

Arrochar and Tarbet Community Development Trust
Annual General Meeting
Three Villages Hall
Saturday 21 November 2015

1. Directors in attendance:

Duncan MacLachlan (Chair)
Betty Clark
Lewis Kennedy (*Ad hoc* Minutes Secretary)
Ronnie MacDonald
Maria Pollard
Ronnie Ross
Melanie Tonks

Apologies from Colin Adam (Sec) and Mark Sutcliffe (Treasurer)

There were 16 members present.

2. Minutes of Previous AGM:

The minutes of the previous AGM (of 26 October 2014) were accepted as an accurate and true account of the meeting.

Proposed by Sue Henderson

Seconded by Retta Deerin

3. Matters arising:

There were no matters raised

4. Chairman's Report:

The full written report was circulated – and will be made available online. Hard copies can be disclosed to anyone requesting.

The abortive attempt at marine access – and the denial of SRDP (Scottish Rural Development Programme) funding – had been a disappointment.

Feasibility Study – Visitors' Centre:

A professional feasibility study had been completed.

Heritage Trail:

There had been negotiations with the LL&T NPA for the production of leaflets for Arrochar and Tarbet – hopefully at no cost. A draft leaflet had been prepared – and was awaiting design input.

Big Lottery Fund and Argyll Voluntary Action:

The Big Lottery Fund and Argyll Voluntary Action were reviewed.

Arrochar Youth Group:

Teri Brady commended the life experiences this group has given – and reported that currently in contemplation is a field trip working with those sleeping rough on the streets of London – which should save on expensive lodgings.

Hydro Project:

The Hydro Power Generating Scheme was progressing towards financial closure. All consents (from SEPA and other environmental interests) were in place. There had been late confirmation of a Feed-in Tariff (FIT) with Ofgem. Sue Henderson queried the exposure of the Trust. Duncan MacLachlan confirmed that the budget of approximately £1 million will necessarily involve lending from financial institutions – and it was intended to engage a financial advisor – to secure funding. The CARES scheme should allocate £70,000 – to a top value of £150,000. The full £150,000 may not be used. The exposure (or contribution) of the Trusts is 5% – to be split between the Arrochar and Luss Trusts respectively – such as to involve liability of 2.5% – with the maximum liability of the Arrochar Trust being £3,750. DM had spoken to SSE about seeking a contribution to the Grid. This had been deferred to February 2016. If we do not proceed to the build stage, this is written off. The Scottish Government is supportive of the project.

It is intended to create a separate energy company – at arms' length from the trust – to limit exposure (see below – AOCB). Properly, there should be a minimum of 3 directors on the board of the energy company.

Duncan MacLachlan thanked accountant Heather Young – and other community 'stalwarts' for continuous support over a 15 year tenure as chair, which he would stand down from at this AGM.

5. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts:

Heather Young gave an overview of the accounts, which she had prepared – circulating excerpts from the full accounts (comprising pp. 16-20).

Heather Young had advised that following the departure of Treasurer Dawn Gourlay, the Trust, by law, must have someone who controls its finances – and Mark Sutcliffe was duly appointed.

While a small profit (£8,602) was made (p. 19), it should be remembered that this reflects that money invariably, comes in for a specific purpose. 'Only' £630 was raised (p. 19). Significant gift aid monies had been reclaimed (£1,962) (p. 19). Rental income from the Pit Stop (£6,000) should be reflected in accounts for the following financial year. It is impossible to give projections as to any future surplus for the Pit Stop. The Village Hall was profitable. Grants had been given – and trading was on an even basis. SAGE training had been provided to Gill Dunbar who had recently assumed financial responsibility within the Hall Management group.

Heather Young and Duncan MacLachlan spoke of the desirability of building up a ring-fenced 'Fabric Fund' – that capital be available – for contingencies – for structural work, maintenance and repairs to the 'fabric' of the Village Hall.

Sue Henderson mentioned that the Village Hall was now obliged to pay water rates. There will also be a requirement to make contributions to staff pensions from 2017.

Duncan MacLachlan spoke of the current positive trading position of the Pit Stop which intended to avoid loan and overdraft facilities over the quieter winter months.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Lillian MacKay – and seconded by Ronnie MacDonald. The members present voted to accept the accounts – and sanctioned public publication of a full, unabridged version on the website. Hard copies can be made available on enquiry. Heather Young admonished that the accounts will require to be signed off by the outgoing Chair.

Duncan MacLachlan recommended that departing members might still continue as associate members if living elsewhere – ensuring that the membership list is not needlessly diminished.

6. Appointment of Auditor:

It was agreed by all present that Heather Young continues as our accountant. Again, thanks are recorded for her hard work, on a voluntary, unremunerated basis.

7. Election and re-election of Directors:

Duncan MacLachlan expressed his wish to ultimately achieve a full complement of 14 directors.

Ronnie Ross – since he is co-opted as a director from the Community Council, required to be re-appointed – and was duly re-appointed.

Duncan MacLachlan vacated the Chair – and Ronnie MacDonald assumed the Chair.

Duncan MacLachlan and Melanie Tonks were re-elected as Directors

Teri Brady was unanimously appointed as (Youth Development) Director, subject to satisfactory completion of preliminaries.

Maria Pollard; Betty Clark; Mark Sutcliffe and Lewis Kennedy were all unanimously appointed as Directors.

Since the Trust is presently short of its full complement, the new directors were spared the anguish of speaking about themselves – in defiance of the prevailing convention (cited by Sue Henderson), which Duncan MacLachlan qualified as only applying in circumstances where there was a surplus of candidates for the position of director.

Post holders will be appointed at the next Trust Directors Board meeting.

8. AOCB:

Expression of interest in development of old football pitch:

There was some discussion about the Trust being mandated by the community (the Community Council) to express an interest in land – specifically, comprising the old, defunct football pitch) adjacent to the Arrochar Hotel and the Three Villages Hall – for rural community development – to be financed by a grant from the [Scottish Land Fund](#). There is as yet no identified (social) purpose. Some suggestion was made of an all-weather pitch – as a way of arresting the local population aging. Funding is only available for ‘ordinary market value’ land (whose value has not been enhanced by the granting of planning permission). The land is not currently on the market. It is believed to be zoned for housing (in terms of the Local Development Plan). The fund is apparently closed until the new financial year (April 2016). No decision was taken – but there was unanimous support of an expression of interest to the effect that the community would wish to table such a position in early course.

Asset protection arrangements:

There was also some discussion about the advantage – if the Trust were to be potentially subject to greater financial exposure – in consequence of its involvement in more ambitious (hydro) projects – in resorting to asset protection arrangement – ring-fencing or financially separating its principal assets – specifically the Village Hall – to mitigate or eliminate any liquidation risk. Not all are convinced. Again, no decision was taken, pending further consideration and continued dialogue with stakeholders (BLF).

The Meeting closed at 3.00pm with thanks to all members for attending