

Minutes ECC Directors meeting 6th June '24

Present: Sara Twaddle, Alistair Danter, Karen Pettit, Sandra Wilson, Joe Kalaher, John Boyle, Billy Shanks, Kenny Mackinnon, Andrew Prendegast

In attendance: Nick Thomson, Calum Gillies

Apologies: Roddy Macfarlane, Phil Ashhurst, John Lowry

Visiting; Morvern Taylor Community Housing Trust (CHT)

1. Coishletter Housing Discussion with MT from CHT

- The Highland Council (THC) have purchased land at Coishletter from previous owners / developers “Skye Luxury Lodges” (SLL) SLL have retained a proportion of the area previously purchased.
- Prior to THC purchasing the ground ECC had been supported by CHT in negotiations with SLL to develop / acquire 6 serviced plots as part of the SLL’s development plans for the site. While ECC had applied for + been awarded funding from the Land fund to purchase the plots SLL failed to obtain planning for the development.
- SCT will now work with ECC + THC to develop proposals for an appropriate affordable housing development on the site with a range of ownership and rental tenures based on local business and domestic demand.
- CHT initial actions to include
 - Development of a Memorandum of understanding (MOU) defining the rules of engagement between THC, CHT and ECC
 - Develop a local needs assessment survey + local engagement plan to update original 2015 needs assessment
 - Set up a 3 party meeting between THC, CHT and ECC
- ACTION AD to circulate original CHT survey from 2015

2. Minutes of last meeting 25th April '24 – agreed, proposed JB, seconded ST

3. Declarations of interest ST reminded attendees of the requirement to declare any personal interests in any agenda items. No declarations.

4. Matters arising from last meeting / minutes

- DTAS, our membership has now been approved - [Development Trusts Association Scotland | \(dtascot.org.uk\)](https://dtascot.org.uk)
- Karen’s track
 - Commemorative stone with “Karen’s Track” carved on it in place

- 2 miles stones along route in place (total length 2.4 kms)
 - Piper identified for opening ceremony
 - Request made to Macrae's of Braebost for use of field next to track for opening ceremony
 - Waiting for agreement with Gus Nicholson + family on format of ceremony
 - Date will either be pre or post sileage making.
 - Playpark benches have arrived as part of larger order shared with campsite (thanks to KP) assembly is problematic as bolts supplied too small for drilled holes in framework. Campsite liaising with supplier to resolve issue.
5. Shop progress report
- Prior notification request to THC to demolish submitted to Planning Dept + cc'd to Rates Assessors Department
 - Process expected to take 6 – 8 weeks
 - AP to see quotes to carry out work
 - Subgroup set up to prepare business plan to be used as part of funding application, remit agreed:
 - Produce operational business plan
 - Produce cashflow forecast
 - Recommend business model
 - An information sharing system within the group has been agreed, a task list is to be drawn up along with a list of community owned shops on Skye (and Raasay) to be visited.
6. Dev Worker report – attached + approved
7. Council Tax – domestic + non dom update – Paper annexed, noted + approved
8. Governance issue. JL raised concerns that ECC and its Directors risk their reputation if the situation regarding non domestic and council tax is not resolved imminently. The Directors agreed unanimously with these concerns and sought assurance that the situation will be resolved urgently and not repeated. The meeting noted and accepted that the situation has arisen due to serious communication problems with THC that only started to be clarified once ECC was given named individuals at THC to contact in November '23. Despite having these contacts communication problems have continued as the contacts represent different parts of the Domestic / Non domestic and Assessors departments. ST and AD will meet with THC in the next few days to resolve finally. There has never been any intention to deliberately withhold monies. All queries to THC had been made in good faith and with the interest of ECC, Directors and members in mind.

ACTIONS:

- Meeting agreed that a future agenda item should include revisiting Governance matters.

- AD to check current levels of Director liability insurance in existing insurance policy.

9. Windfarm update – communications with Skeabost + District CC. The CC had acknowledged ECC's preference to stay as a unique entity, recognised the reasoning and appreciated offers of support in establishing an equivalent body to cover non ECC post code area of the CC.

