

IGHT Member's Meeting: Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 at Gigha Village Hall

Present from IGHT: Shona Bannatyne (SB), Fergus Christie (FC), Andy Clements (AC), Jane Clements (JC), Liz McCrindle (LM), Jane Millar (JM), Bryony White (BW), Ian Wilson (IW), Casey-Jo Zammit (CZ).

35 Members were present.

Minutes: Alexandra Vipurs

1. Chair welcome

IW welcomed all attending members to the meeting and the meeting opened promptly at 19:00. IW explained that the meeting would be recorded for the purpose of accuracy of minute recording. This would only be heard by the minute taker.

2. Summary of 20 years

JC gave a summary of the work of the Trust over the last 20 years following the purchase of the island. This included a review of the Master Plan priorities which included housing and plots; public facilities and infrastructure; and business opportunities, all of which IGHT has either achieved or is working towards. JC also noted the changes in IGHT staffing structure and the movement in IGHT debt reduction since 2013. It was mentioned that an updated Master Plan for the island would be good to review what the community would like to see for the future of the island.

3. Financial update

IW gave an update on the current financial position of IGHT and the subsidiary companies from April 2021 to February 2022. IGHT total income is £907k and expenditure is £866k, creating a surplus of £41k. IGHT's debt level is now at £503,271 which is made up of £303,900 with Nationwide, £156,871 from Triodos and £42,500 with the Bank of Scotland Bounce Back Loan Scheme.

GTL has a surplus of £10.5k at the end of February. The matter of the steadings loan was raised, and the Board are to revert back to RA Clement to confirm the position.

GGPL's estimated loss of revenue for this financial year to end of Feb 2022 is £285k and estimated loss of revenue since issues began with the turbine in November 2020 £373k.

GREL continues to perform well with over £149k income generated. The Community Fund has donated £2,493 so far this year. The Net Cash Debt Position of Trust and Subsidiaries Combined is -£611,939.

IW noted there was an article in the Mail on Sunday about the Trust and subsidiary Bounce Back loans. Hannah Fawcett has spoken with Bank of Scotland and RA Clements and both have confirmed there is no fraudulent activity in claiming the Bounce Back Loans for IGHT, GTL and GREL.

4. Housing & Estates update

AC gave an update on the new fire alarms systems required for all housing.

It has been identified that some of the renovated properties are now requiring some major repairs. The housing budget has been negatively affected by the Enercon turbine currently being out of action. AC asked people to contact the office first if tenants have any housing issues so that these can be logged and dealt with as soon as possible.

AC noted that at present no properties are available and eight parties were interested in the last available house.

AC explained the current position with Kinnererach which has been put on the market; there have been nine viewings to date. Planning has been submitted for a mobile phone mast to be erected on Drumyeonmore hill which will give between 90-95% coverage on Gigha. Construction is anticipated to start towards the end of summer.

5. Renewables update

AC gave an update on the turbines.

GREL – The dancing ladies are 30 years old on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022. Since January this year we have had hydraulic issues on all the 3 turbines. Unsure why – possibly age or servicing changes. T2 & T3 are running again and T1 is awaiting parts.

GGPL - AC explained the issues with Enercon which has been down since November 2020. An insurance claim with the insurers and a compensation claim from Enercon is still outstanding but being chased up regularly. The Trust has been in regular contact with Norrie Cruickshank from

Triodos bank to make them aware of the situation also. Over £350k of income has been lost since the E33 went down in November 2020.

AC also spoke about the progression planning for the renewables, including replacement of the turbines, a hydrogen study, a solar farm, and a with direct feed to Gigha Halibut.

## 6. Development update

JM gave a summary of the development projects.

The Campsite build is due to be completed for the end of March. There have been some delays on site due to weather and issues arose with the drainage system due to the SEPA licence requirements. There has also been delays due to identifying where the water connection will be taken from. The new campsite manager, Anna Lannigan, was introduced to Members. Funding from the Islands Communities Fund has supported the purchase of a further 10 e-bikes and the installation of a solar system at the Activity Centre and Campsite. Highlands and Islands Enterprise has also fully funded an electric vehicle charging point at the campsite.

