

Comrie Development Trust

Board Meeting

Monday 11 January 2016, CDT office, 7:30pm

MAIN MINUTES

- 1. Attending:** Christian Campbell, Fiona Davidson, Bob Hughes, William Levack, Chris Palmer, Andrew Reid (chairing), David Robertson

Apologies: Helen Buchan, Sharon Rice–Jones, Blair Urquhart

- 2. Minutes of AGM and Board Meeting – AGM 8.12.15; Board Meeting 14.12.15**

The minutes of the 8.12.15 AGM were agreed, subject to the presentation material being referenced as available on the CDT website and final comments by 18 January.

The minutes of the 14.12.15 Board Meeting were agreed subject to any final comments by 18 January.

- 3. CDT Membership**

New local full members accepted at the Board: Suzanne Bond, John Ronald, Jane Ronald, Janine Battersby, Neal Battersby.

New associate members accepted that the Board: William Batchelor, Margaret Batchelor, Elizabeth Muir, John Hill, Mark Gill, Christopher Rayers, Denise Wilson, Duncan Wilson, Frederick Macnair, Archie Lowe, Anthony O'Neil, Liam O'Brien, DuanphenThapanachai, Andrew Poulter, Peter Oram, Archibald Wilson, Tommy Watt, Sarah Winlow, Kirsten Watt, Karen Moore, Geoff Moore.

- 4. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

- 5. Decisions by e-mail**

Achnahaird: Item recorded in confidential minutes.

- 6. Finance**

- a) Financial estimates – Operations Budget and Development Budget

Andrew Reid presented a budget paper, which provided revenue estimates for each the next three financial years with respect to the CDT's Operational Budget, with potential Development Budgets over the same period. This identified a significant revenue shortfall in each year, even after savings had been made and additional income generated. It had previously been suggested that grant funding might be available for core costs to meet this shortfall. However, it now appeared that major funders would only consider grants for new and future developments. This still left open the possibility of seeking grant funding for existing staff engaged in improvement work or new projects, and for those developments.

The potential for savings in relation to main items of Cultybraggan Camp expenditure, such as maintenance and security is very limited against its close connection to rents and service charges. The scale of CDT operational business at the Camp requires the continuing employment of a 0.5 wte Estate Manager and a 0.5 wte Finance Officer. The budget paper proposed the deletion of the post of Administrative and Marketing Officer from the staffing establishment and closure of the CDT office in Drummond Street. Board members supported the need for some administrative staff time and the value of a village centre office, which was both accessible to local people and had greater potential to get volunteer input, but it was recognised that this would only be possible if grants funders would provide additional grants beyond the Trust's fundamental requirements. Whatever new arrangements were implemented, there will be a need for a substantial increase in volunteer support.

The Board noted the potential to move to a position of budget surplus, through the Cultybraggan Self Catering Scheme by financial year 2021/22. This would require a range of financial objectives to be met including:

- resolving the problems with the EST loan concerning the biomass boiler to bring loan repayments into line with the income received for the energy produced by it;
- resolving the problem with unaccounted use of electricity;
- reaching agreement with the Tudor Trust to convert loan to grant;
- maintaining communication with Triodos bank to take up the offered overdraft facility of £20 – £30k to maintain cash flow if necessary;
- maintaining both commercial rental tenancies, and commercial and repairing lease service charges at a minimal 80% level;
- raising the number of units with repairing lease arrangements to at least 20 additional units;
- implementing the service charge system to all renewed and new commercial lets, repairing leases and property owners;
- maintaining the income from events and sports at the historical average level;
- maintaining the income from Heritage visitor work and events at the historical average level;
- attracting substantial grant funding to cover the estimated budget shortfalls within each financial year over the next five financial year;
- reducing the staffing establishment to 2 x 0.5 wte staff;
- deleting the admin/communications post from 31.3.16 unless even further grant funding can be found for that post;
- closing the CDT Comrie office from 31.3.16 unless even further grant funding can be found for its continuing rental;
- generating surplus income through sports/events activities, rising to £4,766 by 2018/19 ;
- generating surplus income through Heritage activities, rising to £8,221 by 2018/19;
- generating donations from the Friends of Cultybraggan, rising to £2,940 by 2018/19.

