did this first then HC would be able to move more speedily.

Culag Park –strips of land that ACA does not already own – ROS search initiated

Estate shed behind the Mission - ROS search initiated

Culag Gardens - ROS search initiated

Asbestos shed behind the Mission

Secure compound behind the asbestos shed

Jimmy Crooks Shed site

Fish- selling shed adjacent to the Chandlery

Harbour side land area adjacent to council offices

The Glac – for the 'Cludgie' Waste Group

BA **AGREED** to produce further individual maps and for WJ to carry out ROS ownership searches on the five other sites. SAM asked about community involvement as part of this process. The board accepted and **AGREED** that this would be a fundamental part of the process along with production of a Business plan for each area of land or building to be acquired.

BA **AGREED** to contact Liz Howard from HIE & re-arrange the meeting that had been postponed.

WJ advised that he has been in discussion with a Mr Cook, surveyor from Bell Ingram in Bonar Bridge with a view to reviewing the lease arrangements within the Mission building. He has been advised to have further discussions with solicitors on the lease that ACA has with HC and the sub lease that AC(T) has with ACA. All this will better inform the lease renegotiation that we need to then have with An Cala café & bunkhouse.

8. Waste Disposal

Verbal report from MM of meeting held with Gary Cameron (HC) in Lochinver 31st January

MM report on the Glac site. Uncertainty of ownership so GR has initiated an ROS search on the land

NG suggested that we should investigate the neighbouring land as well. MM advised the meeting that she is going off for holidays and medical so has suggested that she passes leadership onto GR for action – the meeting

AGREED with this change. The next Cludgie meeting planned for March 8th

There is uncertainty as to need for a separate waste tank for Blue & Green waste (grey waste can go into the normal waste system). SAM advised that SW charge about £300 to empty one large tank at Achmelvich campsite and the tanks are only emptied once a year from the whole campsite. Charge to users is estimated at present as being £3. BA asked if anything else was planned for the site – MM replied that apart from some maps & information, no. EM asked when it the project could happen – MM & SAM advised - possibly during the 2018 summer season. There was a general discussion on the need for any procurement and construction to be undertaken by our trading subsidiary AC(T) Ltd rather than ACA Ltd. If this was done through ACT then VAT could be reclaimed on the costs but this would mean that VAT would have to be charged to the users - this was **AGREED**

9. Assynt Groups connected to ACA

a) Loo at Lighthouse

Update from WJ - No progress yet on the coin operated lock for the door

b) LPPG

Update from WJ – the bank balance is £19.96 and is awaiting a cheque for this amount to be presented. All other cheques have been cashed and the account will soon be ‘closed’

10. Archive

Verbal report from WJ on meeting with Stevan Lockhart in Stoer 1st February 2018

WJ updated the board and will arrange to send round a written report of the meeting and the send this to SL. The board **AGREED** to 1. guarantee the tenure of the Digital Archive for five years and review this annually 2. Improve the physical security of the equipment under the desk by enclosing it 3. Allowing a rolling exhibition of the archive within any interpretive area in the marine room 4. The board wish to encourage SL to develop a user group than can further develop the archive and 5. That the workstations be reduced from four to three and be sited on the right side of the room. This will allow the board to use the left side of the room as an office and the left & right sides as you enter the room for storage & filing.

6. Tourism and related issues

a) Report from WJ on meeting with Joan Bishop, Dornoch 22nd January 2018

WJ described his views on the visitor centre at Dornoch esp the funding by HC of the rent & overheads plus the staff salary from the Service Point. The DACIC fundraise £23k pa from tourism providers and spend this on a part time information provider, internet & social media plus an ‘ambassador’ who meets cruise ship coaches. WJ also described the 2.5 days pw of voluntary time put in by Joan Bishop which even she sees is a risk for their organisation.

b) Assynt tourism hub - Business Plan discussion

WJ advised the board on what has happened since the January meetings with DA & Janet Miles. NG introduced the business plan which partly has income coming from tourism providers who will pay for a tourism information service. SAM described the local hostility towards DA and that many are not members as they don’t feel that it provides anything for them. However she also felt they may be willing to pay a greater fee for information provision if it was relevant. The board expressed the view that all residents benefit from tourism whether they are involved in tourist related business activities or not as local services are partly provided here due to the business which tourists bring.

Discussion continued as to the business model which is best suited to our situation in the Mission. Retail may make a profit but who is to run it? Should it be ACA (as we don’t have a good track record)? NG said that he felt that we could divide the former Marine room so it would be part retail and part Interpretive. The retail space can then be rented out to an individual or company who would run a tourism related shop selling books, guides & maps plus local arts & crafts produce to the specification which we wished to see there. The interpretive material (including a possible link to the archive) could be at the rear of the room. NG further described the idea of this retail unit – which would be open to tender for people willing to run their own business. The board **AGREED** with the proposal and will seek to develop it further so that the opportunity can be advertised.

With regards to information provision in the lobby, EM described what we need is a better website/ app, plus someone downstairs in The Mission lobby providing tourism related information. Board members are aware that VS are willing to support provisions of such a service if they can see that our business plan is sustainable. WJ felt that we could widen the income base away from solely tourism providers to include sponsorship and membership.

There was a discussion as to causes of the failure of DA, the impact of this and what ACA can do about it. DA raises its £4,000 annual income from tourism providers. If ACA is to develop a tourism service then it would need this income stream as part of its business plan. WJ advised that in Dornoch the DACIC held an emergency meeting in 2015 when the service there was in decline. They had a proposal which was put to their financial supporters in an emergency public meeting and the outcome was agreement to the plan presented and their income increasing from £3,000 to £23,000 pa. The board **AGREED** to the idea of a public meeting to launch an as yet undefined proposal to be put to tourism providers. It was agreed that we should do this and look to hold the meeting on Wednesday 28th February or Thursday 1st March at 7:30pm. NG **AGREED** to check the hall availability for those dates. WJ **AGREED** to look further into the proposals which should be put to the public meeting.

The meeting can be advertised through AN, Facebook etc, but there was also a need to talk to people individually about the meeting and the proposal which will be presented at the meeting. BA suggested asking DA to run a public meeting like Assynt Conversations which took place in October. MM **AGREED** to compose a letter and poster advertising the meeting.

MM – ACA needs to be above board with the community and say “We’ve thought of this idea – is there anything else you feel that we should do. Are you ok if we go ahead with this?”

11. Board business

a) Governance costs - proposal not discussed

b) Board directors training

DTAS training programme for directors and trustees - proposal not discussed

12. AOB

a) Small Grants Scheme 2018 – not discussed

13. Forward Agenda Items

Business plan - revisit April board meeting

14. Proposed dates of Next Board Meetings

Friday 16th March 2:00-5:00pm

Monday 16th April 2:00-5:00pm

The meeting closed at 5:45pm