

Comrie Development Trust
Board Meeting
Monday 25 April 2016, CDT office, 7:30pm
MAIN MINUTES

Meeting arrangements:

Chair: Sharon Rice-Jones

Minutes: Blair Urquhart

1. Attending

Present: Christian Campbell; Fiona Davidson; Bob Hughes; William Levack; Mark Lynch; Chris Palmer; Andrew Reid; Blair Urquhart, Sharon Rice-Jones

Apologies: Helen Buchan; David Robertson

2. New Trust Members

No new Trust members were identified

3. Minutes of Board Meeting 21.3.16

The main minutes and the confidential minutes of the board meeting of 21.3.16 were approved.

4. Declarations of Interest

Interests were declared for any current and future business by Sharon Rice-Jones in connection with her paid employment by Perth & Kinross Council on the LEADER Programme, by Mark Lynch as having a Cultybraggan Camp hut through the repairing lease scheme, and by Fiona Davidson as with a partner having paid work with a company owning property on the Cultybraggan Camp site. It was agreed to be taken as declaring the same interests for any future relevant Trust Board discussions and decisions.

5. Decisions by e-mail

There had been no decisions by e-mail since the last Trust Board meeting.

6. Matters arising from the minutes of 21.3.16

a) Hut 46 - Community Space

Blair Urquhart was asked to comment on feedback he had received from his report, setting out a proposal to restore Hut 46 as a Community Space. BU highlighted an urgent need - from Primary 7 parents for event space, and from various community groups including Peter Scally who has volunteers sleeping in hut 91 with no heat and light. BU suggested the need for a plan to present to HLF, demonstrating active engagement with the community, and for a meeting space, not for groups to share sleeping space, but to share kitchens and meeting rooms. Hut 46 was the best option for this development. BU said that the Heritage Group had supported aspects of the proposal but also wished to delay action because it might give conflicting message to the HLF bid as it mentioned accommodation. FD indicated that timing and lack of funds were also issues and that in relation to that HLF application there might be a gap related to community engagement – the Heritage group supported the idea of providing classrooms are meeting spaces. WL indicated a lack of funding or capacity to deliver the proposal – electricity might cost as much as £3000. SRJ noted that nobody was claiming that the proposal was bad idea, but it needed to be put in the context of other demands. BU requested that the proposal be given time for final consideration, and asked if the issue could be raised in the coming meeting with the HLF mentor. AR to investigate

whether there is a call for community engagement/space in the HLF application that has not been addressed and to consider in the joint CHSC/CDT meeting re.marketing of out-of-season group activities. If there is anything that needs a decision the Board can consider by email before the HLF mentor meeting.

7. Communications/Correspondence

a) Community Council

Following positive communications between CDT and the Community Council about joint liaison arrangements, it was noted that Sandra McRitchie, Community Council Chair, had reported that the role of DR on both CDT Board and CC was very useful. The CDT Board agreed to extend an invitation for a CC to attend a CDT board meeting, to make up a rota of CDT Board members to attend CC meetings and both receive and provide updates, to jointly arrange a social event with CC, which would also be an opportunity to present plans, and to consider the benefits of an annual meeting. The Board noted the CC willingness to schedule items from CDT Board on the CC monthly agenda.

b) Correspondence with Trust member

Recorded in the confidential minutes.

8. CDT Board

a) Recruitment - Board Chair/Members and Working Groups

There were no proposals in relation to the vacant position of Board Chair.

9. Finance

a) Just Enterprise report

BH said that following the detailed analysis of the Trust's budgeting and ten-year financial projections, Just Enterprise had delivered a very positive report, finding that Trust projections are based on robust assumptions, but raising some issues about the self-catering development finances, which were already recognised and being pursued.

b) Assets, budget estimates and cash flow

BH presented data about CDT assets, budget estimates and cash flow. Questions were raised about the projected figures for camp maintenance bills as contributing to the bottom line deficits and overall shortfall. BH agreed that delaying some maintenance actions could help resolve the negative flows, but maintenance budgets were linked to service charges, and could not be reduced unilaterally. Budget changes in the area would not deal with the underlying problem with lack of funds. Triodos could provide an overdraft facility for up to £30k unsecured with interest rates at 5% over base. OSCR should be appraised of the current financial position.

c) Transitional funding – BL

Grant applications have been made for transitional funding relating to the projected deficit over the next five financial years. Responses have not yet been received from the Dawnie Trust and Thorntons Charitable Trust. A donation of £1,000 has been received from the Tay Charitable Trust. The application for funding from the Big Lottery Medium Grants for Community Activities was turned down.

d) Big Lottery

The Big Lottery application was refused as Comrie has no indicators of deprivation and, despite the community detail included, that there was insufficient evidence of community involvement in the application. The Board agreed that this aspect of the application needed to be addressed.

e) Work Programme

AR reported funding applications to Northwood and the Stagecoach Community Fund, and on letters written to Tasmina Ahmed Sheikd MP, and the two Scottish Government Ministers suggested by Roseanna Cunningham MSP. BH reported on the review of CDT's current expenditure, and the budget line analysis and consideration of staffing and office costs, expenditure phasing, and administration and management cost additions to be sought wherever possible. BH also noted that the budget projections also included increased income from heritage activities and events, with work needed to generate this income.

There was a discussion of the Work Programme proposals to seek contributions, potentially through monthly direct debits from CDT members, and donations from high net worth individuals – AR to gather suggestions from Board members.

