

## **ARISAIG COMMUNITY TRUST**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2017**

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Arisaig Community Trust.

Thank you all for attending tonight and please remember that Trust Members are very welcome to attend Directors' meetings, which are held monthly in the LSIC. Dates are advertised on the Trust Website and on the joint ACT and Community Council Noticeboard beside the Old Library Restaurant. I extend an invitation to you to join us whenever you can. It is important to us as Directors, that the wider community is represented as fully as possible – we need your commitment, your support and your fresh ideas!

#### **Current situation**

**Directors:** Hugh Cameron (Chair)      Julie Gordon (Vice Chair)  
                  Gordon Stewart (Treasurer)    Kate Mundell  
                  Iain Macniven: Pamela King

**Minute Secretary:** Rosemary Bridge

A third of our directors are required to stand down each year. On this occasion, Gordon Stewart and Heather MacDougall are standing down on health grounds. After a number of rewarding and interesting years with the Trust, I am also standing down.

Pamela King as a co-opted director also requires to stand down but will be standing for election.

#### **UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN AND ONGOING SINCE LAST AGM ON 12 DECEMBER 2016.**

##### **Land Sea and Islands Centre**

The LSIC continues to be a popular attraction in the village and visitor numbers are increasing year on year with turnover up by 26% on last year. New items have been added to the collection which keeps the centre interesting, even to those who have previously visited. Comments in the visitors' book are very positive, as are reviews on the acclaimed travel website – Trip Advisor. From April to October the centre is now open for 7 days, with longer opening hours and is increasingly generating income and going from strength to strength. Our sincere thanks must go to centre manager, Alison Stewart, for her excellent management of the facility, and to her group of volunteers for their continued interest and terrific support. We always welcome new volunteers so anybody who may be interested, please do contact Alison Stewart or any of our Directors, to offer your services.

##### **Playing Field**

The playing field continues to be well used by the children of the village. Since the last AGM we have installed the second part of the climbing frame and completed the stepping stone logs. For safety reasons rubber matting has been laid around the climbing frame and stepping stones. The storage shed on the field has been re roofed, following the

deterioration of the previous one. At present the field is in good condition and this is due to the volunteers cutting the grass on a weekly basis and the fertilising and reseeded that has had to be carried out. Our thanks to all those involved. Good short and long term maintenance is now the key to ensuring that the facility continues to be a quality asset in the village. It is hoped that shortly, some new tools and equipment will be purchased to assist with the upkeep. On this note, directors will always be happy to accept additional volunteer assistance so please do make contact if you feel you are able to do this.

### **Public Toilets**

The village has benefited greatly from the efforts made to avoid closure of our toilets and the facility continues to be welcomed by tourists and business people alike, as they pass through the village. The Trust continues to strive to maintain the building to a high standard. Significant improvements have been carried out to the disabled toilet in order to make it compliant with new regulations. I would like at this point to thank most sincerely, Peter Fleming for advising the trust and carrying out upgrading work, free of charge. Thanks also to Julie Gordon for overseeing the project. As the toilets are old there are also running repairs required throughout the year to keep the toilets serviceable. Thank you also to our hard working toilet attendants who keep the facility very clean and tidy.

The Highland Council "Comfort Scheme" will continue to be paid to the Trust to help cover the cost of running the facility and the donations box also makes a contribution. However, notwithstanding this, as there will be no increase in the Comfort Scheme payments, it is imperative that the Trust continues to look at additional ways of funding this critical facility. We would welcome, therefore, any ideas/thoughts that any of you may have. You can either call/write to a director or leave a note at the LSIC.

### **Pension Scheme**

Since our 2016 AGM the pension scheme which the trust was obliged to set up, is now up and running.

### **Grant Applications**

Applications continue to be actively processed to fund future planned projects. This in itself, is a very time consuming task. I would like, therefore, to thank directors for their time and effort in this regard. There is disappointment on the occasions when the application is unsuccessful. Equally we are delighted when there is a positive outcome.

### **West Highland Community Rail Partnership**

With the trust being involved with the station adoption scheme, they have improved the look of the station with new planters and benches. Currently we are looking into the possibility of uses for the old signal box for community purposes.

