

Minutes of the Meeting of the
Helmsdale and District Development Trust
held on the 19th March 2015
In the Community Centre

PRESENT:	APOLOGIES:
Ruth Whittaker (Chairman) Rona Ellis	Karen
Valery George (Secretary) VG Lucy Fraser	Sutherland
Paul Harrington (LDO) Barbara Jappy	Ronald
	Sutherland
IN ATTENDANCE Deirdre Mackay HC Councillor	
Welcome & Apologies: The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and read out the apologies.	ACTION
APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Proposed by Jean Sargent and seconded by Rona Ellis	
Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes Trading Arm PH asked if anyone had thought of any suitable names and if not could they be forthcoming before the end of March. Jean Sargent said that she would check with Companies House to see what was already registered. LF said that any name chosen would need to be generic not specific, this would enable a wider group of projects to be linked under the one banner. Creative Place Awards – Seating ongoing JS updated the Board by saying that they had interviewed for the artists post, but neither candidate was suitable. They were now going to send a letter out to artists, to generate ideas and suggestions. KITCHEN GARDEN update PH said that although the letter of intent to purchase had been included in the Climate Challenge fund bid, because we did not as yet own the land they would unlikely to make an award. RE continued by saying that they would know by the 11 th March when the awards would be announced. RE continued by saying that they had requested that the Gordonbush Strategic grant application be put on hold. PH said the Trust solicitors had made an offer to purchase the land to the new owner. However, because she lives part in the UK and part in the USA, it could take time. He added that the District Valuer had given the value of the plot and that the offer made reflected that and that the Trust would have to pay both sets of legal fees. PH confirmed that the land would be owned by the Trust.	ALL JS

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FINANCE

Finance

In the absent of the Treasurer PH presented the report.

PH produced extracts of the draft accounts for everyone to consider.

He continued by saying that he had asked if the remainder of the contingency fund could be derestricted and was told the it would be very expensive to do that now and that we would need to check with Memorandum od Articles of Association.

He continued by saying that if the amount had in at the pre-development stage, it may able to take it out.

He continued by saying that he had queried the monies shown against the houses, that were higher that the value. The accountant explained that it was because it is new build and in future depreciation would be applied and that he had added a rider to the accounts to that effect.

LDO REPORT – Thursday 19th March 2015

HOUSING

1. Monday 20th April 2015, Margaret Burgess Housing Minister will perform the official opening of the homes, between 10am and 11am.
2. Have given a heads up to all involved in build.
3. Plan to invite ALL funders.
4. HIE are helping with press release and TV coverage – TBC.
5. Outstanding Defects Report will be completed before 10th April.

FILLING STATION

- BLF have agreed the pre development works to the tune of £30,045.89.
- This grant covers the cost of the Design Team (Petroleum Engineers, Architect, QS, Engineer, CDMC & CA) to undertake all the pre-dev works, which also includes planning consent, should it be needed.
- Pet Eng have been booked in to carry out their testing etc on Wed 8 Apr, a design team meeting is planned for Tue 14th April – where the project scope of works will be finalised.
- The funds also cover the cost of updating the business plan, update of valuation, planning permissions, community consultation and a 10% management fee (over the DT), the cost break down is attached.
- I have been in contact with Mike Nicholson from Blake Stephenson – who are supporting us through the 2nd stage application process, to bring him up to date. Mike will be providing some guidance on the consultation and matching outcomes to include these in the application.

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BROADBAND – From Alastair Nicholson (CBS)

- You may be aware that additional funding is being made available to extend the main fibre broadband programme. The State aid public consultation has now been published, see the link below for the document – note that the closing date for responses will be extended.
- <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/02/4674/downloads>
- As indicated in the document this is likely to result in an extension of the existing HIE/BT contract resulting in additional fibre coverage. I will feedback indications for extended coverage in your area as soon as information becomes available, however given the scattered settlement pattern in the proposed community project area it is very unlikely that fibre will be extended to this area.
- I will be in contact tomorrow to confirm the brief for engaging our supply partner to undertake the requested technical design work.

GORDONBUSH

- The awards panel met on Wed evening, with a total of 9 main grant applications, and 4 strategic proposals.
- Total of 4 Strategic Applications were submitted, HDDT, HDCA & Games were supported, however, BaDAG was refused.
- It was also agreed unanimously to start the apprenticeship scheme with immediate effect, therefore a sub group has been formed with its own constitution and bank account to deliver this.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

- I attended the THC supplier briefing held in Lairg last week on behalf of HCT. THC will be undertaking a re-tendering of all their public and school transport in Sutherland.
- To this end, HCT have expressed their interest in becoming a provider, and will tender accordingly, tenders issued in early May – and it is envisaged that contracts will be either 5 or 6 years in length – giving certainty to operators over capital finance etc.

COUPERS YARD

Having met with the planning department, Craig Baxter, several weeks ago with regard to Coupers Yard, he intimated that as Coupers Yard has existing planning consent, then it was highly unlikely that a 2nd application would be granted, unless the current one was withdrawn.

With the recent announcement of MORL failing to get consent for their offshore development, it is also unlikely that Coupers Yard could become a sustainable venture, as BOWL declared their preference to Wick for ALL works in the future.

With this in mind, I suggest that we evaluate the Business Development Plan, in May, one month after the AGM in April, and start the process of bringing the community consultation up to date.

