

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting (AGM)  
Arisaig Community Trust (ACT)**

7 June 2021

7pm

Online Zoom Meeting

1. **Board Members Present:** Iain Macniven (IM), Julie Gordon (JG), Rosemary Bridge (RB), Steve Westwood (SW), Olivia Bridge (OB), Kieran Logan (KL), Jess Logan (JL).  
**Others Present:** Pamela King (PK) - ACT Housing Project Officer, Zoe Pritchard (ZP) - ACT Secretary; 7 additional members of the local community.  
**Apologies:** Alison Stewart, Gordon Stewart.
2. **Minutes of last AGM meeting (9<sup>th</sup> March 2020):** proposed by SW, seconded by IM.
3. **Matters Arising: SEE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT (Appendix 1)**
4. **Chairperson Report: SEE APPENDIX 1.** The report was presented as a pre-recorded video shown to all those present at the meeting.
5. **Treasurer Report: SEE APPENDIX 2.** The report was presented as a pre-recorded video shown to all those present at the meeting.
6. **Election of Directors:** JG stood down from the Board and retired from her role as Chair. The Board thanked her for all her work and commitment over the years. IM and RB stood down by rotation (longest serving) and were re-elected. JL and KL stood down (both were appointed since the last AGM) and were re-elected. One new director nomination was received after the closing date. The nominee was contacted prior to the meeting to be notified that their application would be considered and to attend the meeting. **ACTION: ZP** to contact the nominee and invite to the next Board meeting as not present at the AGM.
7. **AOCB:** Noted that the LSIC will need to encourage extra volunteers if the Centre is to open every day. The goal posts on the playing field will need replacing and/or fixing at some point soon.

**Meeting ended 8pm**

**APPENDIX 1 – CHAIRPERSON REPORT**

The last year has been a challenging one for ACT, and as many anticipated, funding streams dried up, we learned some new vocabulary - lockdown, shielding, furlough and had many learning curves! We found some new funders who helped keep us afloat - special thanks to Rosemary and Olivia Bridge and Gary Reavell in particular, for time spent applying and reporting back on the required detail to funders. The Heritage Emergency fund, Adapt and Thrive, Business Support Fund and the furlough scheme were invaluable in ensuring that we could pay our staff their full salary.

We value our staff and had realised that some of the contracts we were using were not fit for purpose. We have utilised the services of Croner, a professional HR company to ensure that we are compliant with working times regulations and the latest employment advice. On top of this we have policies for our large volunteer "army" to ensure that everyone is valued in the same way. We are ultimately aiming to apply for the Volunteer Friendly Award., but due to Covid, this has not been possible so far. We continue to look for better ways to keep everyone up to date with Trust activities.

Arisaig Community Trust – Land, Sea & Islands Centre, Arisaig PH39 4NU

Email: [info@arisaigcommunitytrust.org.uk](mailto:info@arisaigcommunitytrust.org.uk)

Registered Scottish Charity SC040977

## **Staff and Volunteers**

In the last year we have had to say goodbye to our cleaners Pauline Cunningham and Claire Wortley as they moved to pastures new. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank them both for their hard work in making the public toilets the valued asset we have today. We are currently looking for a replacement for Claire. Alison Stewart resigned in January this year and will be a big miss at the Land Sea and Islands Centre. She and Gordon gave so much of themselves to making the Centre the success it is today. Thanks to all our volunteers who are looking forward to returning when the Centre reopens on May 21st. Our new manager, Rachel Crawley, is already known to many of the volunteers and is a welcome addition to the team. We are sure she will be very successful in her new role.

Our Housing Project Officer Pamela King has the unenviable task of delivering on affordable housing on Station road. There have been many hurdles along the way; some due to Covid but other delays from legal issues and last minute issues with land ownership. However, we have managed to buy the shorefront land, playing field, orchard and wee play park. These areas will be mentioned in more detail later.

Our Eco Manager Alison O'Rourke was unable to meet the objectives of the current project because of Covid but the Climate Challenge Fund have been very supportive. Some of these were green transport, textile recycling and upcycling but she has also worked with local adults and children in video film making and a photography competition. She has purchased two more e-bikes and her project covers the cost of the EV chargers at the moment. She has set up a group "Arisaig Eco Friends" who will help secure the long term legacy of the Eco Project.

Our secretary Zoe Pritchard keeps us all right and has been a huge support in making sure we are all becoming better organised and have the organisational detail we need for a firm foundation. She has set up Easyfundraising and Recycle for Charity (for used inkjet cartridges) on our website and we also have a donate button.

Our volunteer Board is very dedicated but sometimes other priorities arise and we have had to say good bye to Gary Reavell and Peter Fleming in the last year. We are very glad to have Kieran and Jess Logan join us recently and look forward to working with them.

## **Land, Sea and Islands Centre (LSIC)**

Our main source of income had to close last year and needed measures put in place to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and the public. All this had to be paid for by grant funding - often available within a limited time period. Sourcing supplies/builders etc when all were in short supply was another challenge!! You will see obvious changes outside the building. Thanks to Ross Milligan for making our covered area, Steve Westwood for ensuring the gravel area is now wheelchair accessible and Ian MacQueen for restoring the porter's barrow.

Rachel is working hard to reopen on May 21st with limited hours initially until she knows which volunteers are able to help out. Everyone is excited to get back, even though it will be strange at first! The EV chargers have been well used in between lockdowns. The Board will look at the merits of charging users either before the current Eco project ends or by next March.