The Community Hub has just been furnished and equipped now. There is a small seating area and a gym space. There is to be a small fee for annual membership to cover maintenance, cleaning, and insurance costs. The Hub is available to anyone to use. A Planning application has been submitted for five new houses following the housing need survey findings. The site for the development was chosen due to its central location with access to services. Argyll and Bute Council's Local Development Plan also influences where developments are permitted. It was explained that the design of the homes is being based on elderly and young people. The funding for the project was presented. Approximately £300,000 may need to be borrowed to make the project work, however this will be financed by the rental income generated.

A summary of the new visitor website and branding was presented. The new website is to launch at the end of March ahead of the season. An interactive map and downloadable guide are to be included on the site.

The Trust has been working with Kintyre Gin to produce a "Gigha" gin which includes botanicals taken from across the island, including Achamore Gardens. The bottling is being made to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## 7. Gateway to Gigha update

CZ gave an update on the Gateway project as Craig Whyte, Gateway Project Manager, was unable to be in attendance.

The Phase 1 paths are now complete although final inspections are to take place by an independent consultant.

Phase 2 trod paths are next. Planning permission is not required for these routes as they are classed as "permitted development". Only one small section of boardwalk will require planning permission.

There was a five-month planning permission delay, so the project is likely to exceed the original timescales.

There was not enough stone in the quarry on island for all of the phase 2 paths so some stone was brought in and will be moved by helicopter to the required sites across the island. CZ explained it was £12k cheaper to have this airlifted.

The 7 primary interpretation panels are being mounted on Gigha stone plinths. The interpretation panels will contain natural history and heritage information. The secondary wayfinders will contain up to 100 words of information. Gaelic place names will be included in the panels.

CZ gave a summary of the community heritage projects. The community wanted to find a way to preserve historical monuments. The Trust are now working with Historic Environment Scotland, Archaeology Scotland and University of Glasgow to achieve this.

An update on e-bikes was also given. The e-bikes support the aim of Gateway to reduce vehicle numbers on island and increase active travel. 10 e-bikes have been purchased and 3 adaptive e-trikes/bike/wheelchair are to be purchased once approved by the funder.

## 8. Ranger update

CZ shared a video of what the Ranger Service has achieved over the last 12 months and what future aspirations are. CZ also thanked the Zero Carbon Gigha group for allowing her to become involved in this work.

## 9. Achamore Gardens update

BW gave an update on the second year of restoring Achamore Gardens.

The team have cleared the Macabeanum Wood (east of the pond) which was very overgrown. It will shortly green up and be replanted.

Old rotting wooden bridges in this area have been replaced by Tim Lister. Tim and the team have been working hard with drainage and the bulk of the drainage work has now been completed. Quite a few of the plants threatened by water logging will hopefully soon be visible.

An update on path works was given. The Board had approved repairs to the viewpoint; however, the Trust has now secured funding from Argyll and Bute Council's Infrastructure Fund to upgrade the viewpoint path, Springbank path, and south walled garden paths. An easy access path through the Gardens is being funded through the Gateway project.

Other developments include the re-establishment of the steering group, phase 1 surveys and reports being completed, and a guided walks and events programme being introduced. Members were informed that Morgan Russell will soon complete her apprenticeship at Achamore, and Kacper Kasperowicz has been kept on from his KickStart placement into a 2 year Modern Apprenticeship.

## 10. Final address

IW acknowledged the good level of turnout from Members and thanked everyone for their attendance. He also explained that Members were able to put themselves forward to join the Board as Directors should this wish to.

### **Questions and comments received from the members.**

#### Chairpersons opening

Member: What is the protocol if someone doesn't want to be on record?

Ian Wilson: Members who do not want to be recorded should raise their hands and the recording will be turned off during their question/s.

#### Update and developments

Member: Does the debt figure outstanding include GGPL's debt?

Ian Wilson: No, this figure only includes IGHT's debt.

