IGHT Board Meeting

Wednesday 16th September 2019

Trust Office – 7.30pm

Present: Ian Wilson (IW), Fergus Christie (FC), Jane Clements (JC), Ailsa Raeburn (AR), Anne Shaw (AS), Malcolm Henderson (MH), Stuart McNeill (SM)

In attendance – Kathryn Howell (KH) Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Apologies: Brandon Clements

Minutes: Alexandra Vipurs

1. Chair update
2. Community Fund Directors: There were three applications for the above position. John Martin and Ian Wilson will be joining as directors from the renewable side. There will be a meeting on 30th October to discuss the application processes, criteria and advertising the Fund.
3. Fyne Homes have confirmed that after looking at the IGHT housing stock, they decided that they would not want to look at taking on ownership of the houses. This is due to the ongoing and future anticipated maintenance costs of the houses. They have offered to continue to work with IGHT on management and providing advice which is much appreciated. IGHT are using the information from the survey to look at future liabilities and how the housing can be better managed over the long term.
4. Finance update and cash flow forecast

The IGHT current account: £302,908. This will reduce by £255,538 once payment to AMC clears, and will leave a balance of £47,000.  The Trust continues to maintain a reserve balance of £165,791.

GREL current account has £69k and £38k in the reserve account. The GGPL current account has £163k and £22k in the reserve account. GTL account has £69k and the business account has £9k.

Current debt is now £780k. Since the end of the last financial year this has been reduced by £400k.

The Directors report was approved to go into the accountants.

In future financial reports, revenue and capital items are to be split out to make the accounts more accessible. The Board are of the view that having been able to build up reserves in IGHT and subsidiaries; it is vital that these are preserved and not used for general expenditure

1. GTL Update

The GTL board met on the w/c 9th September 2019 to consider leasing the holiday cottages to an external management company. The five holiday cottages will only be leased out externally if a suitable managing and marketing candidate can be found for this. HIE are offering support with an independent advisor through their Support for Communities framework. The estimated cost of this exercise will be c£7,000 for roughly 12 days practical support from the independent advisor.

1. Future staffing needs

It has been agreed that a review of the office staff roles needs to be carried out.

1. Updated vision/masterplan

The Trust completed a Strategy for Gigha in 2015 following on from the 2001/2002 Masterplan of Gigha. However, both documents are now outdated. A new vision/masterplan process is being considered and should aim to bring together and identify the future needs of the community. The Trust will facilitate delivering some of the aspects, but this will also involve independent consultations with different community groups and steering groups. The vision needs to be developed and led by the community and not by the Trust. JC to discuss the ideas of the Masterplan at the Tea/ Coffee afternoon on 18th September 2019.

1. Development projects update

The Board were disappointed that the pathway project funding application to NCHF was unsuccessful largely due to a concern from the funders as to the Trust’s future financial position. The Trust’s finances have now improved so we are hopeful that this will not prove an issue in the future. New funding routes have been identified.

Surveys have been completed on the housing project. A good response was received. Details to follow. Community Housing Scotland are now working on the detailed feasibility.

Planning for the campsite has been accepted and funding has been secured. Members concerns have been taken on board and addressed. The council will maintain the responsibility of the carpark. The council have however now agreed to work alongside the campsite development and will remove their public portacabin toilets and provide a financial contribution towards the Trust’s cleaning/running of the new toilet block within the campsite project. Members will be asked for their feedback on the updated project and will be asked for their opinion on the preferred operational options (including management of the facility).

1. Estate Managers report

Estates report was discussed. A community meeting to discuss the future vision of the gardens will be arranged (date to be advised).

1. Policies

There is currently interest in several plots on the island. Plots are to be sold for full time residential use only and it is the purchaser’s responsibility to seek planning permission. An updated policy on the sale of plots will be circulated round the Board prior to publishing on the website.

The Caravan Policy has been updated discussing agreed use of caravans on the island. This will be circulated to the Board prior to publishing on the website.

1. AOCB

A pilot opening of the Trust Office has been agreed in order to allow staff to work more efficiently. The office will be open to the general public for enquiries from 10am until 2pm. Outside of these hours, the office can be contacted by telephone/email and meetings can be arranged.

The Business event was well attended by island businesses and HIE and Business Gateway were very informative. Particular issues highlighted included the struggle to gain and retain staff on Gigha due to shortages in island housing and a lack of childcare.

The afternoon tea was attended by in excess of 40 people. A good amount of money was raised which was donated to the Village Hall. Residents requested an updated version of the island phonebook which Gigha Primary School has agreed to do. The event will be repeated on Wednesday 18th September where residents have been asked to bring along photographs of Gigha to collate ahead of the 20 year anniversary.

A delivery of road gravel is required on the island. A suitable storage location of this prior to its use will be decided by AC.

The Board would like to find a productive way for the process of mediation to move forward to deal with any existing issues, resulting in a constructive outcome. It is hoped that the proposed Masterplan/vision process might address a lot of the issues raised in the mediation.

IW to speak to Fiona McGlynn (R&A Clement) to arrange a date for the AGM - suggested to be 24th October.

Meeting ended at 9.30pm