

Assynt Development Trust

Minutes of the meeting of the Glebe Land development Steering Group

Tuesday 30th March 2021 4:00pm via Zoom

- 1. Present:** Willie Jack, Iain MacLeod, Morven Taylor, Nigel Goldie, Brendan O'Hanrahan, Elaine McAskill, Colin Masterson, Kirsty Crichton, Adam Pellant, Elaine McAskill, Ewen Mclachlan
- 2. Apologies:** Ronnie Macrae, Claire Belshaw, Jamie McIntyre
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting** – these were approved by the meeting as an accurate record of proceedings
- 4. Update on purchase of the Glebe Land**

WJ advised the meeting that the purchase of the land had been completed this morning. He thanked IM for his help liaising with the Church through the process.

- 5. Site investigations**

KC advised that the CHT team came up to Lochinver to the Glebe on 17th March. The purpose of the visit was to look for sites not already investigated by the engineers Arch Henderson last summer. During the AH investigations 5-6 trial pits were dug around the areas identified by Matt Bridgestock in the 2019 Lochinver local options appraisal; unfortunately these sites discovered the presence of deep peat in this area. During the recent site visit Ronnie Macrae used a measuring pole and came across several sites which have definite potential for building houses. A proposal to the Rural and Island Housing Fund (RIHF) is being put together to include funding for further site investigations and the application will go in this week. This may include 2-3 more days of exploratory work for an engineer and contractor with digger to find a buildable development on the land. CHT have received the quotes from the contractors and client's agents and following the application being submitted to RIHF it could take 2-3 weeks to gain approval. Assuming this timetable the site investigations could start on the ground in early May. KC will forward the site plan for these investigations to steering group members.

- 6. Footpaths**

WJ walked across the Glebe land with Chris Goodman on 13th March with a view to looking over the ground to see what the possibility would be for paths in certain areas. CG has now suggested to WJ and to the steering group that 2 days of work could help to identify tentative routes for paths which could be of great use in early consultations with the community. BOH advised that the IPA Investing in Public Access applications are open until 30th June 2021, but with such a tight deadline it could be best to wait until 2022, assuming the fund will re-open. CG had said that the minimum IPA path width is 1.8m wide and paths built under this width receive no funding. BOH feels that early plans and possible path routes may well help to bring people on board with the project. EMcA said she felt that it would be a bit rushed for the IPA this year as the fund is incredibly picky and do not like any changes once the plans and application are submitted. MT suggested that the RTF round 4 could be useful for footpaths as there is the possibility of a £5k design grant, although it was felt that the tourism aspect of the paths may be questionable. BOH thought it could comply if there was sufficient signage and tourism leaflets. EMcA suggested that once we have identified the possible house sites it would be useful to use a system of overlays (similar to acetates used on overhead projectors) to identify the best sites for different activities, as this will be useful in assessing areas where there is a match and where there is conflict. WJ to follow up in funding for CG first path design.

7. Consultations

LT said that he feels that the best approach for consultations locally is to keep it simple and to the point. NG suggested that we pull together some of the comments from last summer's survey Monkey consultation, and these could possibly be considered at the next meeting. KC and MT agreed to pull together some themes based on the consultation comments. EMcA is working on the community consultation for the Lochinver deer fence and following discussion with LT this could be ready to go out towards the end of April.

8. Website

WJ advised the group that ADT had agreed to build a new website for the Trust which will include a new section on the Glebe as this will be a good central place for information about the project. KC advised that another local community they have been working with included a consultation forum within their website and she will forward information about this to the group. BOH has been designing a community survey for Ullapool Community Trust and he will forward some information about this to the Trust. MT advised that there are many forms available on the CHT website which can be used for example for requesting further information about the project and she agreed to forward this to the group for consideration.

9. Mountain Biking

CM looked round the land on Saturday and was concerned to see so much standing water! For mountain biking he understands that CCWT are considering a skills level MTB area within the NE part of Culag Woods, it could well be that the Glebe could offer MTB users a more progressive area between this and the more advanced MTB tracks at Cnocnaneach. CM believes that mountain bike routes can be identified once we have identified the potential house sites.

10. Publicity

MT asked what publicity the group would consider for the acquisition of the Glebe Land and KC suggested that as CHT have a new marketing assistant they can help the group to pull something together for the media. BOH advised that Community Land Scotland would help with publicity. LT suggested including a map and a plan of the site as part of the publicity.

11. Action Plan

- a) Site investigations - CHT
- b) Initial footpath design funding – WJ
- c) Consultations – review Survey Monkey – CHT. UCT survey BOH
- d) Website – ADT/ CHT
- e) Publicity – CHT / ADT

12. Date of next meeting

Proposed Tuesday 11th May 4pm