

ASSYNT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
Board Meeting 5.30pm 20 March 2017 – Mission Building

1. Attendance
Present: Nigel Goldie (Chair), Madeline Macphail, Willie Jack, Boyd Alexander
Apologies: Marianne Hutchinson, Trish Bangor-Jones

2. Minutes from 13 February 2017

3. Matters arising
 - 3. No action on helicopter landings but an issue of deer on Culag Field was noted, and with regard to health issues (tics & e.coli) the responsibility and need to fence the playing field.
 - 4.3 Need for Gairloch Visitor Centre visit, and clarify financial support for visit from HIE or DTAS. Discussed later.
 - Discussion between Chair and Leigh Sedgely not completed, but will be addressed
 - Trish's engagement with affiliates organisations was postponed, but will be addressed
 - No update on contacting Brora Trust
 - Minutes were approved.

4. Finances
 - 4.1 Annual Accounts for approval
 - The Chair introduced the ACA Annual Accounts for formal approval for submission to Companies House. He noted that income from Assynt Community (Trading) Ltd. was not detailed and out of cycle. He additionally highlighted timeline of events of organisation and trading arms (see attachment) and explained item of motor vehicle being purchased through ACA for use by the Assynt Centre, and subsequently sold to Kenny John.
 - The Chair noted that the tenants are investing in the décor in the interior of the Mission building and ACA or ACT will need to create a reserve for up keep of the exterior of the building – in an updated business plan.
 - Willie Jack proposed the Annual Accounts be adopted with the recommendation that the income from Assynt Community (Trading) Ltd. be explained to the board by the accountant. Madeline Macphail seconded adoption of the accounts.

 - 4.2 Current Bank balances
 - ACA has a balance of £1,200, with monthly transfer from ACT of £200.
 - ACT bank balance approx. £2,500, with outstanding creditors of approx. £7,000. Of this £7,000, £3,700 is for Sandy Johnson's Estate and remainder for NPower. Tim Wright the accountant believes that by next year the debt for NPower can be considered as written off.
 - Relationship with bank accounts linked to ACA need to be clarified to ensure board addressed any good management and transparency liabilities.

 - 4.3 Small grant funding

- The Chair explained the grants dispersed in 2016 of four grants of about £250 each.
- The small grant fund comes from the composting toilet financed by HIE and owned by ACA (Loos at the Lighthouse). Leigh Sedgely, Sharon Bartrum and Brenda manages the toilet and collects “donations” (if patrons were charged then ACA would have to charge VAT). Annual income declared by Leigh is approx. £1,500 per year.
- Clarification of toilet management agreement needs to be documented to ensure clarity, and ensure board addressed any good management and transparency liabilities.
- The Chair noted an email from David Slator about Scottish Government Fund money for Community Chest allocated to redistribute to community groups. The Chair will get more information on this, and the possibility of combining local available funding, which would be a way to link to other local groups.
- Madeline suggested that the small grants be put on hold for the moment until contacting local groups e.g. Angling Club. Add as **Agenda item for Board Meeting for June**
- Madeline suggested that Trish might wish to clarify and document the management agreement of the “Loo at the Lighthouse”, and regular remittance of donations.

5. Mission Building

5.1 Visitor Centre update

- Madeline noted that Assynt is looking to ACA to the address needs of the Visitor Centre, and is pressing in next 30 days.
- Visit Scotland will quit building by 15th April and move the TIC part to the lobby of the Mission Building, paying rent and employing Mary.
- At Discover Assynt meeting on 17th March, Madeline suggested that ACA might provide the Marine Room rent free for one season as a display room/ranger base, and Discover Assynt would pay transition and running costs. Discover Assynt have a fund reserve of over £5,000.
- Boyd, having now received the historic file on the Mission Building renovation, will try to determine which funder payed for the fish tanks and what the “disposal of assets and equipment obligations” may be, and possibility of transferring them to Noel Hawkins/Kevin Peach in Ullapool for eventual use in the region.
- Madeline has catalogued all the exhibits with Andy and they are all the property of the community.
- Madeline noted she will attend a Discover Assynt meeting on 21st March, and asked clarification on what ACA could offer. The following was **agreed**
 - Discover Assynt to take a lead to make a costed proposal for use of Marine Room, including suggested improvements such as lighting, and safety requirements, removing panelling on front of building, if they would use the fish tanks, what ongoing costs for heating, etc
 - Marine Room only available for display but not storage
 - ACA will not pay for transition costs
 - Need onsite meeting
 - Who would be nominated link persons