The Board agreed a series of tasks and responsibilities to deal with the financial issues concerning the operational aspects of CDT work, as follows:

Action	Responsibility
Set up meetings with Scottish Government, Scottish Land Fund, PKC and other major funders for 5 years bridging finance with annual review and quarterly monitoring	BH (FWG)
Secure overdraft facility from Triodos to maintain cash flow	BH (FWG)
Set up monthly variance finance reporting to Board	BH (FWG)
Reach agreement with EST on DHS loan, in line with income from energy use	BH (FWG)
Reach agreement with Tudor Trust on loan capital and interest	BH (FWG)
Maintain commercial rents @ min 80% occ., commercial & repairing lease service charges	WL (EMWG)
Manage risk of repairing lease scheme reducing commercial let demand	WL (EMWG)
Implement service charges for renewed & new commercial lets, repairing leases, owners	WL (EMWG)
Identify unaccounted electricity use	WL (EMWG)
Maintain Events, Sports surplus at historical average as minimum	S R-J (ERWG)
Maintain Heritage visitor attraction surplus at historical average as minimum	FD (HWG)
Support focus of work of 0.5 Finance Officer on operations & delivery of self catering dev.	BH (FWG)
Support work of 0.5 Estates Manager on operations (and camp infrastructure if funded)	WL (EMWG)
Reorganise all general administrative, communication and marketing work to be carried out by volunteers, unless some tasks through 0.5 staff member if extra grant funding found	AR (AWG)
Establish general admin. deliverable by volunteers (with 0.5 wte staff input if grant funded)	AR (AWG)
Set up office base at Camp (unless extra grant found to continue village office)	WL (EMWG)
Establish volunteer admin support input	AR (AWG)
Limited income generation developments	
Plan and deliver heritage visitor attraction development (without significant capital)	FD (HWG)
Plan and deliver events, sports development (without significant capital)	S R-J (ERWG)
Implement Friends of Cultybraggan regular donation scheme	BH (FWG)
Aspirational income generation developments	
Progress Phase 1 capital development infrastructure for short-term implementation	WL (EMWG)
Progress extensive heritage attraction development for medium/long term implementation	Proj. Plan WG
Progress extensive events, sports development for medium/long term implementation	Proj. Plan WG

b) CDT Project Planning/Fundraising Group

It was agreed to establish a Project Planning/Fundraising Group to coordinate continuing work in the early planning stages for longer term projects to follow in development phase 2 following the establishment of the self catering resources. Andrew Reid would seek to draw together this group.

7. Cultybraggan Self Catering Development

a) Business Plan and Design Proposals – process for agreement by 14.1

It was noted that the Business Plan and design proposals for the self catering development required to be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund on 18 January, in advance of a meeting with HLF on 28 January to be attended by Bob Hughes and Ann Petrie.

The Board agreed to the Business Plan as currently set out, on the basis that Bob Hughes would seek clarification and amendment in relation to a number of issues, and would have discretion to agree to changes to the Business Plan in consultation with board members in whatever way found necessary.

The Board agreed the most up-to-date external and hut Design Proposals, acknowledging that there might be further revisions after the consultation meeting later in the week, with further variations over time during the planning process, and modifications during the building work period.

b) Membership of CBS Planning Group (CDT and Community Benefit Society) was confirmed by the Board as: CDT – Bob Hughes and Andrew Reid; CBS – Fiona Davidson and John King.

c) CBS Board and CBS AGM

It was agreed to seek to convene the first AGM of the Cultybraggan Benefit Society in mid February (14 clear days notice required), with a view to its formal establishment, including elections to the CBS Board. Andrew Reid identified to pursue this matter with Katie Molloy through the CDT office.

d) Partnership Agreement

Various issues were raised about the draft Partnership Agreement to be proposed by CDT to the CBS Board, once that is established. It was understood that a proposed Agreement is not a requirement for the current stages of the process with HLF. It was agreed that Andrew Reid should communicate further with Board members and Will Reid about the terms of the draft proposed Agreement.

e) Traffic Circulation

Issues had been raised about 24 hour noise affecting residents in the self catering development caused by the nearby cattle grid and night time traffic down the main entrance road. It was noted that suggestions had been made to deal with the cattle grid noise through rubber inserts. It was agreed that rerouting of night time traffic through the commercial area would be appropriate. The question was raised about access width there, and it was reported that the access had been designed at 7 m wide by Kelvin Marine, which should be sufficient for two vehicles. It was agreed EMG to check and ensure this width of access road would be available for day and night time use through the commercial area.

f) Meeting with Consultants

The development consultants would be meeting with Board and Heritage Group members at the WRI Hall on 14.1.15 – shareholders had also been invited. A pre-meeting had been arranged for board members in the CDT office from 4.30. Any interested board members were invited to attend.

8. Any Other Business

a) Meeting with representatives of Comrie Community Council - It was agreed to suggest that CDT Board members could attend part of a regular Community Council meeting to discuss liaison and joint working arrangements. Andrew Reid would contact the CC Chair.

b) Visit by Findhorn Village Conservation Company - Fiona Davidson, Christian Campbell, William Levack able to attend on 20 January. Blair Urquhart to be asked if he can also get to the meeting.

c) Mower – Camp mower needs servicing. Chris Palmer to arrange through Andy Heming.

9. Date of Next CDT Board Meeting – 25 January 2016