Member: Why don't we put all of the money from Kinnererach towards the outstanding debt? If we are reducing debt why did we taken on bounce back loans? Was this just one loan?

Ian Wilson: the money will be applied to different debt and that 3 bounce back loans had been taken out.

Member: Does the steadings loan still exist with IGHT?

Ian Wilson: The only loans we have is Nationwide and Triodos with security against the Steadings.

Member: So then it has obviously been transferred to the Trust. So do GTL have to pay back the Trust for that money? At one point this was suspended because GTL couldn't afford to pay the Trust.

Ian Wilson agreed to get back to the Members to confirm exact details around this.

Ian explained the current situation with regards to the Enercon turbine and the insurance claim around this.

Member explained the previous agreement with Enercon for repairs should the turbine be out of service.

Ian Wilson explained that only the electricity is covered by the insurance and not the Feed in Tariff.

Member: How much did we manage to claim for last year when the turbine was off?

Ian Wilson explained how the compensation year is calculated from November to November. Enercon now owe the Trust from last November 2020 to November 2021. There will be three individual claims for loss of use.

Member: Have we changed the policy that we turn the turbines off in winds exceeding 40mph?

Andy Clements explained that the turbines are turned off if the wind speed exceeds 50mph.

Member: Do we make more money selling the electric off island than providing the electricity on island?

Ian Wilson explained we can only put into the grid as we do now, as we do not have the infrastructure to supply the island.

Ian Wilson explained the allegation made in the Mail on Sunday with regards to the Bounce Back Loans was false.

#### Housing update

Member: Would it be a possibility before missives are completed on Kinnererach that the community would see what the property is to be used for? Can the community discuss this?

Ian Wilson asked what the member's thoughts are. Should we go for the highest offer or go for a family, or local islanders?

Member: Usually if someone was really interested in the property they would be prepared to wait.

Ian Wilson again asked for a general feeling of what islanders felt the priority should be given for.

Member explained that Homehunt goes through applications and then give this back to the Board for the final say. However they would need a good reason to go against Homehunt.

Member: Why is such a big plot getting included with Kinnererach?

Ian Wilson: the area isn't in anyone lease and it isn't suitable for building as it's too rocky.

Member: Could someone else do something with it?

Member: Why are the outbuildings included in the Kinnererach plot? Can we sell the outbuildings separately?

Ian Wilson explained they felt this would reduce the value as the buildings are more of a liability.

Member: Who did the valuations?

Ian Wilson: DM Hall

Member: Can they be a liability and an asset at the same time?

Ian Wilson: Some potential viewers had said the property was too big.

Member: Have you discussed with potential buyers about the issues with water up there?

Member: Could the outbuildings be demolished, and the stone kept?

Member: The slate is worth 40k plus the plot doesn't include where the septic tank is.

Ian Wilson: The septic tank is yet to be found.

Member: Why was the road sold as the Trust always had a policy not to sell roads?

Ian Wilson: There is no access to fields or properties along the road. We were not aware of that policy. There is no access to anything off that road.

Member: Would it not have been better to communicate with the members about Kinnererach prior to it going on the market with the members?

Member: You are asking now but it's a moot point as it's already on the market.

Member: It would be more apparent for us if we had been involved in discussion.

Member: In the future if we are putting things on the market could we consult with members first?

Member: Could this be done anonymously? A point scoring system?

Ian Wilson: Would you have an issue if IGHT accepted £20k less if we brought a family to the island?

Member: Can we ask in future if the members were informed and could give their view on potential purchases ahead of sale? At least people could be informed. It's surely worth having a discussion prior to sale.

Member: Put in a restricted covenant.

Member: It doesn't even need to be a restricted covenant.

Fergus Christie: It is a good idea, but the timing is currently an issue.

Member: This could be then written into the missives.

Fergus Christie: I agree that this is something that could be looked at for future sales.

Member: There are bats and owls in the Kinnererach steadings.

Ian Wilson: IGHT were not aware of this as they were not informed.

Member offered to send photos of this.

