

## Minute of Directors' Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025

1. Present: Maureen (Chair), Iain, Fiona, Caroline, Rachel, Alison, Dean, Chris.
2. Apologies: Kate, Michelle.
3. Declarations of Interest: None.
4. Adoption of minutes of the previous meeting from 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025: Proposed by Caroline and seconded by Dean.
5. Matters Arising: Iain asked if there had been any contact with the new community council in Tynron. Chris reported that he had received a very positive response from the secretary stating that the new community council was keen to establish a positive working relationship with the Trust.
6. Correspondence: e-mail from Tynron Community Council (reported above).
7. Financial Report: Iain circulated his report prior to the meeting. During January the Trust received £10,321 in income from: a Third Sector D&G grant for the wellbeing programme of activities, bank interest and an electricity refund. Against this there was expenditure of £10,060 covering salary, office and accountancy costs, project costs, CBF payments and a transfer to reserves. The Trust's net cash position was £89,250 at the end of January.  
Capital Budget: No income was received in January but payments were made to TP&E for Phase 1B1 project management costs and 1B2 design costs as well as to the Finance Manager. An advance payment was also made to the contractors on Phase 1B1 which has since been recouped from Swestrans. At the end of the month, the overall cash position for the capital budget stood at £34,343.
8. KPT DO Performance Objectives: Michelle submitted a report prior to the meeting. There has been good progress in most areas. The director's planning day has been confirmed as Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March in Dalswinton Hall.
9. Active Travel Path (inc. Tracks and Trails): Caroline reported on the progress of the path to Nith Bridge. Good progress was being made and it was expected to be finished by the end of March as required.  
The Trust is still awaiting planning permission for Phase 1B2 which Caroline thought was due to concerns about the time given to pedestrians to cross the bridge. There was no news yet in relation to the 'Levelling Up Fund'. There is an estimated installation time of 6 to 8 weeks for the installation of traffic lights on Nith Bridge. Caroline reminded directors that the Trust was the client for the whole length of the path but consultation with the Thornhill Active Travel group would be ongoing.  
It was noted that stones for use in the path construction had been reported (at Penpont Community Council) as having fallen from AMD lorries and Caroline said that she would follow this up. **Action: Caroline.**  
Path strimming was currently being carried out by G. Holmes (?) for the completed section of the path. There was a discussion about the relative cost-efficiency of different methods of keeping the path clear of weeds which Caroline, Fiona and Rachel said they would investigate further. **Action: Caroline, Fiona and Rachel.**  
Dog fouling remains an issue around Burnhead. Further measures to address the situation were discussed but no conclusion reached. Alison has written to the Council about the provision of a dog waste bin but has not yet received a reply. Following recent consultation with Burnhead residents, it was reported that they were not enthusiastic about having a sharing box in the hamlet, mainly because of a lack of space, but that a bike repair stand and bike rack would be fitted on the ATP.
10. Community Benefit Fund: In addition to those activities already supported, and

as reported under finance, the CBF has supported 'Warm Wednesdays' in the cafe and the Friendship Club's Burns' Supper.

11. Trust Website: Fiona reported 1680 page views up to 19<sup>th</sup> January. This represents a 6% increase in traffic. Fiona has been working on some updates and is currently working on an events page. **Action: Fiona.**
12. Local Place Plan: Iain reported on the completion of the Local Place Plan which will be available on the Trust website on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. A consultation period would begin on the same day, lasting until 31 March, and would include invitations to comment from the seven adjacent community councils as well as the local Dumfries and Galloway councillors. A drop-in session will be held in Gladstone Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> March. Following the period of consultation, the plan goes to the Council for acceptance.  
Iain circulated postcards promoting the survey that is asking for views on the future use and purchase of Vollie House as a community space. Rachel asked about funding for the acquisition and Iain said this would be addressed as part of the business plan which would follow the the initial survey stage.
13. Membership Report: No report.
14. Community Garden: Fiona is still trying to attract volunteers and reported that some tidying of the area had been completed. A seed sowing day has been organised for 8<sup>th</sup> March. A workshop, led by 'Edible Gardeners' based in Newton Stewart and promoted by the Food Network has been suggested at a cost of £150. Fiona will investigate. **Action: Fiona.**  
It was reported that Hilary Park had expressed interest in establishing a women's circle and was prepared to lead on this proposal.
15. Health and Wellbeing: The existing activities continue to be supported, with the addition of funding for the yarn bombing project and supporting Michelle's work in promoting e-bikes and led walks. Michelle is also developing contacts with health workers in order to direct residents with health issues to some of the Trust's activities. The community garden, as a health and wellbeing venue was discussed together with the idea of providing allotments as suggested in the Local Place Plan.
16. Broadband in Village Halls: Chris reported that BT had offered an enhanced service at a slightly reduced price over a three year contract. New equipment had been installed and checked in operation. Initial reports had been very positive.
17. Community Transport: Iain reported on a grant funding package being pursued with SWestrans for active travel projects in the area and a request from the N76 Partnership to include support within the grant package for future membership activity across Nithsdale generally. There was a discussion about the value of the activity to date and the justification for the grant request and concerns raised about a possible conflict with the Trust's charitable objectives (ie. to support the development of Keir, Penpoint and Tynron). Directors agreed not to include the relevant costs within the proposed grant application, subject to further discussions with the Partnership.  
**Action: Iain/Maureen**
18. Affordable Housing: Dean circulated his report prior to the meeting and explained that the task was to continue to identify a housing build that would be considerably cheaper than that proposed by JGA. Dean also highlighted the need to secure the funding from existing assumed sources and that more would need to be raised from elsewhere to achieve project viability. Rachel agreed to send Dean a link to searches for possible funders. Community shares were also mentioned. As there was a need to apply for planning in principle, questions on the design were raised. Dean asked about the possibility of a further community consultation event to research opinions

about any proposed changes to the project. Rachel thought the Trust needed to be clear about the purpose of affordable housing in Penpont before any presentation was planned.

Dean reported a difference in valuations for the Glebe Field. Directors agreed to the cost of a third valuation.

Dean expressed concern that more volunteers were needed as the capacity of the Trust to lead such a project was limited. Iain thought it was necessary to establish exactly what SoSCH's role was in the project. Maureen suggested a meeting with Mike Staples and Fiona offered to design a poster for volunteers based on what tasks are required. **Action: Dean, Rachel, Maureen and Fiona.**

19. Carbon Reduction: No report.

20. AOCB: Applications for the post of Finance Officer close tomorrow and interviews are scheduled to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

The KM Rally (May 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>) is taking shape. Arrangements have been made for camping, toilets and showers, Gladstone Hall is to be used for meals with the cafe providing breakfasts and packed lunches. A ceilidh will be held in Keir Village Hall on the Saturday night and the 'cake raid' to Keir on Sunday.

Maureen has arranged a mobile phone contract through Tesco for Michelle. She will circulate the new number. **Action: Maureen.**

The issue of shared ownership of windfarms to achieve long-term community benefits was raised by Rachel which prompted a short discussion.

A possible candidate to fill the vacancy on the board of directors was suggested. Dean will follow this up. **Action: Dean.**

**Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025**