



# DUNVEGAN COMMUNITY TRUST

## AGM Minutes: 18.01.2024

### 1 Welcome & Apologies.

Present at the meeting were the following Ordinary Members: Jason Bold (JB), Mali Messent (MM), Anne MacAskill (AM), Paul MacAskill (PM), Philipa MacRae (PMr), Leona Coull (LC), Liza Cleland (LCI), Emma Jane Morrison (EJR), Gregory Frances (GF), Colin Ewing (CE), Katy Lawrence (KL), Caroline Bruns (CB)

Present online were the following Ordinary Members: Jennie Chapman (JC) James Coull (JC), Moira MacLeod (MM), Anna Campbell (AC), Sylvia Meyer (SM), Mandy Boswell (MB) Kristina Kontou (KK) Calum Campbell (CC)

Present by Proxy Vote: Seumas MacLennan (SM) & Sarah Bold (SB)

Apologies: Gilly Alston (GA)

JB welcomed everyone to the meeting in person and online despite the inclement weather.

### 2 Previous minutes:

AM Propose, PM Second

**Actions: MM will upload to the website.**

### 3 Election of Trustees:

- JB informed everyone that Gilly Alston and Anne MacAskill had decided to step down from their role as Trustee for DCT. JB thanked them both for their time and commitment over the last few years.
  - Jason Bold & Paul MacAskill both decided to stay on as Trustees.
  - There were nominations from ordinary full members of the trust for Liza Cleland, Katy Lawrence and Emma Jane Morrison to become trustees.
  - Jason Bold was nominated by Paul MacAskill & Sarah Bold
  - Paul MacAskill was nominated by Jason Bold & Mali MacLennan
  - Liza Cleland was nominated by Jake Cleland & Seumas MacLennan
  - Emma Jane Morrison was nominated by Mali MacLennan & Sandra Thatcher
  - Katy Lawrence was nominated by Jason Bold & Sarah Bold
- They were all welcomed.

### 4 Minor Change to Constitution 8.1 & 8.3:

- Since our move to become a SCIO, there are a couple of amendments needed to be made to our constitution to bring us into compliance with the Community Empowerment Act, which enables us to use Community Asset Transfer legislation. The change we are voting on will be to increase the minimum ordinary membership from 10 to 20, stipulated in the following clauses of our constitution:

*8.1 The Organisation shall have not fewer than 10 Members at any time*

*8.3 In the event that the number of Members falls below 10 or that at least three quarters of the Members of the Organisation do not consist of members of the Community, the Board may not conduct any business other than to ensure the admission of sufficient Ordinary Members to achieve the minimum number and / or maintain the majority.*

All ordinary full members that were in attendance at the hall and online agreed to these changes.

QUESTION from CE - Historically how many members have the Trust had? MM noted that before we moved to a SCIO, the original unincorporated group had a membership of about 80, but we are now sitting at 91 ordinary members, 17 associate members and 1 junior member. Ideally we would like to see this increase over the coming years.

#### 5 Chairperson's Report:

- JB stated that there had been a longer period between our AGM's, the last one being held in August 2022, due to the change in structure of moving to a SCIO. JB thanked all of the trustees that have been involved over the last 15 months. Special thanks went to Kenny Nicolson, who had been our Development Officer until December 23. KN was key to helping DCT progress the Playpark and Gaeltec projects and securing funding for both of these.
- Leona Coull was contracted in October as the Community Admin Officer and helps to support the Trustees and coordinate the day to day operations.
- Mali MacLennan, previously a highly effective Vice-Chair, stood down in October 2023 to undertake a contracted role as DCT's Development Officer, given Kenny's departure. Mali's local knowledge, and drive to best support the community, makes for an exciting year ahead.

#### **Key Activity**

##### DCT SCIO approval – October 2022

The shift to a SCIO will enable the trust to oversee and develop its own projects, whilst also continuing to distribute grants to support local people and groups.