It is hoped that HIE will be able to support this.

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DISTRICT HEATING SCHEME

- I visited Rhyrie Farm several weeks ago as part of an open day about DHS, sponsored by VG Energy. The installed system is providing hot water and heating to 8 cottages, a very large farm house and an office in one of the barns. Further information provided by VG Energy, suggested that they would install the complete system, and provide the feeds and tanks for the residents, who would then be charge according to their demands/usage by way of metering.
- There are 2 distinct areas within the community that could benefit from this, both being at Simpson Crescent. However, for economies of scale, this would need the 'buy in' from THC, and I have arranged a meeting with David Goldie – Head of Housing, to explore this further. I have since learnt that Sutherland's housing stock will undergo a refurbishment heating programme, for those homes that do not meet the current housing standards, with Helmsdale programmed to start in September 2015. So this proves quite timely. However, it is unsure which units will be refurbished with what type of system including Quantum, ASHP etc. Some of the basic questions we need to ask ourselves are:

a) do we want to become and energy provider?

b) would it be preferable to have a company such as VG Energy or other provide this on our behalf, and we simply become the facilitators?

After a general discussion the following was proposed:-

HDDT to act as facilitator between Installer, HC and the Private Landlord. This was agreed.

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

PH said that he prepared three pages of the newsletter but had done no further work on the website. He continued by saying that there was an opportunity to use the HIE Graduate Scheme in which HIE fund 70% and HDDT 30%. This would be at a cost of, approximately £300pm.

The question was asked 'could a student of Golspie High school be utilised?'

RW reminded the Board that it was coming up to exam time and it would not be appropriate to ask.

PH then updated the Board on the disaster that had overtaken Helmsdale.org. He continued by saying that the ISP ownership had been purchased by 'Godaddy' and they had suffered a fire that destroyed all records and they did not have a back-up in place.

The Board felt that this was tragic and agreed that it should be restored.

It was suggested that a graduate could be employed to re-instate the website.

PH said that he would get an update from David Mason.

DM said that she would look at the Ward Budget fund and look for others.

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AOCB

The Chairman asked Deirdre Mackay to give an overview of HC activities.

DM opened by reminding everyone of the savings that the HC had to make (£72m) and that the austerity budget had to be put in place. She continued by saying that a series of external consultations had been undertaken and the new budget should be through by Christmas.

- Service Points – there was a strong case for retaining this in Helmsdale as it was the face of the HC in the community and the decision would be out in May.
- Transport Review – the aim to decentralise transport and make better use of HC, private providers and community transport was underway
- Sutherland District Health and Social Care Partnership – DM said that this was a real opportunity to address issues affecting Sutherland - Health, Community Safety, Recruitment, RCOP, Families etc
- Food Banks – this was being managed by CAB
- Fuel Poverty – this was a fund to assist people to access cheaper fuel
PH asked if this was means tested.

LF pointed out that there were two fuel poverty officers, Skye & Lochalsh and Pentland Energy Advice, and that these were excellent.

DM continued by saying that SSE had been asked what held them back and why can they not make an economy of scale.

LF asked if the HDDT could access the Hardship Fund to do a survey of need.

PH asked for the contact details so that this could be pursued.

RW asked what was happening to the Beechview Respite and Day Care Centre in the light of current events

DM gave a brief overview on the problems, actions and resolution to the situation that had arisen with the Respite centre. She continued by saying that the Day Care was not affected but the numbers had dropped dramatically and the feeling of attendees was that they did not want 'segregation'. She continued by saying that it was a very large and beautiful building that needed an innovative re-think as to its use as a community asset.

RW asked DM for clarification on the rumour / speculation of replicating the Helmsdale Hub in Beechview.

DM replied by saying that the Beechview Day Centre building was changing to more community use and that there was a meeting planned, at the Day Centre, with the Agencies and the Public to discuss options.

LF asked for the date of next Sutherland District Health and Social Care Partnership.

DM replied 20th May 2015

DM/PH

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SSE Corporation proposed visit.

PH said that senior SSE Manager would be visiting Helmsdale on the 30th March 2015. He continued by saying that they would be coming to the Hub, HCT and Timespan and that SSE was looking to support communities more & more.

HBTC

RE gave an overview of the Badminton and Tennis club and the plans to re-furbish the existing courts to provide a multi – sport facility. She continued by saying that they had applied for a grant from ‘Investing in Ideas’ to employ a consultant to gather the evidence of need and level of community support, prepare the business case, cash flow forecast and the grant applications.

She concluded by saying that the various local clubs were very supportive and enthusiastic.

BJ said that as the HYP was now defunct she was trying to close the bank account and, hopefully, transfer the balance to the HTC.

Bunillidh Rowing Club Regatta

Jean Sargent asked if the HDDT would write a letter of support of the Regatta Ceilidh to the Caithness and North Sutherland Fund.

It was agreed to send such a letter to David Shearer (Chairman) of the fund.

PH reminded the Board of his forthcoming hospital appointment on 27th March 2015, and that he would be unavailable for several days.

Next Meeting

The Chairman advised the Board that the next meeting would be the AGM 23rd April 2015

As there was no further business the Chairman thanked Deirdre Mackay for attending.

She then thanked the Board and closed the meeting at 2130.