

Assynt Development Trust Limited

Minutes of Board Meeting Wednesday 29th July 2020, 4.00pm via Zoom

Present

Willie Jack (WJ), Marianne Hutchison (MH), Boyd Alexander (BA), Sarah Ann MacLeod (SAM)

In attendance

Adam Pellant (AP), Ewen McLachlan (EM)

Apologies

Edwin de Jong (EdJ), Bill Badger (BB), Nigel Goldie (NG)

| Item | Meeting | Action |
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| 1 | Minutes of the Board Meeting of 24th June 2020 After amending two minor aspects of the draft minutes it was agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate record of the proceedings. Proposed by MH seconded by BA. | |
| 2 | Matters Arising from the minutes of the previous meeting (not addressed elsewhere on the agenda) Item 10a2: Painting the creel sheds - AD was now following up on this issue. It is understood that HH may offer labour if the funding was found for the materials. | |
| 3 | Climate Action MH discussed 'Plastic at Bay' in Durness and advised that their funding for a ranger appears to be sourced through the SSE Community Fund and is for a two year project from 2018. The fund may reopen for applications in 2021, otherwise the Coastal Communities Fund might be a source of funding for an Assynt project. MH to contact Julien Moreau from PAB to find out more. | MH |
| 4 | Finance and Legal a) ACA Ltd and AC(T) Ltd finance update Papers circulated. There were no questions regarding the figures presented. b) Supporting Communities Fund – For Assynt Resilience Group WJ gave the meeting an update on SCF projects including an up-to-date Income & Expenditure report to 22 nd July. There was a general discussion on what would happen with the food bank when the SCF funding finishes at the end of September and this included the Scourie community food larder and the Muir of Ord Moo fridge. WJ advised that the Scotland Towns Partnership's "Towns and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) Resilience & Recovery Fund" has just offered the Trust a £2,500 grant to assist businesses in Covid Recovery. | |
| 5 | Cludgie Waste Project AP advised the meeting that following the 21 st July meeting between ADT & AL the Trust have heard that AL agree to the proposal put forward. Ideally AL would wish the Cludgie to be sited on the west side of AL but AP thinks a planning amendment would be required for this and is uncertain that it could be approved in time for project to go ahead within funding deadlines. ADT agreed that they wish to help AL apply for phase 2 of the Cludgie which would complete the project as originally intended as without the car park and plumbing sorted it is not as attractive a deal. The Board agreed that it is likely to be a rolling challenge of helping AL to apply for RTIF Round 3 and possibly the Coastal Communities Fund for the 30% match funding and was willing to agree to this within the resource and staffing constraints applicable to ADT. AP has applied to Wendy Anderson | |

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| | <p>from HC for loan finance as this is the next element to be agreed prior to the RTIF & Leader programme going 'Live'. AP advised that if this happens soon then construction could take place between August & October. The board agreed that it would be good to see this project completed.</p> <p>EM told the board that he is assisting AL in applying for an NHI grant.</p> | <p>AP EM</p> |
| <p>6</p> | <p>Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Mission – HC CAT Application Corra Irwin from M&M has advised the Trust that the BLF security burden on The Mission has now been removed although we still await formal registration of this with the Land Registry. b) The Mission boiler has broken down recently and is in the process of being repaired. c) Lochinver Glebe Land HSCHT's agents have undertaken the first site investigations with a topographical survey still to be carried out. WJ advised that the Trust has applied to HIE for a grant to cover part of the RHF grant support (currently unavailable) for the site feasibility study. HSCHT hope to complete their feasibility study by the end of August could allow ADT to submit a Stage 2 application to SLF by their 31st August deadline. | |
| <p>7</p> | <p>eBike Project</p> <p>The Babboe eCargo bike was delivered to AL on 21st July and is now available to be rented out. The board discussed and agreed with the insurance and finance update from AL. It was suggested that maybe the eCargo bike could take advertising on its side. AL are currently considering the most appropriate levels of charge out rates for all the eBikes which cover the costs yet remain affordable.</p> | |
| <p>8</p> | <p>Discover Assynt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Proposal for Sutherland Tourism Board – WJ updated the board on the Zoom discussion held recently. He advised that not much seems to have come out of the proposal so far although the NHI already have structure which allows co-ordination across different parts of the North Highlands. b) Chris Taylor at VS gave a positive mention to the recent DA video in a P&J article. c) Free to Book – EM advised that an email has been sent out to DA members and Jane P and Ian at FTB are dealing with this project. d) BA advised that CALL, along with Achiltibuie Tourist Association and DA are in the process of submitting a VS Growth Fund application for their Sense of Place project. e) The board discussed the latest situation with 'Wild Camping' in Assynt particularly in Achmelvich and Ardvreck Castle. The board understand that the HC toilets at Achmelvich do not appear to be cleaned in line with HC statements and that perhaps some of the toileting problems can be attributed to a lack of trust in HC's toilet provision & cleaning regimen. The board agreed that momentum on this issue appears to be building around the need for: 1. More toilets 2. More cleaning 3. More clarity on responsibilities 4. More waste collection. MH advised the board that a complaint to HC will be considered if it is logged at the HC Service Point. It was agreed that this should be highlighted on FB | |

