

NOTES of meeting of directors of LISMORE COMMUNITY TRUST held at 7pm on Wednesday 12th February 2020, in the School House, Achnacroish, Lismore

- 1 PRESENT: Archie MacGillivray, Anna Stewart, Sebastian Tombs (Chair, Notes); Apologies from Kiki MacColl.
- 2 MINUTES of previous meetings: as the meeting was non-quorate, no minutes were reviewed. The meeting therefore constituted an update on developments.
- 3 PROJECT WORK:

3.1 ENTERPRISE UNITS at Achnacroish: Sebastian confirmed that arrangements were in place for the drop-in session for residents and interested parties to meet the architect, Iain Angus Campbell of CP Architects, Oban. This would take place between 4.30 and 7.30pm on Monday 17th February, in the School House. He showed the latest sketch drawings from the architect, which would be fully drawn up by then at a large scale. The proposal was for 4 or 5 units on the SSE site, with landscaped parking opposite on the 'roundabout' area. Visibility around the corner and across the site could be an issue with Roads.

Meanwhile, a meeting was to be set up with the local Planning Officer, to expedite a response to a formal Pre-application Request which would be free in this case (following helpful contact with Councillor Robertson). The purpose of the open day was to assess residents' observations and comments, prior to any submission.

Sebastian indicated he had been keeping the sellers informed, and Iain Campbell had had helpful feedback from SSE. He noted

that the 'viability study' being undertaken would also include a business plan, and funding plan – which would start to tease out aspects such as rental levels etc – a natural concern for directors wishing to minimize risks of under-use of any new facilities.

Archie intimated he was likely to have to offer apologies for that event.

- 3.2 HOUSING STUDY: further to the meeting of the directors of LIP on Friday 7th February, funds had been allocated towards a further more detailed study of housing provision for Lismore and Easdale. Expressions of interest had been requested from three contractors, and two competent returns had been submitted, the optimum value being received from a joint bid by Rural Housing Scotland (RHS) working alongside Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT). This project worth slightly under £10,000 had just been awarded and work to commence studies and visits was expected soon.

This had prompted Sebastian to explore possibilities of sites with the greatest potential, an ongoing process. However, the initially preferred location had been confirmed by the landowner as not available, and thus other sites were being explored further. (See also note in item 3.5 below). It was agreed that recommended practice in any face to face meetings with potential sellers was that more than one director be present.

Sebastian stated that he would be attending the RHS Annual Conference on Rural Housing at Birnam at the end of February, and would be reporting back.

- 3.3 SCHOOL HOUSE: the meeting with Kathryn Wilkie of Argyll and Bute Council, regarding the future of the School House following the announcement of Catherine Davies' standing down as Head Teacher from the Spring, had been postponed -

but no further date had been confirmed as yet. A watching brief was required, and it was hoped that, if the Council formally requested access for a new teacher, that due time would be given for that. In such a circumstance, plans for relocation of furniture etc would be required relatively quickly.

Meanwhile, and on the basis that use of the School House was possible, Gill Law had been maintaining contact with the Lottery to explore potential enhancements, as had previously been the plan.

- 3.4 KIOSKS: Installation information, along with the timber donated, was now at Salen, awaiting further clarification. A definite plan of action was required to be put in place to complete this project.

Meanwhile, distribution of the accompanying Leaflet Guide and Map was agreed to sources such as the Ferries, Pier House, Lismore Stores and the Heritage Centre – subject only to agreed methods for monitoring uptake, and ensuring a flow of supplies.

- 3.5 CLACHAN STEADINGS: Sebastian confirmed that he had now drawn up his sketch plans based on dimensions taken in May 2019, which he shared. These were intended to form the basis of requests to consultants to obtain indicative estimates for refurbishment, and thus a submission to the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF), for grant to support a feasibility study. Final use was not determined, (although housing was one possibility), the idea being that the brief for consultants would seek to have appropriate final uses explored, for community responses. The AHF funds were offered on the basis that within 12 months the fund offered needed to be matched equally, or the offer would be withdrawn. Early discussions with AHF and a Historic Environment Scotland advisor, had rated the likely support for such a scheme as quite positive.

Archie expressed concern that the directors needed to be mindful of their – and the community’s capacity – for project work. Sebastian noted that he had been seeking contact with the Fell Estate factor in relation to responses to recent Local Development Plan consultations.

- 3.6 LISMORE STORES and POST OFFICE: the success of the Trust’s efforts to secure nationwide press and media publicity for the opportunity arising at the shop, was noted – as well as the surprisingly speedy outcome. The fact of having a Community Trust, and the willingness of a range of islanders to contribute to such efforts as part of a Working Group was most welcome. The Working Group had consisted of: Sebastian Tombs, Brona MacDougall, Bob Hay, Jennifer Baker, Dave Layton, Julian Wormleighton, supported by Gill Law. Sebastian noted in particular the extraordinary help provided by Julian, when Sebastian’s internet had failed between Christmas and late January; logging and responding to enquiries, which amounted to nearly 50 by the close of play. Iris Piers with Julia Fayngruen had almost concluded a digital media advertisement to supplement efforts, which had been cancelled at very short notice when the sale announcement was made.

Following the result, a request had been received from Coll islanders facing a similar dilemma; and notification of this had been passed on by Sebastian to all enquirers barring one who had requested no further communications on the topic.

- 4 LORN ISLAND PARTNERSHIP: update. Sebastian had chaired a meeting of the LIP Board in Oban on 7th February. Arrangements were in place for the final tranches of Investing in Communities (IvC) funds, formally taking the funding through to the end of March. However it was likely that some expenditure, including support from Gill Law would run over for a period. An application for a small sum beyond March 31st

had also been approved previously; all works in hand were within the scope of approved plans. This news was welcomed.

- 5 CORRESPONDENCE: Sebastian had received information about Tourism Workshops planned for the next 2 years by the Scottish Civic Trust, and had made contact with them expressing interest, and alerted those on Luing, Easdale and Kerrera and Carron Tobin, who had undertaken the Tourism Study, accordingly.

He had also made contact with two residents of Jura leading a piece of work on Island Passports; expressing interest. Some publicity could follow related to this.

- 6 COMMUNICATIONS: it was noted that the Island Website was now slowly being populated with information etc – much welcomed. Sebastian noted, however, that work was required to finalise all the minutes which had not yet been posted, over a considerable length of time.

- 7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: not set.