## Gigha Renewables

Since January we have had a repeated hydraulic fault across all turbines.

Member: Supplying the island could be more achievable because electricity price is going up.

Andy Clements has approached energy companies and it has been looked at and costed but it is not financially feasible at present.

Member: Surely this would be beneficial for Gigha?

Andy Clements: It's not been thrown out. We are having ongoing meetings with Gigha Halibut.

Member: How much would it be for poles and wire?

Andy Clements: It's not an option. We have been told it needs to be looked at further.

Member: What protection do you have if you move away from selling to the grid and what happens if they then resume selling to the grid?

Andy Clements explained subsidies run out in 2027 on the Dancing Ladies. An options appraisal is about to be completed. V52 replacements would vastly increase our revenues and we would not be able to export all electricity. This is currently being discussed in the background.

Member: I'd be surprised if you could get financial support for just one?

Ian Wilson: We are hoping for potentially 2 or 3.

Member: I don't know where you would get the money for this?

Andy Clements: There is an issue in siting these. It also has to be financially viable.

Member: What the cost of decommissioning?

Andy Clements: It should be neutral as there is a good global second-hand market and these would probably be sold on from current advice given.

Member: If it was just one could you just put one turbine near the fish farm?

Andy Clements: It was decided that the current location is the best place.

## Housing

Member: It must be quite annoying when you have a house lying empty and there is a house sitting empty for half of the year. Could the Hotel not provide caravans for Hotel staff and take the house back and give a home for a family.

Andy Clements: The Hotel and the Boathouse have both approached the Trust for housing.

Member: If the caravans are sorted could the houses go back to the island?

Andy Clements: Ken had planned to open all year round and use the house for staff but due to Covid staff have had to leave.

Member: Its now prevented hidden homeless locals from accessing housing on Gigha. We are providing accommodation for seasonal workers and driving members permanently away from Gigha which is against what the Trust was formed for. Are the Trust registered as an HMO? Do we need to go through this process?

Andy Clements: As a Licence to Occupy there can be up to 3 people from different households living there.

Member: The reason the Trust was formed was to protect young people.

Jane Clements: When the Trust was set up it was also to support and protect businesses. The businesses do employ people. We need to have more housing on the island for young and elderly people.

Member: Surely to have a house lying empty for 6 months wouldn't be right? Surely people with businesses can buy a plot and build a house?

Ian Wilson: We do agree with you. We need a balance between the young people and local businesses. We don't want a family home to be use several months a year only. We don't want any young people to leave the island because they can't get a house.

Andy Clements: We don't want this and are in discussions. Sam Berry (Boathouse) is putting up 2 pods to accommodate his workers. Ken at the Hotel is looking at pod ideas at the back of the Hotel to have workers on site. Andy Clements is currently having monthly meetings with Ken.

Member: The point of renovations was to give people on island warmer homes.

Member: Fyne homes did previously agree to give weighting to people with a Gigha connection.

Andy Clements: This is no longer the case.

Member: We should have an agreement for that.

Member: There must be something in writing above this as the Trust remained superior to that ground when the land was sold. Would it not be worth exploring that?

Fergus Christie: The extent in which a superiority clause can be enforced is very limited. Fergus agreed to look at this.

Member: There have been a lot of empty Fyne Homes recently and if there was a weighting this would help the people on Gigha.

Member: I don't think any of the houses have been advertised for Fyne Homes.

Andy Clements will follow up with this.

Member expressed how untidy it is at the back of the Hotel and asked if this had been addressed?

Andy Clements explained this had been spoken about and some of this has been removed.

Member: If their caravans go will it be at a cost to us?

Andy Clements: No cost to us at all.

Member: Is there a time scale for the Hotel bar?

Andy Clements: It was December but now April. Freddie, Hotel's maintenance man, is away and cannot carry on until he is returned. The bar ceiling still needs fire proofing.

Fergus Christie: The Board have had many meetings about the Hotel. We are doing all we can about the Hotel.

Member: Is Freddie a qualified builder?