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| 9 | <p>Culag Park Update MH advised that following the delivery of the correct replacement for the broken belt for the mower the long grass is currently being tackled by Assynt Upkeep. WJ advised that he has agreed with CCWT that they could hold an open air AGM on Monday 24th August at 2:00pm</p> | |
| 10 | <p>John Muir Trust Proposals for a Collective Vision for the North West Highlands</p> <p>Richard Williams from JMT joined the meeting to explain JMT’s proposal for the NW from Ullapool in Wester Ross to Bettyhill in Sutherland. The Trusts CEO David Balharry is leading on this proposal which asks the question “can we speak with one voice and act collaboratively?” The proposal is that not one organisation leads this as it needs to be many organisations coming together and be community based. It would take another 2-3 months to develop, engage and shape the proposal. DB used to work for the Deer Commission, Crofting Commission and then with Fergus Ewing at SG. This proposal is to be considered now as the SG begin to consider CAP reform post-Brexit and in the run up to the SG elections planned for next Spring. It is felt that we can see ‘what is coming down the track’ and the NW would be stronger speaking with one voice. JMT have set up a project working group which aims to plan and progress the consultation process which can then form the collective vision for the NW.</p> <p>The board discussed this proposal and questions to be considered included: what feels most relevant about this proposal? Is there anything missing? Who is involved? What land-owners? Will it be a lobbying group for the NW? Could it take inspiration from the new south of Scotland Enterprise Board? It was stated that: Good to know more about it. It should include community members, community groups and Development Trusts. Feels really exciting; the NW Sutherland Community Councils tried to set up a NW group but it never transpired (as people didn’t have the time to devote to it), although there are plans to revive this proposal. The experience of CALL is that other community groups have become more active. Housing is a key issue with lots of land but access to the land is challenging. The other key issue is demographic change and the resultant decline in population; this could be a good response to the Hutton Report.</p> <p>The board agreed that the development of a collective vision for the NW Highlands is an exciting proposal which could be of great benefit to the NW and the board agreed to support it. However due to time constraints for both staff & board members the Trust will need to consider how to become involved.</p> | |
| 12 | <p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Creative Communities Fund: The board agreed that this fund could be advertised locally on FB. b) Loo at the Light: Problems continue with the Loo lock & door closing mechanism. Leigh Sedgely has proposed to WJ that the Loo is made free with her cleaning it as a volunteer and ADT supplying hand sanitiser & other materials. Donations could be sought online. WJ agreed to investigate this further and report back. c) It was reported that the toilet seat in The Mission is broken and needs to be repaired or replaced. d) Luis Gouveia Fund: A young Assynt resident has written to the Trust seeking financial support for studying for a Masters degree at University. The board discussed this and it was agreed that before any decision is made on whether to support or how much that an updated Luis Gouveia Fund poster to put up around the Village and on FB seeking further applications including support while in further or higher education. BA advised that a previous recipient of the fund to help towards academic travel costs has now been accepted for university | |
| 13 | <p>Proposed Date of Next meeting Thursday 3rd September 4:00pm</p> | |