10. Applications:

- Hall annual running cost support £ 3,500 agreed
- Support to Hall to cover costs of a Development worker for 1 year £ 7,020.
Agreed subject to:
 - Hall to provide a Job Description for the post
 - Support agreed subject to balance of £ 7,020 being raised from other sources
- Skye wind bank application for £1,000. Meeting noted that 1 member of the 40 strong group is from Edinbane. Meeting felt that impact of the application on the ECC area is limited + agreed to make a £100 donation.

11. DONM – 25th July 7:30 Community Hall

Annex 1 Dev Workers Report

DEVELOPMENT WORKER BOARD REPORT – June 2024

1. Edinbane Links Path

- Paths for All grant of £25,000 for redesign of first section (Edinbane campsite to village) awarded
- Mike Hyatt has produced draft redesign to reduce average width to 2.0m and introduce new crossing at campsite. Currently consulting with THC Roads and Planning (we will need an amendment to existing PP)
- Will aim to contact and offer to meet all remaining proprietors whose agreement is outstanding in June prior to community consultation event later in summer.
- Possibility of Paths for All capital funding for construction, also interest from Hi-Trans. Ultimately still hope for Highland Council to take on delivery once project 'shovel ready'

2. Lyndale Renovation Path – 'Karen's Track'

- Works now complete, final grant claim from THC paid out
- Stonemason has completed remedial works to bridge stonework
- No interest or capacity among other Skye stonemasons to look at undersides work in 2024, but will ask Donald MacLennan to look at Lyndale bridge.
- Official opening and dedication scheduled for June?

3. Edinbane Shop project

- ECC's solicitor still pursuing offers to purchase land to front of shop from Highland Council, and additional land for car-parking from croft No. 16.
- Planning application for optimal layout is dependent upon getting these two areas of ground, otherwise we may need to consider sub-optimal layout option.
- ECC Sub-group working on shop business plan, management and legal structure.
- Sleaf community shop have shared their financial figures and lots of useful experience to help our business planning.
- Prior Notification application submitted to THC for demolition – required a full method statement and asbestos handling statement, as well as restoration proposal – awaiting outcome.
- Funding landscape currently in flux due to UK elections and Scot Gov uncertainty, may take 6-12 months to settle down before new/revised funding programmes are announced.

4. Village Centre scheme

- Planning application for village green improvements submitted, THC requests for additional fee and drawings met. Await approval, then go out to tender.

Annex 2 Council Tax update Domestic + non dom rates

Paper summarising amounts owed to THC for domestic and non domestic rates

Council Tax + Non Dom rates owed to THC

	Non Dom Rates	Dom Rates
'21 / '22 Rates	£ 1449.86	£ 1,641.78
Surcharge	£ 144.99	
'22 / '23 Rates	£ 1,494.00	£ 2,537.57
Surcharge	£. 149,40	
'23/'24 Rates	£ 1,680.75	PAID
Surcharge	£. 168.08	
'24/ '25 Rates	£ 1,727.81	£ 2,416.78

Amount seized from ECC £ 4675.88

Amount THC claim will be cleared – corress 29:05:24 will be £ 3,492.23 leaving a balance of £ 1,183.65 – email sent requesting clarification / face to face meeting 02/06/24

There are currently a number of discrepancies between what THC claim is owed, will be covered by the amount seized from THC's account

Corress from THC 26:04:24

A 50% discount was awarded for 6 months from the date of purchase due to the property having been unoccupied for more than 12 months and in need of substantial repair or alteration. However I note that to date no planning application or building warrant has been submitted for the redevelopment of this site and I can find no extenuating circumstances in which to delay the 100% premium long term empty levy as I believe it has been correctly applied.

Info for ECC Directors The p[ro]fessional report advising demolition had to be produced + approved by Directors AND Members, this was done, due to the nature of the issue the time scale was protracted + had to coincide with an AGM. The reports itself has been submitted to the Rates Assessor AND operations team on numerous occasions. The application for permission to demolish

has been submitted to THC, a copy of the application has been submitted to the Assessors office, once permission has been received this will be passed on to the relevant authorities.