The Work Programme also included a proposal to reconsider generated funding from sale of the four plots identified for potential housing development on the CDT hill ground. It was noted that there had been suggestions that PKC would only provide planning approval for such development if the funding received was ring fenced for heritage development in Cultybraggan Camp. It was agreed that there should be communications with PKC about planning permission being much less restrictive about fund usage. FD suggested that a pre-application might be useful.

f) CDT Board Workshop

It was agreed that the nature of current financial position would benefit from further consideration within the Board workshop session previously agreed. It was agreed to arrange this event in May to discuss what should be CDT long-term strategy, use of camp properties, and financial plans.

9. Planning Activity

a) Visit Scotland

It was noted that a visit was due on 25 April from Visit Scotland Regional Managers Liz Shorthouse, and Neil Christison and would involve providing them with a Cultybraggan Camp tour, and meeting with them about the self-catering accommodation and longer term visitor development.

b) Historic Enterprise Scotland/PKC Conservation Officer – 12 May
Simon Montgomery HES) Doug Reid (JFSA) FD, CC, JB, HM

It was noted that a visit had been arranged on 12 May by Doug Reid, self-catering development architect, for Simon Montgomery of Historic Enterprise Scotland and Neil Welch, PKC Conservation Officer. A Cultybraggan Camp tour would be led by FD, and there would be a meeting with them about the self-catering accommodation and longer term visitor development, alongside other issues about the camp environment and specific properties there.

10. Cultybraggan Self Catering Development

a) CHSC Management Committee liaison and joint working

It was noted that a joint planning and project implementation group had now been established between CDT and the Cultybraggan Heritage Self-Catering Society Management Committee. The approach being adopted is to work on a cooperative partnership basis.

b) SKS Meeting –

A joint meeting has been arranged for 5 May with SKS on its market study and financial modelling.

c) Planning Application

It has been reported that the self-catering development planning application will be dealt with within PKC through delegated powers, with a decision anticipated in mid-May.

d) Work programme, Partnership and Lease Agreements

Progress is being made with the work programme required by HLF, including the Heritage Activity Plan, and on the terms of partnership and lease agreements between CDT and CHSC.

e) Development phase budget – capital, project manager and operating budget

BH is scheduled to meet with Marc van Grieken, CHSC Management Committee Treasurer on joint financial issues.

f) Hut 30

BU had proposed renovation and opening of Hut 30 as an exemplar, as a way of generating earlier income, to make best use of assets, and because Hut 30 already has various services. AR had identified the possibility of fundraising from military charities on the planned accessible Hut 30 as a holiday place for veterans and others and as part of the financial strategy required by HLF to meet the £200k capital shortfall in the development. Within the board discussion, concerns were raised about the implications for HLF and other funding of a phased programme and for the procurement and contracting process. It might cause too many complications to pursue an earlier part of the overall programme. The board supported the proposal to look for support from military charities and agreed to reconsider the phasing of the development if this seemed desirable and appropriate at a later stage.

11. Staffing/Administration

a) Office move

The Board thanked staff, including Katie Malloy, and others for their hard work in making the move to their camp. Special thanks were also given to Fiona Weaver and the other volunteers who gave assistance.

b) E-mail systems.

A new email system has been implemented for all members of the board and the officer positions. An issue has arisen about access to the admin pages of the Trust's Facebook page. SRJ to find out who has access.

c) Volunteer recruitment

Volunteers are needed for the CDT's administrative work, in the absence of any paid staff dedicated to this work. It was agreed to arrange and advertise open days at the office to promote and provide information about volunteering there, and also to investigate the potential for intern funding, training and work experience suitable for young people. It was agreed to offer this as a joint exercise with the Self-Catering Society.

12. Estate Management

a) Infrastructure Specifications Consultancy

- Tendering exercise – Four tenders have been received from specialist engineering companies to complete designs, specifications, modular development plans and bills of quantities for an infrastructure improvement programme concerning water, sewage, electricity and broadband. A evaluation and contract award process will determine the company to carry out the work.
- It is proposed to complete applications to LEADER and the Architectural Heritage Fund for the funding to cover the cost of this consultancy work. The proposal has already been subject to an Expression of Interest to LEADER and accepted as a valid application. The Board formally approved that applications should be made to LEADER and the Architectural Heritage Fund for the funding for this purpose.

b) Camp parking and signage policy

FD expressed Heritage Group concerns about the new Wilde Thyme parking sign in front of the Cell Block. FD reported that HES (Historic Environment Scotland) had also commented on the visual intrusion caused by parking in this area. It was noted that this has been in the past generally accepted as a common parking area and that it has white lines indicating the spaces available. It was agreed to establish traffic, signage and parking policies after decisions by the long-term planning meeting by the Board in May.

c) Officers' Mess

It was agreed that the future function of the Officers' Mess should be clarified at the Board's May workshop.

d) Decision making protocol

It was suggested that there needs to be greater clarity about the consultation needed between the Estate Management Group and the various interests, when relevant in different situations.

13. Events

a) Event bookings

Events booked include: – May: Hands-On History – June: Strathearn Marathon; and CEDA Conference – July: Paranormal experience . It was noted that the first Car Boot Sale had taken place, and, with no difficulties arising, would be followed by a further Sale

14. Any Other Business

- a) Comrie Fortnight - agreed that action required to complete forms for Guide entry and Boulevard Table.
- b) Noted that Hut 1 has still been found locked on several occasions – WL to pursue this issue.
- c) SRJ reported significant progress on various issues concerning the Brownies' hut.

15. Date of Next Meeting – Monday 30 May 2016

Chairing Rota: May – BU; June – RH; July – AR; August - ML

Minute Taking Rota: May – RH; June – CP; July – ML; August - FD