##### Playpark – ongoing throughout

Huge strides have been taken collectively to realise an improved facility in Dunvegan, with a Playpark Committee now operating as a sub-group under DCT SCIO. Funding secured to date is £73,000 including contributions from Highland Council, MOWI, local fundraising and DCT's contribution. A funding application has been submitted to the CRF (Community Regeneration Fund), to which we await a decision.

##### Gaeltec Building – ongoing throughout

The overarching aim of this project is to deliver upon the stated desires of the Dunvegan community to improve the quality of life for its residents, by providing much-needed community facilities. The project has progressed swiftly and has garnered community support. A funding application was submitted to the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) in November 2023 to raise funds to purchase the building, for which a decision is expected in March 2024.

##### Cruachan & Orbost Woodland - ongoing

DCT has furthered interest in Cruachan, a manageable area of woodland within the wider Orbst Forestry and Bluebell hill. Negotiations are ongoing with HIE and DCT's application to SLF for Stage 1 development funding, has recently been updated as we seek updated feasibility work and business plan.

#### Dunvegan Community Council (DCC) - ongoing

DCC and DCT continue to work together, and we have co-funded several valuable activities, including new Defibrillators for the community, energy, and hardship fund support, alongside an DCT annual grant to support DCC's own priorities.

#### Dunvegan Primary School (DPS) - ongoing

DCT has provided DPS with an annual grant to help support school trips and the breakfast club, both which are vitally important.

#### Wind farms – ongoing

A significant amount of time has been put in by committee members to attend a variety of consultations, drop-ins with developers and meetings with neighbouring communities. The objective is to explore these main topics:

- Enhanced community benefit
- Community ownership opportunities - including funding & legal support
- Local energy discount schemes
- Additional funding to support local projects

#### Community Funding Opportunities

As part of DCT's evolution to a SCIO, the funding process has been simplified and adapted, to widen opportunities for more funding to be distributed. Applications can be made online via: [dunvegantrust.co.uk/apply-for-funding/](http://dunvegantrust.co.uk/apply-for-funding/)

- Large project grant (over £1000)
- Small project grant (under £1000) – available to individuals / groups which benefit the Dunvegan area, including events
- Charities grant (to £1000)
- Educational & employment development grant

#### QUESTIONS

- CE enquired as to whether there was a plan B for Gaeltec building if the Scottish Lands Funds stage 2 application is unsuccessful? Yes, there is. It would take a bit longer, meaning applying for funding from the Community Regeneration Fund when it reopens again, or possibly from the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, which is a much bigger fund and would take considerably longer to do. This is why we are formally registering an interest in the land.
- CE asked with regards to Cruachan Wood, has anyone been in touch with Uigshader Forestry. There is a group called Uigshader Living Forest Project who have some really interesting things happening. It might be worth getting in touch with them for a chat.

## 6 Treasurer's Report:

JB gave a brief run down on the 2022 accounts which are attached. We have not yet finalised the 2023 ones. AM proposed the accounts and PM seconded them.

## 7 Development Officer Report:

Kenny finished up at the end of last year, after submitting 2 large funding applications, one a Stage 2 Land Fund Application for the purchase of the Gaeltec buildings, and one for Community Regeneration funding for the Community Park. We're looking forward to hearing back from the Community regeneration fund hopefully by February, and the Land Fund in March.

The next steps for the Playpark are ongoing fundraising efforts by the Park Committee, who have been really tireless in their enthusiasm and drive to see the project a success, the ongoing Crowdfunder and 2 further funding applications to get us over the finish line. We're all really grateful for the support of local folk and businesses, it has been such a great community effort so far.

Looking ahead in the short term, I'm working to get more meat on the bones of the proposals for facilities within the Gaeltec Buildings. I'm visiting Raasay Development Trust and Lochalsh and Kyle Community Trust in February, to learn more about their successful projects- namely how they have overcome challenges that we are also likely to face, and what makes their projects work.

