



## Board Meeting - Public Minutes

Thursday 08 June 2023

### **1. Attendance and apologies**

Present: Dannie Onn (DO), Callum Hay (CH), Andrew Abrahams (AA), William Joll (WJ), Linsay Chalmers (LC)

Apologies: Lesley McInnes (LM), Darragh Keenaghan (DK), Helen Mann (HM)

### **2. Resignation of Sarah Hobhouse**

Confirmation of her resignation given to the members of the board. DO has written to thank her and a meeting will be had with Sarah in the near future to discuss access to and running of the website.

### **3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising**

Minutes agreed.

### **4. Declarations of interest**

None.

### **5. Briefing Note**

This was circulated prior to the meeting.

Port Mhor housing; DO has spoken to WHHA who have confirmed that the servitude rights have been passed over and that Rhona Robinson has been paid. WHHA has some concerns with rising costs of building with the contractor TSL. Pre-contract with the road construction and services is an option which may be put in place. WHHA would like to get started this summer.

CH asked if the chair's briefing note could be uploaded onto the website each month. This was agreed – to be discussed with Sarah.

### **6. CCC briefing**

DO has produced a briefing note, that can be passed onto the CCC and will amalgamate recent briefings and other updates into a single note in advance of each CCC meeting. WJ thought that CCC should reciprocate and produce a briefing note for CCDC after their meetings.

WJ suggested that someone representing the CCDC should be on each panel for the Colonsay and Oransay Community Fund (COCF) as a representative of another community body. No-one could see any objection to being asked to be on the COCF panel unless there was a conflict of interest with CCDC. WJ will take that back to the Community Council.

## **7. Scalasaig update**

CS report was circulated prior to the meeting. The houses are nearly finished inside, interiors should be completed by the end of June. The houses will then be locked and work on the outside will follow on. CS is organising visits for the public to go round the housing from 13 June onwards, subject to demand.

The business units power supply is not yet resolved. Colonsay Estate has asked SSE for a particular change to the wayleave, which has not been explained. TSL are looking at an alternative route via WCHA land.

There is a steep drop at the back of the units. CS has asked Matt Green to price for a fence around the units, which will be outside of and additional to the contract.

There has been a recommendation by Community Housing Trust (CHT) for allocating the shared ownership houses. These have been on hold until now, pending our request that they be sold with a rural burden rather than NSSE.

AA said we should not accept that decision because it would repeat mistakes of the past, where housing gets lost to the affordable market. CH thought that CCDC should write a letter to the housing minister, Brendan O'Hara and Robin Curry to put our views forward, representing the Colonsay Community and the real concerns, unique community problems here. (Letting Ronnie know before the letter is sent.) DO thought that the grant may have come to the community with the NSSE – this needs to be checked. CH to draft a letter.

## **8. Housing and business unit allocations**

DO to ask CHT hold on allocating for the time being on the houses to buy.

CS reported at the last meeting that there were no applications for the units, however there are now 2 applications for the business units. A panel will be convened to assess the applications and allocate the units, subject to lease. The panel is intended to include an outside member. Following a discussion of suitable persons, it was agreed that DO should approach Jane Millar from the Gigha Trust.

The rental housing applications are already over-subscribed, with others known to be applying shortly. Allocations may be deferred if the contract will overrun further.

CH suggested that the table showing allocation of housing to be put into the private minutes pack as sensitive information. Directors agreed to the retrospective change.

Leases need to be prepared for the business units. We have a quote of between £2,000 and £2,500 per unit from Harper McCleod. That would be the equivalent to a year's rent. It may be that the money can come out of the fees budget for the project, but LK and CS are looking for other cost estimates.

## **9. Housing Management update**

HM messaged DO with confirmation that she is still committed to producing all the documentation for managing the houses etc.

CH suggested that a meeting with HM take place soon to discuss all her points in a lot more detail, face to face. DO suggested changing the board meeting dates to allow HM to attend through the summer.

AA discussed his concerns regarding the community managing the houses. CH agreed that CCDC needs to tackle this in a professional way. The key is to find funding for a management post for a period of 3 to 5 years.

#### **10. Old Manse report**

LK circulated her report prior to the meeting, including some sketch plans for site development options. No commitments to any plans have been made. The plans were discussed in some detail. Concerns were raised at the extent of development proposed, the lack of an option of a rear extension, and the potential for access difficulties. Mixing houses and business units could be problematic but studios could be successful. At some point, proposals should go back to the community for consultation. In the meantime, DO said that the proposals have raised more questions than answers and it might be wise to go back a step and clarify our brief. DO will prepare a first draft and share with Native Architects with the intention of reporting progress at the next board meeting.

DO and Chris Walker of Native Architects have seen the damp patches on the wall in the Old Manse. Chris has suggested that this is just condensation which is coming out in the wall. This does not seem to be a big problem and as the current let is temporary, no further investigation is proposed now.

#### **11. AGM date**

Our accountant thinks that a draft of the accounts can be available at the end of August. The board therefore agreed to hold the AGM on Saturday 23 September 2023.

#### **12. AOCB**

**E- bikes** – essentially the grant arrangements require this be done through Colonsay Boards and Bikes. However, a qualified person must check over the bikes between customers, and both the grant and insurance rely on locking away bikes when not hired out. These are not currently available. CH reported that in principle the E-bike project may need to be dropped at the next board meeting after a meeting between CH and Boards & Bikes.

**Moorings path** – Alex Howard (AH) said that the proposed housing at Queens Bay has been held up by Argyll and Bute as planning authority. Two permissions in principle have been granted, but the other two have not. AH is told by the planning officer that the outstanding decisions must wait until adoption of LDP2, which he is told is in abeyance at Scottish Government. AH does not want to introduce a potential conflict between a path and the development of housing. He suggested an indicative route for now. DO asked if a sign at each end could also be added as well as repairs to the existing track. AH thought this would be possible.

There may be funder implications with an indicative path and only partial works, which DO will discuss with LK before replying to AH.

Both parties agreed to keep each other informed so that any resolution of planning permission might allow a precise path to be agreed.

**Colonsay Estate** - DO reported his meeting with Colonsay Estate (CE). Jane Howard (JH) set out that CE proposes to change their agricultural practices and that this is linked to viability. They seek to introduce regenerative, organic and less intensive practices over a five-year period. They would like to introduce a community wide nature regeneration project and have approached crofting groups and RSPB to see if they would like to be involved. Currently they await a decision on an application for a grant which would enable a development study. That should be decided by August. It would include a community

engagement programme over several months. AH and JH spoke of credits, investors and a micro-MOWI style community benefit fund. The applications and the development project would be carried out with Galbraith's. CE said that further information will be shared with the community after August.

AA is concerned that the Estate is moving too fast and already a long way down the line without discussing with the Community. Others have heard that this is an alarming threat to the agricultural way of life and heritage of the island.

LS recommended that directors read a report by Alasdair Macintosh, commissioned by Community Land Scotland and titled *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black Black Carbon*. This report sets out the current initiative by NatureScot to encourage and support nature regeneration and highlights the potential issues for communities. A copy will be forwarded to directors.

## **DONM**

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023 @ 7pm