**The Road To The Isles Facilities Group**

**Notes of a meeting of Trustees held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 5 May 2021**

**vIa Microsoft Teams**

Present: Stuart Griffin (Chair), Jacqueline McDonell (Vice Chair) Nick Murray (Treasurer) Catherine Young, Eilidh Henderson, Iain Macniven and Dave Newnham (Minute Secretary)

Apologies: Susan Carstairs

1 Schedule of Meetings

It was agreed that once the current projects at Mallaig and Traigh are fully operational, there was probably no need for the Trustees to meet more than once a quarter. Outside of this, Stuart said he would keep the Trustees updated on the progress of individual projects.

It was noted that as a result of the pandemic and the extended timescales for the projects, the schedule of Annual General Meetings has not been as regulated as it needs to be in future years. Nick will ascertain the timescale for the preparation and auditing of the 2020 accounts and will liaise with Stuart to agree a date for the next AGM, once they are available.

2 Mallaig Toilet Block and Landscaping

Healthmatic are due to complete the internal works, although there have been delays, one being the fact that the wrong doors were fitted so they need removing and replacing. Jacqueline was also concerned in case the doors were not fitted with an automatic locking system but Stuart confirmed that they would be. He went on to report that Ffion are due to asphalt the paths this week. There have been some concerns about how sturdy the canopy that has been fitted is and there are a number of outstanding issues that need to be addressed including fencing which the issue of a completion certificate is dependent upon.

Unfortunately, as yet, it has not been possible to landscape the area around the toilet block as had originally been planned. This has in part been due to unavoidable increases in the cost of groundwork.

3. Cleaners

The Cleaners for Mallaig have been appointed and will provide three hours a day (probably for three cleans a day) seven days a week. The toilets are built like wet rooms and are fitted with hoses, so will be hosed down at the end of the day and left to dry overnight.

Three cleaners will service the toilets at Traigh on rotation and will be advertised in next month’s West Word.

4 Opening Times

The Highland Council will provide income of £300 per month to Mallaig and £50 to Traigh from its Comfort Scheme and whilst HC will in turn determine opening times, we anticipate opening from 8am to 9pm during the high season.

5 Tougal Car Park

The extension to Tougal car park will not now go ahead as planned. Although initially agreeing in principle to the proposal, the land owners are unhappy with the plans that have been drawn up and have withdrawn their support. Stuart is exploring an alternative option but it was agreed that he advises the Highland Council that unless additional land can be found, then the asset transfer of the existing car park and toilet block from Highland Council to RTIF cannot go ahead. It was agreed that the planning application be let run its course on the basis that if it’s agreed, and the landowner has a change of heart, there would be an opportunity to resurrect the scheme at any time during the three years the planning consent was valid for. Without additional car parking capacity, the Highland Council will not agree to extend the double yellow lines any further than the foot of the hill, so we can anticipate similar congestion at the height of the season this year as we have experienced in previous years.

6 Loch Morar Car Parking

A landowner is considering allowing a small, perhaps fifteen space car park at the side of the loch, providing Highland Council act to prevent parking on verges and in particular, in passing places. There are a number of ways such a scheme could be funded and managed and the question is whether RTIF would be prepared to take it on. However, should we submit a bid to the Crown Estate/Coastal Communities Fund or the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund, we would be required to agree a thirty year lease with the landowner which they are understandably reluctant at this stage to do. More work needs to be done on this proposal and there were concerns expressed about its viability given the limited income it would generate and the challenges we would face in managing it.

7 Finance

Nick stated that the 2020 accounts need to be prepared and audited as soon as possible. He stated that £13.5k in the overall budget was restricted to the Playpark project, which had successfully been awarded a further £13k from the Children’s Lottery. Finally, Nick agreed to liaise with Stuart to raise invoices with the Highland Council in respect of the Comfort Scheme.

8 Any Other Business

A discussion took place about sourcing cleaning products and other items for the toilets. Stuart has been trying to set up an account with HIS but both Catherine and Jacqueline stated that their experience had been that HIS were more expensive than some competitors such as PHS. Stuart agreed to follow this up.

9 Date and time of next meeting to be agreed.