

IGHT Members Meeting

Thursday 17th August 2023 at 7pm in Gigha Village Hall

Present from IGHT: Ian Wilson (IW), Fergus Christie, Graham White, Jane Clements, Per Östlund, Ian Pinniger.

Apologies from IGHT: Jon Grunseth

18 members were present

Minutes: Anna Lannigan

1. Chair Welcome

IW welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. General IGHT update from the Chair

IW referred to the update letter that had been circulated via email and post and asked for comments. Two members had not received the letter previously – a printed copy was shared. ACTION: Check all members did receive the update.

Member question: £10,606 spent on house maintenance - did this include electrical surveys? Board comment: No, that was paid last financial year, and this is the spend for this year.

2. Member Meetings format

After previous members meeting the Board received feedback that the meeting was negative and some members do not feel comfortable at the meeting or feel safe speaking up. Personal comments that want to be made public should be submitted to the board and it can be made public this way. Encourage members to submit questions prior to a meeting and then it can be raised and answered at the meeting. Need to find a way that everyone has the opportunity to ask questions or make comments. Should there be different types of meetings? Need to find what's best for the island/organisation, need to listen to every member. Can't have opinions without listening to members. Could a meeting be more of a workshop, with working groups/questions/topics that people can discuss – could cover specific things/new areas that aren't regularly discussed. Need to allow people to say things publicly.

Members were invited to suggest comments or thoughts on how to change the meeting format.

Member suggestion: Create a log of members correspondence going into the Trust so that someone can be responsible for making sure that all correspondence is being dealt with and responded to. There is a frustration on both sides (the members and the board) so need to look for ways to reduce this in advance of the meeting. Need to keep things open.

Member comment: Doesn't submit comments/questions outside meetings anymore because they haven't had responses or have had inappropriate responses from Directors. Doesn't feel comfortable raising hand and asking question at a meeting.

Member Comment: Aggressive people should be asked to leave, there needs to be a degree of control. There is tension and there always will be, but the meeting needs to be able to deal with it.

Member comment: It's an emotive subject and people feel strongly about things. Some things will come up on the evening and not in advance. Need to manage the meetings better, as there might always be someone who gets angry/cross/frustrated.

Member comment: People use it as a chance to express personal issues. Could there be a drop in before the meeting to discuss any personal issues?

Member comment: should the board/working groups ask those that don't come to meetings why they don't?

Member question: Why is a Trust House being left empty the majority of the time/let seasonally when a key worker can't find a home?

Board comment: This is a private matter, there are extenuating circumstances and it is in hand.

Member comment: Need to make sure that Homehunt Policies are being followed. Leases must have conditions within them that support the Homehunt Policies.

Board comment: The Housing policy has been updated to support key workers.

Member comment: Changes to any policies made by members should come back for a members vote. This sort of thing causes frustrations which make the members meetings more emotional. There needs to be application of governance.

Member comment: It would be valuable to explain the methodology for the working groups – to make sure the proposals come to the members meetings before anything is defined or can't be changed – with voting on any amendments. Needs to come back and forth between working groups and not just be presented to members.

Member comment: People need to be reassured to speak up and need to know their view will be welcomed.

ACTION: The Board will discuss the comments and suggestions and will propose an approach that will allow all members to raise issues, concerns and frustration without creating an atmosphere that feels uncomfortable or unsafe.

3. Members training

Directors training has taken place and was found to be useful. Directors asked the members if there would be support for the members to receive training. The room agreed. A member asked who would deliver the training? Sarah Whitman of Delfinity HR Consultants who also did the directors training.

ACTION: Members training to be organised and all members to be invited.

4. Hotel

39 people submitted feedback. In Summary – leasing out is the better long-term option, being careful about who it is leased to. A bar is wanted as quickly as possible however the original bar needs time/money spent on it as it is not meeting regulation – this will be discussed at the board meeting on Monday.

Could phase things – bar, food then rooms as a community business to get the funding and get things back up and running and then long term have a lease. Get a manager for a few years first before leasing.

Working Groups: The Board are looking for volunteers to clean up/sort out the hotel across 6 different areas. Need a team leader for each area. Kitchens would be done professionally. Sign up sheets were available for attendees to choose area of interest.

Bryony White will set up a gardening working group for one day soon.

Temporary Bar:

Member question: is the plan to open a bar before everything else? Yes. Andy Clements is getting quotes for fixing the bar.

The Board want to open a Temporary Bar as soon as possible.

