

## Lairg & District Community Initiatives

### Minutes from Board Meeting held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021

#### Lairg Community Hall

In attendance: Kaye Hurrion (KH), Robert Johnstone (RJ), Norman McLeod, Dr Rosie Reid, Annette Parrott (AP), Chris Powell (CP), Alison Magee (AM), Jan Blackwell (JB), Catrina Mackenzie (CM)  
Kirstin Langlois (Project Officer) KL

Item	Action
<p><b>1. Approve Minutes/ Matters arising that are not on the agenda</b></p> <p>The minutes were proposed by RJ and seconded by CM.</p>	
<p><b>2. Care and well-being project:</b></p> <p>KH explained that Susan Clark had heard from Colin Callum from Albyn regarding indicative timescales which had envisaged a start on site in the Autumn, but after discussion it was agreed that these timescales were unrealistic given that Albyn don't yet own the land and that the Minute of Agreement which governs the relationship between Albyn and LDCI has not yet been received.</p> <p>However, she has been tasked with asking the board for feedback on certain design aspects that were not included in the original design specification:</p> <p>The board voted for sliding doors (for the back doors that will be facing the loch) as they are easier to manage and wide enough for a wheelchair to go through.</p> <p>The board was also asked whether appliances should be supplied with the flats (Susan's project in Drumnadrochit did not supply this.) There was a discussion about whether LDCI would then be responsible for ongoing costs – and also about how some people may require specially adapted appliances so it was unanimously agreed that appliances should not be provided.</p> <p>Finally, the board were asked to consider whether provide outside taps – everyone agreed to this.</p> <p>Susan has also asked if the board had a preference for using local contractors.</p> <p>Norman has sent Susan a list of contractors. Everyone else was asked to forward any builders that they would like to recommend.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the fact that Albyn may be looking to go on site soon, but the issue with the trees removal still needs to be sorted. It would make sense to get this done before the bats start</p>	

nesting. It is one of the Highland Council planning conditions that an arborist needs to be used for the landscaping works. Kaye will speak to Susan re the trees and report back next month.

### **3. Coach House:**

KH reported that LDCI has been approached by a prospective buyer enquiring about purchasing the Coach House. The board was asked to discuss what their thoughts were on selling the building on the open market.

KH gave her view that every time LDCI has explored doing something with the building – e.g. creating a gym, café, meeting space etc – they have always been advised that it would not be possible because there is a similar facility close by or it would cause displacement. She felt that it would be better to find the right person to run something for the benefit of the community rather than holding on to the building for it to become more derelict. LDCI only own the Coach House because it was part of the deal for the whole site. RJ has asked the Scottish Land Fund if it is acceptable to sell the Coach House – they have verbally agreed that this is fine providing the proceeds will go towards the Care & Wellbeing project. He is just waiting for the formal letter to arrive.

Iain Mackenzie LDCI's solicitor has quoted £2,600 to market and sell it. LDCI can add some clauses which means we don't have to take the highest offer but can go with what the board thinks is the best offer. There was a discussion with each of the directors being offered to state their opinion on whether the building should be sold or retained. CP, AP, RR, AM, CM, JB and RJ all voted to sell the Coach House, (with most directors stating that they wished for there to be a caveat to try to ensure that the purchaser will have plans for the building that will benefit the community (although it was recognised that the board would not be able to control what happens to the building once it is no longer the property of LDCI.) NM opposed the sale of the property but could understand why the rest of the board wished to.

KH added that the money raised will strengthen LDCI's position with Albyn because the funds will be able to go towards the Landscaping. Following the vote – the board discussed the timeframe for putting the Coach House on the market. It was agreed to inform the community via the August edition of the Lairg Magazine by producing a special insert with an update on the Care & Wellbeing project with the news of the sale on the other side.

### **4. Ferrycroft Play Park:**

AM reported that Phil Tomalin is on annual leave and our MSP has covid so she didn't have any news to update regarding the Ferrycroft

<p>playpark ownership and the SNP funding situation – but she will chase it up in due course.</p>	
<p><b>5. Church Hill Wood improvements &amp; Sustrans Art Roots Fund:</b></p> <p>KL said that she had been given the date of Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July for installation of the new signs from Acorn Signs.</p> <p>The Community Payback team should also be attending to oil the carvings – when they do they will tape off the main entrance.</p> <p>The bike repair station hasn't been ordered yet, the insurance company has requested a risk assessment and suggested that it would be advisable to install bollards. The supplier has offered to do a drawing for us.</p>	
<p><b>6. Aire Project:</b></p> <p>KL reported that the project managers KOSDT have:  Engaged with Consultants (Engineer and Quantity Surveyor), developed the Project Initiation Document and Project Timeline and created a Work Plan to Gather all Information for the Funding Application.</p> <p>The draft submission will be submitted in the week commencing 30 August 2021.</p> <p>This funding application is based on the quality of evidence which will be gathered via historic and current data/documents. The gathering of evidence requires creating awareness to the local community regarding Lairg Aires development.</p> <p>KL will communicate info about the Lairg Aire project on Facebook, on the Website and in the Lairg Magazine.</p> <p>She informed the board about the eform to count tourists staying overnight in Lairg and asked them to get photographic evidence if possible.</p>	
<p><b>7. Station Path:</b></p> <p>KL contacted Sustrans last week and was advised that the Station Path project will be considered by a decision making panel in early September 2021.</p> <p>We need to provide them with an updated programme plan showing when we intend to carry out the works following, if successful, an award in September.</p> <p>KL is exploring match funding. She is submitting an application to the Movement for Good Fund and contacted Ali Macdonald from Highland Council to find out if there is funding available for Rural Transport projects.</p>	

<p><b>8. Helping Hands Fund (HHF):</b></p> <p>KL has not processed any more HHF applications since the last meeting. On a related matter LDCI has (through the Community larder) been referring some of the families to a new MFR 'cash for kids' fund that is being administrated by KoSDT, which will provide £100 per child towards various items e.g school uniform or food etc. We know that a number of families from Lairg are being supported to benefit from this fund.</p>	
<p><b>9. Achany Glen proposal:</b></p> <p>KH advised the directors that Forestry Land Scotland said that it is very rare that they would sell land to a private individual before offering it to the community first, and following the discussion at the previous meeting she will reply to the Achany Glen proposal to state that LDCI will remain neutral.</p>	
<p><b>10. Cemetery clean up:</b></p> <p>KH said that only eight people turned up to the most recent clean-up so it was not as well supported as last year, but the team still managed to get a fair bit done. She will advertise another clean up to take place at the end of August.</p>	
<p><b>11. Walk &amp; Talk sessions:</b></p> <p>KL has registered LDCI with HTSI's Think Nature Health Walk Network, and will take part in Health Walk Training in August. One volunteer has signed up after the magazine appeal, KL asked if anyone on the board be interested to help out and JB volunteered to be a walk leader too.</p> <p>Charlotte (the project coordinator from HTSI's Health Walk Network) is coming to walk the Ferrycroft route and will help KL do a risk assessment prior to holding the first walk in September.</p>	
<p><b>12. AOB</b></p> <p>KH ended the meeting by saying that LDCI has been invited with other community groups to submit a joint bid to the CCRF (response recovery fund) which has funding available for growing projects. LDCI will apply for funding of around £3500 for a pergola which can be used as an outdoor learning space that can also be used by other community groups e.g. Lairg Learning Centre and the school. She is also looking into a garden tool library.</p>	

