**The Road To The Isles Facilities Group**

**Notes of the Trustees meeting held at**

**7.30 pm on Tuesday 19 September 2023 at**

**Mallaig and Morar Community Centre**

**Present**

Stuart Griffin (Chair), Jacqueline Mcdonell (Vice Chair) Nick Murray (Treasurer) and Dave Newnham (Secretary). Catherine Young and Iain Macniven joined the meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams.

**Apologies**

Eilidh Henderson.

**Notes of Meeting Held on 13 June 2023**

These were proposed by Stuart and seconded by Jacqueline.

**Matters Arising**

Stuart gave an update on the action points which are incorporated into the notes of the meeting.

**Community Regeneration Fund**

Eilidh successfully submitted a bid and we have been awarded £26.5k dependent upon RIFG allocating a further £3k. We now need to decide which projects/local issues we fund. To this end Jacqueline agreed to compile a list of local repairs and renewals and Dave would write to the three Community Councils asking if they had any specific issues they would like addressing. These would then be added to the list and prioritised at a future meeting of the RIFG. In addition Jacqueline would approach the “Men’s Shed” to see which if any of the projects they would be happy to take on.

*Action: Dave to contact the three CCs/Jacqueline to collate list of “projects”*

**Highland Nature Restoration Fund**

Jacqueline reported that the whole of our allocation has now been spent with plants and topsoil stored until the weather improves and the numbers of visitors starts to diminish.

The memorial plaque has yet to be fitted to the bench.

*Action: Stuart will collect plaque from Harbour Office and install.*

**Mallaig Toilet Block**

The CCTV system has still not been installed but has been registered with the Information Commissioner.

*Action: Stuart to chase the contractor.*

Catherine has received a few quotes to provide direct access from the main road through the existing wall to the toilets. She will organise a site meeting to discuss the cheaper quote with the contractor to ensure they can deliver for the amount suggested.

*Action: Catherine to organise a site meeting.*

It was noted that the retaining wall needs urgent attention. It was discussed whether to include with the direct access from the main road project. There was agreement that instead of rough cast it would be smooth cast which would keep the option of some sort of art project in future.

*Action Catherine to include when discussing the direct access project with the potential contractor.*

The Paddle Gates continue to be a source of frustration. They were disabled in July which has resulted in a reduction in income from the same period last year although the shower and motorhome service point have compensated for most of the lost income. Stuart proposed three options for our consideration and discussion at a future meeting:

1. Replace the existing paddle gates.
2. Remove the paddle gates but continue to charge for the use of the toilet but with no real means of enforcement.
3. Continue to charge for the shower and motorhome service point but remove the paddle gates and offer the toilets free of charge, whilst enabling users to make a donation if they wish to do so.

*Action: Catherine to explore alternative providers of paddle gates. Decision to be taken at next meeting.*

*Action: Stuart to circulate donation stand system.*

Discussion about updating and renewing the signage took place.

*Action: Stuart to design new signage and distribute to trustees before getting prices, Catherine to provide Stuart with the contact details of sign maker on Skye.*

**Traigh Toilets**

Nothing of note to report. Doors to be treated by Men’s Shed when volume of visitors decreases and the weather permits.

**Tougal Car Park**

The outstanding work on the toilet block has been completed, but the car park surface is deteriorating and it appears that most of the damage is being done when vehicles turn into a space. This could be improved by laying a tarmac or concrete strip up the middle of the car park from the entrance which would take the strain of a vehicle’s wheels turning as it manoeuvres into a space.

A discussion took place about the potential impact of “Fire Safety Orders” which would put requirements on the owners of land where the overnight parking of campervans was permitted.

*Action: Stuart to contact Shane Manning at Highland Council to find out how they as owners would like us as tenants to proceed.*

**Path To The Isles**

The plans have now been received and a pre-planning application submitted. At the moment the scheme is unaffordable but if planning advice is acceptable and funds became available in the future, the project could be resurrected quite easily. Anyone wishing a copy of the project report should email RIFG.

*Action: Stuart to circulate plans to Trustees.*

**Mallaig Car Parking**

Nothing further to report.

**Rehearsal Room**

Dave reported that he had submitted a planning enquiry to Highland Council and awaited a response. This related to the change of use of an office in the Prawn Market into a rehearsal room for local musicians. He has received a first quote for works to remove the false floor, stud wall and for soundproofing the room which was circa 10k. Once it is clear where the project stands in relation to planning, further quotes can be obtained and estimates for the electrical work can be sought.

It is accepted that this isn’t the ideal location but is the only one at the moment. Catherine is part of a group trying to find premises to create a “youth space” and one option to consider is combining the two projects if suitable premises become available.

*Action: Dave to progress on the basis of Highland Council Planning response.*

**Finance**

Nick reported:

The accounts show a surplus of £14,270 on Unrestricted Funds and £40,305 on Restricted Funds.

From an accounts perspective it is the surplus on Unrestricted Funds that is important as that is the day to day trading of the SCIO. The Restricted Funds are the Projects side of the business, largely Tougal and the Garden project currently in progress (sorry I know they are complete from the project perspective) albeit a balance will exist for as long as we have undepreciated assets at Traigh, Tougal or Mallaig. I have introduced a new Restricted Fund for the Path project with the cost being incurred some time ago and the funding received yesterday. We also received a donation of £100 from the Shetland ex-Whelers Association as a memorial to Peter Gillies for the Play Park Project, hence they get line back until it is spent.The surplus of ££14,270 should be viewed in light of the parking revenue which has contributed £16,025 to the surplus. Without the parking we would have been in deficit to the tune of £1,755. That deficit would have been caused by startup costs for Tougal toilets, signage, baby changing platforms etc. The other factor to remind everyone of is that any deficit the Traigh makes is covered by Trust money held to cover running cost. Therefore the deficit, currently £1,022 at Traigh will be covered. The reason Traigh’s deficit has gone up quite a bit this month is because Olga and I revisited all the HIS invoices to correctly allocate purchases over the 3 sites. Previously, Mallaig had borne the brunt of the costs because I did not know the allocation of products over the toilets.

There is a degree of tidying up of project costs and revenue with respect to Tougal and this should be completed by the end of the financial year. The accounts do not currently have any depreciation charged for the current year. This all has to be tidied up for the year end.

**Any other business**

We have been approached by Nicky Robertson asking if we would be interested in hosting the completion of the Circular Walk Project, which was agreed in principle on the basis Nicky was happy to become a Trustee and continue to lead on the project.

*Action: Stuart to feedback to Nicky.*

**Next Meetings**

7.30 pm Tuesday 31 October 2023 Mallaig and Morar Community Centre

7.30 pm Tuesday 12 December 2023 Mallaig and Morar Community Centre