Member suggestion: Could the Boathouse be a bar if the hotel isn't ready?

Member suggestion: Could the temporary bar be moved into the front dining room?

Member suggestion: Temporary licence holder with dates set for ending it so that they have to leave.

Member comment: IGHT as a charity should be able to be the licence holder. Board to look into this.

Longer term plans and investment: Need to access grants while it sits in Trust hands – could take on a manager with a view to leasing at a later date.

Need to get the bar sorted in the original area – but need to start again and work with members to decide how/what to do. Needs to be accessible. How much money should we spend on it?

Community ownership fund: Jane Millar is working on this.

Hotel: needs disabled bedrooms put in, roof and electrics need to be sorted.

Member comment: Fundamentally, prior to a business plan being formed – there needs to be an options appraisal informed by professional experience in the hospitality industry – looking at Gigha’s tourism product, the target market for the hotel, the fact we have several good accommodation provisions and food outlets. This information would inform bar design as well. This would help define who the hotel lease should be targeted at. The Board agreed with this point.

Member question: Are all the pictures/art/quaich everything safe? Board comment: Yes.

Member suggestion: Need to let people know the manager position might be coming up as early as possible – not a job advert, but expression of interest, hospitality trade press. People will start to get in touch before the job is even advertised.

Timescales: As soon as possible, but no timescales have been set. Would like to be open by next summer season. Hoping HIE fund/business plan will be quick and then move onto Community Ownership Fund but this isn’t open at the moment.

How long should a lease be – is 25 years too long? Would start shorter and then increase. A staged rental/lease – shorter, cheaper and then reviewed after an amount of time.

Staff/Manager Housing

Where would a manager live? In the hotel? In one of the holiday cottages temporarily? If they live in then there’s very few rooms to make it financially viable. Might need the holiday cottages to make it an attractive portfolio. It is very difficult to make the hotel pay. And experienced managers wouldn’t want to run such a small hotel.

Need to think about staff housing in the future, not just the manager. Will be reviewed as the caravans are not fit for use. What about pods where the caravans are?

Holiday cottages are coming back to the Trust in October. Could turn the Steadings into residential use. Some could be for key/essential workers. A temporary house for an essential worker? With a view to taking it back to holiday cottages in future, and potentially being included in a portfolio with the hotel?

If stayed as holiday cottages, this impacts on workload for the Trust and finding staff to run them. Financially are they beneficial?

Member question: What about existing bookings? The Board agreed that a decision needs to be made quickly for those that have already booked. Member felt that can’t really take away holiday cottages when the hotel isn’t there as well – will impact on other businesses on the island and where people’s relatives stay.

Member comment: There are so many variables and dependencies in the ideas being discussed. What happens next for the Hotel?

The Board: Options appraisal and then come back to the members. Already speaking to funders and seeking support. Monday’s Board meeting will go through the ideas and pare it down and work out what will happen next.

5. AOB

1. Ardmish Bay – Can the Trust look at forming a partnership with other stakeholders to improve safety in the Bay. Concerns for swimmers and young children when ribs/jet skis come into the Bay. How can safety guidance/regulations be established in partnership with other organisations? Speed limits introduced? How to police it? How has it been done elsewhere? Could there be a swim zone? Crown office could help? Can be put onto charts?
2. There used to be a requirement within the lease of the Boathouse to keep toilets open for the public and yachts people. Those facilities have been removed. They should be opened again but if not need to communicate where the facilities are. There’s potential for boats to use onboard toilets more and then need to empty them whilst moored. Sailors say that the reputation for the island is going downhill, no pub/hotel. Boathouse septic tank can’t facilitate additional toilets without fully refitting. The website, pontoon notice

board and moorings operative all explain where toilets and showers can now be found. Boats have been quiet across Scotland this year, not just on Gigha.

Close of meeting – 8.34 pm

| Action | Allocation | Update |
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| Check all members were sent the Update Letter | SB | |
| The Board will discuss the comments and suggestions and will propose an approach that will allow all members to raise issues, concerns and frustration without creating an atmosphere that feels uncomfortable or unsafe. | The Board | |
| Members training to be organised and all members to be invited | The Board | |
| Review all suggestions and comments regarding the hotel and holiday cottages and make a plan of action | The Board | |
| Organise a gardening working group at Hotel | BW | |
| Look into options for improving safety in Ardmish Bay | The Board | |
| Look into how to increase awareness amongst sailors of where facilities are now located. | GTL | |