

The Road To This Isles Facilities Group

**Notes of the meeting held at
17.15h on Tuesday 3 May 2022 at
Mallaig and Morar Community Centre**

PRESENT

Stuart Griffin (Chair), Jacqueline McDonnell (Vice Chair) Nick Murray (Treasurer) Iain MacNiven, Catherine Young, Eilidh Henderson and Dave Newnham (Minute Secretary)

APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

MALLAIG TOILETS

No major issues to report. A few problems with blockages, particularly when the shower isn't being used and the toilets aren't being flushed regularly. Catherine suggested installing downpipes which Stuart will look into. He will also ask Olga (the cleaner) if she could flush all of the toilets once a day. The issues with the exit barrier are in the process of being resolved.

Stuart also reported that he had replaced some of the toilet roll holders with "one-pull" holders to try and reduce the amount of toilet tissue being used. Whilst the tissue for these holders is more expensive, because less is dispensed, it is suggested that it could reduce the costs by up to 40%.

Eilidh observed the fact that Stuart is personally being called out to deal with issues at both Traigh and Mallaig and suggested we employ someone to respond when problems arise. Stuart agreed that in the long term this might be something we consider but it is unfortunately not affordable at this moment in time.

Stuart intends to review the signage in order to better identify the main entrance and the enhanced/disabled entrance.

We are currently not receiving reports of the usage the motorhome service point. Stuart and/or Jacqueline agreed to chase this up. The cost for using the shower has recently increased to £2 for up to 4 minutes and £4 for up to 8 minutes.

Finally, the feasibility of creating a roadside entrance adjacent to the toilet block by effectively knocking a hole in the dyke, is still being considered. This is not as straightforward as it might seem as barriers and temporary traffic lights may be required.

TRAIGH TOILETS

The toilets at Traigh were emptied last year by Highland Loos at a cost of £55. They were the cheapest option at the time but Nick will look at the costs and responsiveness of other companies including Bowman's. Stuart also advised the group that the hatches had been shut so tightly that he had to approach NatSol for advice as it was proving difficult to open them.

Eilidh has kindly agreed to arrange for the doors to be sanded and stained and Nick has agreed to pick up the donations and bank them in future.

Finally, Jacqueline reported that there had been many very positive and complimentary comments left on the Just Giving page by visitors who had used the toilets at Traigh.

MALLAIG CHILDREN'S PLAYPARK

Having received additional kit, the design/layout was changed but in the process of installing it, a cable laid by SSE was uncovered. It ran the whole length of the play park but it transpired that the cable is dormant and no longer connected which thankfully abated any concerns that the project might be delayed.

Catherine reported that the topsoil was due to be delivered on the evening/night of the meeting and the matting fitted the next day. The work as a whole should be completed by the end of next week. Once completed, inspected and approved, it will be handed back to the Highland Council who will maintain it.

Whilst the original estimated cost of the installation works was £24k including VAT, due to the many obstacles and changes that have been made this has increased to £30k but is never the less, still within the allocated budget.

There is real excitement and anticipation building in the village as it's young people look forward to enjoying the facility when it opens and there is currently a survey/competition being run to name it and once this is completed, Catherine will approach the school with a view to inviting youngsters to design the signage. Nick suggested some of the sponsors may be identified through signage and Catherine will look into this.

Finally, Catherine and the group wanted us to put on record, our thanks to Toby Robinson and his team for all their hard work, effort and patience. They have done a fabulous job.

SILVER SANDS CAR PARK

The lease is currently being drawn up and the heads of terms agreed. Planning has still to be approved but this will hopefully be a formality as no objections have been raised. The tender has still to be issued and Stuart will chase this up. A traffic management plan will need to be agreed before the work can begin. The parking meters have been ordered. Stuart will approach HC to ensure the double yellow lines are extended immediately the car park opens. A permit scheme for local residents still needs to be devised.

TOUGAL CAR PARK

The asset transfer is nearing completion and the lease is in the process of being agreed. The parking meter is on order and a cleaner has been identified. There are no major maintenance issues regarding the toilet block but it will probably need refurbishing in the years to come once enough income has been generated. Finally, whilst not part of the current plan, an Elsan point may be provided in the future.

ACCOUNTS

Nick reported that he was slightly disappointed to report a deficit on the "trading" side of the business of £1,006 year to date. This has been caused entirely by the PHS contract for Mallaig and the fact that we have made 2 payments in respect of the contract, £683 in March in respect of the period to March 2023 and we reimbursed M&MCCA £455 for a PHS bill paid by M&MCCA in respect of the period July 2021 to March 2022. Ordinarily, in traditional accounting one of the payments would be treated as a prepayment and the cost deferred over the balance of the contract and the other would have been accrued back into last year's accounts. Unfortunately, we are operating on a "cash basis" and therefore the costs hit our accounts when they are incurred, irrespective of the period they cover.

Traigh is showing a deficit of £383 year to date, which is acceptable. We banked the donation box prior to Easter so there will be 2 holiday weekends worth of donations waiting to be

picked up and banked. We also need to remember that the Gower Trust have funded £10,000 to meet any deficit of costs against income which Traigh may incur and we will draw down funds to meet any deficit on an annual basis.

Mallaig is in deficit to the sum of £624 year to date and this deficit is entirely caused by PHS. I would expect that provided there are no unforeseen costs incurred we should make a surplus over the summer period.

This format of Accounts do not adequately report on the Restricted Project Costs and one cannot see the current the position. For example, the Play Park Project shows a deficit for the year to date of £36,201 and that only means that expenditure since 1st October has exceeded income by that amount. In fact the Play Park Project is in a healthy position

The actual picture is as follows

Donations and Grants = £74,485.47

Less: Expenditure = £64,885.78

Balance in Bank = 9,599.69

Add: Grants to be Received = £15,000.00

Less: Committed Expenditure not yet Incurred = £19,250.00

Balance in Restricted Funds = £5,349.69

Because the Balance has come about over 3 different financial years this overview is lost and Nick reported that he needed to find a way of reporting the overall project finances.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. We still have a Trustee vacancy and whilst it is possible to continue operating with the existing number, it would be preferable if the vacancy was filled. Stuart reported that he had received an initial approach from someone from Arisaig with the sort of skill set, knowledge and experience that could benefit the work of the group but the individual has yet to formally express an interest.
2. Stuart reported that he has submitted an application on behalf on the Highland Council, to fund the design of a path that would link Morar village to Tougal.

NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that a further AGM be held in July to receive the accounts for 2020 - 21 once they have been approved. For a variety of reasons, our last AGM reported on the work of the group during the period 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021 but the accounts received were for the period ending 30 September 2020. The purpose of the meeting in July will be to ensure that the two are synchronised in future.