5.2 Visit Scotland Information Service

- Willie mentioned he and the Chair were at the meeting with Jamie Conner of Visit Scotland on 17 Mar, who said recorded numbers at the Visitor Centre in Lochinver were slightly down from previous years (may be due to incorrect recording of numbers), but numbers in Thurso, Durness and Ullapool have increased by 25-30%.
- Jamie Conner mentioned that they are reviewing Visitor Centres on:
 - Accommodation Bookings – there were 10 bookings made in Lochinver last year
 - Ticketing
 - Footfall – approx. 15,000
 - Cost – Lochinver Visitor Centre rent twice the cost of Durness
- Visit Scotland not prepared to commit to TIC after this season. However are sending Lyn Jack, a Senior Manager, to talk to the community to develop a plan for the future, on May 10th, 11th, or 12th, or 17th, 18th, or 19th.
- John Thurso, Chair of Visit Scotland, recounted to Madeline that the future strategy is to only have Visitor Centres in the centre of large cities, local TIC will become information points in shops or post offices. John Thurso wants Assynt to be a pilot project to great a community owned Visitor Centre.
- Madeline suggested that ACA and Discover Assynt need to visit Gairloch and Loch Ewe (GALE) community run Visitor Centre, and others to develop ideas for future before meeting with Lyn Jack.
- The Chair introduced the Occupation License sent by Visit Scotland for the reception area of the Mission Building and asked to review it and approve it. Willie Jack noted the license required ACA to provide a Health & Safety Plan (and would be needed for other tenants as responsible landlord). He also mentioned that just because it is called a Licence, it may still be a Lease that has more landlord responsibility.
- However as time is of the essence, and the Licence is just for one season, Willie Jack proposed approving License. Seconded by Madeline. **Agreed** the Chair signed the License and was witnessed by Willie Jack.
- Visit Scotland have intimated they will move in on 3rd or 4th April

5.3 Office accommodation for Ranger Service

- Madeline talked with Andy Summers on 19 Mar and he would be happy to have an office upstairs and contribute to the exhibition (he has already rejected space in the harbour office) and the Highland Council Ranger Service are prepared to pay up to £800 a year.
- Madeline propose to invite Andy to take office space, even if at a reduced rate. This would allow visitors to inquire at TIC and access the ranger. **Agreed** make available office space for Andy, but explore with Highland Council options for contributing to costs such as heating and rent (inc. VAT as Highland Council can reclaim it). The Chair will ask for a contact from Andy and make contact, and ensure that any IT system to link Andy to Highland Council is installed

6. Communications

6.1 Logo and name

- Postpone consideration of issue but need to be prioritised for **Agenda of April meeting**

- 6.2 Website (The link is <https://assyntcommunity.wordpress.com/>)
- Boyd asked for approval of the proposal of Monika Strell to get the website serviceable. **Agree** Boyd will email Monika and ask her to complete the work
- 6.3 Assynt News
- The Chair noted that there has not been any recent update in the Assynt News. **Agreed** Madeline proposed that no new update should be published until a new name for ACA is agreed.
- 7 Broadband Update
- Willie Jack noted his broadband update, and that it will be published on the front page of the Assynt News on 24th Mar.
8. Affiliates
- 8.1 Taking forward development agenda (see attached)
- Strategy to connecting with other local community organisations see 4.3
 - Madeline highlighted local development issues that were highlighted in previous consultations
 - Affordable housing with jobs
 - Broadband – being addressed by Willie Jack
 - Apprenticeships
 - Facilities for teenagers (traditionally secondary school pupils were residential in Golspie so there is a lack of local facilities or habit of having activities for teenagers). Marianne suggests a need for youth worker.
 - Leisure Centre is underutilised for young people
 - Transportation
 - The Chair said need to form working groups (both from board and with other groups) to address strategy for moving forward.
 - The Chair mentioned the mandate for Development Group needs to be acted on soon, to ensure strategy is bottom up, and some quick wins.
 - Madeline noted that working on the Tourism/Visitor Centre will give some credibility on which to base further communication with community groups.
 - **Next Meeting Agenda Item** Small Focus Groups to Take a Lead on some development issues.
 - Boyd offered to put together a draft business plan issues “to do list” as a starting point, to be circulated round the board for additions and comments, and interests to lead
- 9 Governance Issues
- 9.1 Board links with other bodies
- The Chair asked Boyd, before the next meeting, to contact all board members to list what organisations they are members of or have affiliation.
 - Once links are mapped out the board may be in a better position to contact affiliates
- 9.2 Board office holding