### **ACT Website**

As mentioned last year, we are pleased to be able to report that the contract for setting up a LSIC and an ACT Website has been awarded to MacDonald Orr Design. The excellent LSIC site is now live and our thanks to Alison Stewart for the key role she played in working with the designers. The ACT site is almost complete thanks to input from Pamela King and Jain

Macniven and we look forward to viewing this very soon. We hope that you will take some time to look at both sites and perhaps give directors some feedback on them.

### **COMMUNITY FUNDED HOUSING**

Our directors, led by Pamela King, have recently been investigating the possibility of ACT progressing a Community Housing project in Arisaig. Following a meeting with the Communities Co-ordinator of the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust, guidance and useful information on how to begin taking this forward was provided. Presently there are plans to carry out a survey to establish housing needs within the village. We are looking into the community right to buy legislation with a view to purchasing some land for the project. We have, of course notified the land owner of our interest. I would like to say however, that we are in the very early stages of progressing this potential initiative.

### **LSIC EXTENSION**

As you will be aware, plans for an extension to the LSIC were drawn up some time ago and had been made available for public viewing. However, following a recent meeting with a Sam Foster Architects representative, directors discussed proposals for changes to the external finishes to the LSIC plans previously drawn up. Two options were approved by the committee and both will be made available for public consultation early in the new year.

### **CAR PARK/STORAGE FACILITY**

ACT has plans to extend the existing car park and also to build a storage facility/workshed at the LSIC. It is hoped too to put in a car charging point at this location. Existing funds will be used to finance these projects. This include a sum from the Gower Trust. Additionally the LSIC was pleased to receive a donation from the family of the late Bill Henderson. It has been suggested that the workshed could be called Bill's Shed, as Bill was involved in the early stages of the setting up of the centre.

### **EVENTS**

**Talks** A number of interesting and well attended events are hosted annually at the LSIC. They are advertised well in advance and we invite you all to come and join us on these.

#### **During 2016/17**

**Celebrating the centenary of the Arisaig branch of the SWRI - 17 July onwards** This is a temporary exhibition celebrating the centenary of the Arisaig SWRI. It is interesting to note that Arisaig was one of the first ten institutes to be formed in the whole of Scotland.

**Rambles Round Rhu** - A very interesting and well attended talk on the historic settlements on the Rhu Peninsula

**A Greenfingers Planting workshop** with Becky Dacre from Shielfoot Organics

**Otters in the West** - a talk by local naturalist, Aly McCluskie

**A Butterfly day** This was an enjoyable presentation by Tom Prescott from Butterfly Conservation, on Scottish west coast butterflies and moths. It was part of Butterfly Scotland's Big Butterfly Count

**Bonfire Night - 5 November 2017** A well attended evening with an excellent bonfire and refreshments and snacks provided by Arisaig Primary School.

- and of course our traditional and popular **Christmas Cheer weekend**

The following community groups used the LSIC for one or more of their meetings:

**The Arisaig Primary School Parent Council**

**The SWRI Embroidery Group**

**The Bridge Club**

**The Gardeners' Club**

The Centre also regularly hosts the monthly ACT board meetings.

We supported the inaugural, successful, Mallaig Book Festival in 2016

**Christmas Cheer** - this will be held the first week-end in December (2017) at the LSIC so we look forward to you all joining us here. There will be a glass of mulled wine to enjoy and a good choice of Christmas gifts will be available.

**Christmas Fayre** Remember - Thursday 30th November, 3 - 7 pm, in the Astley Hall with festive snacks and refreshments provided in aid of Arisaig Community Trust.

**Village Picnic** For a range of reasons it was not possible to hold the village picnic in 2017. However, it is hoped that this can be considered again for 2018.

**Garden Trail** The popular event did not take place this year. However, ACT will embark on a joint project with the Arisaig and District Gardening Club to reinstate the trail for 2018.

## **CLOSURE**

I would like to thank you all once again for your attendance and also to personally offer my thanks to you for your support over the last few years. **I would like to thank Gordon Stewart for his commitment and dedication to ACT over the last 9 (??) years. He is standing down on health grounds and we wish him a speedy recovery.** Etc etc. I look forward to informal discussions over some refreshments at the end of the evening. In the meantime, I will now hand over to Gordon Stewart our Treasurer, who will provide some further detail on the ACT finances.

## **Playing Field**

The playing field continues to be well used by the children of the village. Since the last AGM we have installed the second part of the climbing frame and connected the supporting stone legs. For safety reasons further matting has been laid around the climbing frame and stepping stones. The storage shed on the field has been re-roofed, following the