Andy Clements: He is doing the rough work and bringing qualified electricians, etc. This will be done by qualified staff.

Member: Is the hotel bar that is to be fitted manufactured in Ireland?

Andy Clements: Yes. You buy the carcass and put the materials to it.

Member: If they can afford a bar from Ireland why can't they afford to move the rubbish and pay the Council?

Member: The Hotel is a loss of revenue which affects us all as a whole. How long does the Trust wait before they do something? How long has it gone on already?

Fergus Christie: We started this through a meeting in November with Ken. We cannot breach confidentiality and we are having discussions. Please accept from the Board that we are aware of the effects on tourists and the image of Gigha and this is on the agenda every month. We cannot breach more confidentiality than this.

Member: Its affecting the community.

## Housing Development

Member: Are we proposing to build these houses and add them to IGHT housing stock? I thought you wanted to move away from this?

Ian Wilson: We can justify paying up to £60k per house for houses we can rent out. These houses will have a different renting policy and are for people on island only.

Member: It looks like we are borrowing 1.5 million pounds. We have sold off houses to reduce debt and now we are borrowing money to build houses?

Jane Millar: We are only looking to borrow £300k. The rest is made up of grant funding.

Jane Clements explained we don't have enough homes for the demand.

Member: We have used public money in the past to update houses. How are the funders prepared to give us the money when we are selling property?

Jane Millar: I cannot speak for the funding bodies.

Ian Wilson: We have had to sell houses previously due to the debt. We just couldn't afford it. Current houses cost a lot more to maintain.

Member: it's not doing the reputation of Gigha any good if we keep borrowing from the public purse when we keep getting given money and then we sell on.

Ian Wilson: It's a necessity. The Scottish government are very keen on building more houses in Scotland.

Member: In 15 years' time these new houses will cost money too.

Member: In the past you said we haven't had to sell more houses to subsidise this but now you are saying we have to?

Ian Wilson: If future boards can generate the funds elsewhere then great, otherwise some property will likely have to sell. This is not a money making scheme.

Member: If we have people needing access and care are we able to provide houses to them?

Member: Rather than spending on a house can we not have the money spent here instead?

Member: If a young person who wants to buy a house and may want a family, what happens then? Also, there are only 2 carers on this island how are you going to provide more carers to elderly people to ensure this need is met? It would be interesting to see how many applicants are received for Woodside to see if this is needed?

Member: Every time we have a private let it has an effect on the community. Once housing stock is sold, we cannot control how it's used.

Member: A lot more discussion in the hall with the community with a bit of consultation or input would allow people to feel empowered and deflects from problems later on when the project is done and dusted.

Ian Wilson: There would have been more meetings if this was possible but due to Covid it was not.

Member: Can we put the seasonal workers out in a block?

Member: What happens if there are no elderly to move in them? Will they lie empty?

Ian Wilson: No. The Trust has not had an issue with houses lying empty because there are no tenants wanting them.

Member: Elderly people don't have to move out of their homes. There also needs to be more staff and facilities for people with need. Not everyone wants to live in the Village.

Jane Clements: Amenity housing for the elderly was on the Master Plan from 20 years ago.

Member: 20 years ago we couldn't sell anything.

Ian Wilson: If we didn't sell anything over the last 20 years there wouldn't be a Trust and it would have failed in its businesses.

Member: Will you sell more houses?

Ian Wilson: We cannot say as we will not always be here. In the future unless we can find a lot of money we cannot keep all houses.

Member: The community were under the impression that houses couldn't be sold because of burdens and the community were not informed. The community should have this discussed with them. On taking a rural property grant the property has to be safe for 25 years. A bit more discussion before we are too far down the line would be good, so we can have input and feel empowered. It does not need to be major input but it allows people to be part of the development.

Ian Wilson: Anything we sell has to be approved by HIE.

Member: A lot has changed since the Master Plan, maybe we need a session in the hall and members can give their ideas to brainstorm their thoughts for the island.

Jane Clements: We need to review the Master Plan. We need to look at new funding for a new Master Plan.