- The Chair noted that there is a need for a position of Deputy Chair. Willie Jack was proposed by Madeline and seconded by Boyd. **Agreed** Willie to take on the role of Deputy Chair.

10 Other issues

10.1 Local Democracy (see [Commission on Highland Democracy Website.](#))

- Willie Jack reported that the Commission will come round and consult communities, which may, or may not, materialise in real change. They have a survey on their website
- The Chair highlighted Angus Hardie, previously of DTAS, but now of Local People Leading, which has a monthly newsletter with summary of 8 different projects.

10.2 Sutherland Partnership

- The Chair reported that he attended the first meeting of Sutherland Partnership but does not know if it will lead anywhere. They have ongoing questionnaire which is not well set out or clear what it will provide. The Partnership does not have neither power nor a budget.
- Madeline mentioned that six of the Community Councils Chairs are now meeting.

11. AGM 10th May

- The Chair mentioned that nothing has been done for the AGM.
- Madeline asked if there is a legal requirement for the AGM
- Boyd volunteered to review the ACA articles to determine what the requirements for AGM are. He suggests that if so, the AGM should be delayed to later in the year, as members would wish to know what ACA has done to support the Visitor Centre.

12. AOB

- Madeline volunteered to contact GALE Visitor Centre to see what dates that ACA and/or Discover Assynt could visit.
- Madeline will also ask GALE about financial support from DTAS.

13. Date of next meeting: April 18th 5.30pm

Assynt Community Associations Chronology of Events

1950s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assynt Community Association established as unincorporated association
1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assynt Community Association registered as a charity 20 August 1975 (SC015208)
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assynt Community Association (unincorporated) dissolved and registered as incorporated company 2 June 2010 (Company number SC379557) • Clive Shepard appointed as Development Officer for 18 months for Assynt Development Initiative • Assynt Community Association receive funding to purchase Mission Building and grant to renovate. Awarded £400,000 from joint BBC and Big Lottery Village SOS Program. Total renovation funds in the region of £614,000. Reclaimed VAT from renovation in region of £100,000. • Lochinver Mission Ltd. incorporated 4 Aug 2010 (Company number SC471306). Classification: Other retail sale in non-specialised stores; Hotels and similar accommodation; Library activities; Operation of historical sites and buildings and similar visitor attractions • Marine Centre Plans dropped when building conversion tenders exceeded budget (circa end 2010?)
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lochinver Mission Ltd. signed lease for Mission Building March 2011 and occupied building May 2011. Manages café and bunkhouse as a commercial concern.
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lochinver Mission Ltd. ceased trading on November 21 2013.
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assynt Community (Trading) Ltd. incorporated 3 Mar 2014 (Company number SC471306) and classified as Unlicensed restaurant and café to run café and bunkhouse. Board Mary Hinsley, Rody Kerr and Sarah Corkish • Circa. July 2014 Letter from Assynt Crofters Trust “do not wish to claim any interest in monies raised” by the Stoer Composting Toilet as long as spent to the benefit of local causes. Signed Mrs. Jeanette McCarthy. • Oct 2014 Assynt Community (Trading) Ltd. experience financial difficulties. Approx. outstanding liabilities of £17,000, of which £5,000 a loan from • Sandy Johnson. • Oct 2014 Sandy Johnson stood down as chair and Nigel Goldie became chair.
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Slator, Assynt Community Council Chair initiates a community consultation on the need for a development group for Assynt • Nigel Goldie suggests ACA could be an ideal vehicle for a development group for Assynt <hr/>