I'll also be contacting everyone who has expressed an interest in the Mens shed to try to set up a visit to Broadford's Shed. The biggest challenge of the proposed Gaeltec based facilities will, I believe, be the childcare facilities. I've had an initial meeting with Tracy McIlvar, the ELC commissioner from Highland Council to discuss models, and it is going to require imagination and community engagement to make it a reality. I'm meeting up with a representative of Fàs Mòr in Sleat in February and I'd like to arrange a subsequent meeting with parents to discuss options, models and need.

We are also in the process of adopting the Dunvegan Community Minibus under the umbrella of DCT, which we hope will be complete by March 2024. We're pleased to be taking the burden of this great community asset from the shoulders of Tina and developing it further.

Looking slightly longer term, we are pursuing an updated plan for Cruachan Woodland which we hope will include the creation of 2 woodland crofts, 2 affordable plots and an area of community woodland. After further community consultation planned in the coming months, we hope to request an Asset Transfer of Cruachan Woodland and Cnoc nan Craobh (bluebell hill) from HIE. We are also in discussion with Lochalsh and Skye Housing association about the acquisition of a small piece of land to build 1 or 2 Community Owned housing units, though this is at quite preliminary stage. Part of these processes will include a housing needs survey, which will give us the opportunity to look at the needs of our defined community as a whole, in 3 parts, local needs, business needs and non-resident needs.

A major project that I strongly feel we should undertake as a community this year, which is certainly larger than just Dunvegan Trust, is a Community Action Plan. As communities are taking matters into their own hands in ever increasing ways due to statutory funding cuts, this is an invaluable tool to ensure we are all singing from roughly the same hymn sheet. It would ensure that the DCT committee and paid staff are working towards the aims set out by the people who live here, and the groups that operate in the area, and having a formalised plan is invaluable evidence to present to funders, private businesses operating in the area, and local politicians. A

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solid, well founded plan would require engagement with all groups and demographics - crofting, fishing, education, health, housing, culture, construction, in public, private and third sectors, and could set out what we want to achieve over the next 5 years. An important aspect of this could be making more use of available legislation to register formal interests in land and buildings in the area, which we think would be an asset to the community. Registering an interest is useful for land or buildings that are at risk of being sold - and it just means the community has first refusal. A good example that was suggested to me recently is the police house- it has been empty for a long time, and could be put to good community use if the Police Authority decide to sell it, but we can register interests in as many assets as we wish to.

In conclusion, I've really enjoyed volunteering for DCT for years, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to work for the Trust. My hope is that DCT can build more community wealth, use it constructively to help regenerate the area and to address some of the challenges we're all experiencing, and begin to future proof us for whatever lies ahead.

8 AOB:

- An email was sent in from one of the traders at the Lochside shops enquiring about the new playpark. They asked whether it could be moved from its current position up to the Primary school grounds, this would then free up the parking outside the shops to be used by patrons of the shops and not folk using the playpark. EJM said that it would not be able to go up to the school as the public would not be able to use it during school hours. EJM also noted that the ground was gifted to the village by Dame Flora MacLeod to be used as a playpark as a condition of the houses being built. As we are only looking to upgrade the playpark, we will not need planning permission, if this was to be a whole new build elsewhere, planning permission would need to be granted first.  
It was suggested that we speak to the Church of Scotland about their car park and whether the trust could help to upgrade their car park and alleviate some of these issues. New signage up and around the Lochside area regarding parking was also discussed.
- AM wanted to thank the committee for the work that they have done and continue to do for the area. It has been very interesting and a pleasure to help out but now feels the time is right to step down.
- Jennie Chapman asked what the most helpful thing folk could do re Gaeltec would be? MM suggested that community feedback would be really helpful. The plans that were at the hall will go up on the website and the Facebook page for folk to look at and discuss. MM also said that once she had her meeting with Sports Scotland re the gym facility at Gaeltec, then she would have a catch up with JC.

**Actions: MM will upload plans to the website & Facebook pages**

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- Sylvia Meyer thanked all of the trustees for their work.

Meeting came to a close at 7.35pm