Member: How many renovated houses have been sold?

Ian Wilson: 3

Member: The board have to commit to the members for any development of land. This has not happened.

Ian Wilson: It is time to review where we are.

Member: Why don't the Trust and Community Council put forward to the powers who be for a speed limit on the island.

Andy Clements: To do that you need pavements and streetlights.

#### Countryside Ranger

Member: Will you ensure marine plywood is used for the board walk?

CJ: We are looking at plaswood as its recycled plastic which can be repurposed.

#### Achamore Gardens

Member: Any potential for island firewood following the storms?

Bryony: This is for discussion by the steering group.

#### Additional points raised at the end of the meeting

Member: It is right we celebrate the successes of the last 20 years and what we have achieved. What's also right is that we continue forward in a way that is aligned with the reason that Gigha was bought. Gigha was bought to ensure that the membership and activity and that members have a say in what has happened. At times assuming membership has been made. The policies written over the past few years was done in a way that were informed by the community. This needs to be done a frequent basis. The board need to be sure they are referring to the memorandum and articles in carrying forward the decision making and make sure the spirit of what was written in the memorandum and articles is bought back to the major investment decision. The reason behind this ensured the board was not focused on short-term decision making and future generations are for the long term decisions of Gigha.

We collectively need to take a good look at how major decisions are taken and influenced going forward. There is also a need for a refresh of the 5 year strategy to make sure future decision about the 5 year aim of the island is not short-termism and thoughtful and that islanders are listened to.

Member: The pathways are a godsend.

Member: Can we have more regular meetings?

Jane Clements: Meetings need to be more regular to listen to members on a more regular basis.

Member: Can we have a member meeting again in May?

Ian Wilson: Yes.

Member: When I became a member I didn't get any information about what we have discussed tonight. Can members get copies of the 20 year plan when they join?

Ian Wilson acknowledged the size of the turn out this evening. We need to keep a good size of members at members meetings and have regular meetings. Ian explained Brandon Clements had stepped down and invited members to put themselves forward as directors as island directors are needed.

Meeting ended: 9.40pm

### **Amendments raised at Members Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

*The final comments made in the last meeting from a member about the spirit of which decisions should be undertaken on the island are to be corrected to the following: "It is right that we celebrate the success of the last 20 years and what has been achieved. What is also right is that we continue forward in a way that is aligned with the reason that Gigha was bought. Gigha was bought to ensure that the residents influenced their future, and the Trust was established ensuring that members have a say in what happens to the Trust and how assets are held. A suite of documents is in place to guide the Board in decision making and when members will be consulted and asked to vote. It includes the Articles and Addendum to the Articles and several policies developed by the membership and voted in by the membership with the route established as to how these would be reviewed. These were all developed to assist the Board and were formed based on the importance of members having their say in decision making in line with the reasons for the original purchase, and because the ownership of Gigha is for the long-term and decisions must not be 'short-termist' but create opportunities for the future and current generations, and not establish constraints. The Articles and the Addendum set out the spirit and when decisions would be brought back to the membership. This mechanism is set to support the Board to inform development activity. It is clear that from membership questions and pattern of decision making, that this mechanism needs to be utilised more in line with the spirit of the Addendum. Whilst community consultation is a very important mechanism to shape development, so to is reverting to the membership early enough in the development of projects to maintain and obtain membership buy-in."*

*The addition of member question made at the previous meeting with regards to house renovations and a minuted response from the Board. Tenant raised the condition of their house. AC: A 4 bedroom Fyne Home was held back to allow the tenant to move out while the house was renovated but this offer was not taken up by the tenant. Some improvements such as windows have been done. The discussion was not for a public meeting and it was suggested a meeting is held with the tenant.*

*The addition of the reference made to a £20,000 reduction on the sale of Kinnererach to families. IW said that the Trust would consider a lower offer to encourage a family to move to the island.*

*The addition of the conflict of interest declared at the last meeting with regards to the sale of Kinnererach. IW and JC declared a conflict of interest with one party who may have submitted an offer for Kinnererach.*