## **Playing field and toilets**

The playing field had to be shut for months last year. Maintenance was continued by a small group of volunteers using an adapted lawnmower which is now a scarifier!!

The shed, picnic tables were given lick of paint and new gate latches welded on - hopefully this will prevent the deer getting in as the gates shut more easily now. Pam MacDonald, Active schools co-ordinator, has held some organised football and play sessions. We hope to have our usual rota of grass cutting volunteers back this summer. Thanks to all who look after this well used area.

The community orchard has had more fruit trees planted, deer fencing is now in place and a heavy duty trimmer purchased to control the reeds and bracken. There are also more apple trees in the playing field. The toilets needed a lot of work to make them safer to use for customers and staff. PPE, risk assessments, cleaning schedules and a contactless donation system. We have just had self opening door mechanisms installed. Thanks to David Smith for doing this.

Volunteers have painted inside and outside the building. Thanks very much to Gill and Arthur Whittaker, Kieran and Jess Logan for doing this!

## **Community Land**

Pamela King has worked tirelessly to deliver on the purchase of the shorefront and playing field /orchard land. Steve Westwood has been leading on the community consultation and implementation of the shorefront improvements. You will see the new planters opposite the glass recycling. He is liaising with ADCC regarding the area.

There was much support for an Aire and business park just outside the village but unfortunately the land purchase was unsuccessful.

The housing project almost ground to a halt during the Covid lockdown, with further delays from lawyers, and just before completion, some land was found to be owned by Transport Scotland. There is now further delay - hugely frustrating for all concerned.

Pamela has secured funding from the Quaker Housing Trust, a loan from Ecology bank and the Rural Housing Fund to deliver on the housing project. Ken MacDonald's team is ready to start construction if the sale can be completed soon. The price of building materials has increased since Covid - yet another challenge. The Communities Housing Trust are an invaluable source of information and support to us.

## **Arisaig Station**

We have agreed Heads of Terms with Scotrail about leasing the whole of the station building. The next step is to consult the community about the use of this space and seek funding for a Development Officer and capital funding. We are awaiting a response from our application to the Coastal communities fund. Volunteers are needed to maintain the planters - any takers?!

## **Renewables**

CARES conducted a survey on possible sources of renewable energy. The report is available on our website.

## **10 Year Vision and Plan**

The last community consultation has now expired with most of the objectives met. We have been exploring ways of funding a new one and will keep you posted on developments. In supporting the Scottish Tourism Action Group (STAG), we have been seeking ways of managing the increased tourist numbers whilst attracting funds for the community. Unfortunately the Aire project has so far been unsuccessful as we were unable to purchase affordable land. There is widespread support for such a venture so who knows what the future holds?

Whether a project succeeds or fails, there is a huge time commitment on behalf of Board directors and staff that proves their dedication in delivering what improvements the community support.

I will be stepping down as Chair and will miss all of ACT. You are all very special people and I have been privileged to have worked alongside you for the last 8 years.

## APPENDIX 2 – TREASURER REPORT

### FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

This report is based on ACT's examined accounts for the financial year to March 31, 2020. These can be forwarded on request, electronically or hard copy. They are on the ACT Website and additionally, there is a brief summary of finances in the monthly minutes which are displayed on the noticeboard and also on the ACT website. Figures submitted to the Accountants for examination for the financial year ended March 2021, will be available, as is usual practice, at a later date – early autumn 2021.

Prior to closure in March 2020, the LSIC continued to attract an ever-increasing number of visitors and this promoted income levels, with both shop sales and generous donations augmenting our bank balances quite significantly. We attribute this to the efficient way in which the centre has been run over the years and there have been many complimentary comments, in our visitors' book and on Trip Advisor. Therefore, many thanks to our former Manager, Alison Stewart and her exemplary team of local volunteers. While planning permission has been in place for the building of an extension to the LSIC, estimated costs have been prohibitively high and expected plans for the project have not materialised.

The community run toilets continued to be a most welcome facility in the village and we are indebted to the staff members who so efficiently run them. Donations for the period of this report were substantial, and along with the £200 monthly Highland Council Comfort Scheme payments, made an important contribution to operational costs. A contactless card system for donations has also been put in place.

Ongoing maintenance of the Playingfield included regular grass cutting, re-seeding, fertilising etc. This much appreciated work was carried out by a rota of volunteers, thus reducing operational costs.

Funding was successfully secured from the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) to acquire land from the MacMillan Trust for a mix of affordable housing and self-build plots in the village. A Project Officer employed by ACT and funded by the SLF and the Highland Small Communities Trust, will oversee the project. Additionally, SLF monies were secured to deliver improvements to the village shorefront (car parking, refuse management and an improved environment/infrastructure) for visitors and residents.

ACT secured a share of funding made available through The Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) for a new eco project to run for two years until March 2022. The Arisaig Eco Project Manager plans to deliver interesting initiatives, training events and workshops during the year.

In summary, it should be noted that while the bank balances reported in our minutes and end of year figures may appear very healthy, most of our funds are restricted, thus linked to specific projects. For example: "Keep Scotland Beautiful" total entry of £30,345 (2020) is for CCF projects only. Thus, each year we must take action to gain extra donations and income to rectify this, concentrating income generating projects.

The financial year 2020-21 was a challenging one for the Arisaig Community Trust. I would like therefore, to touch on some points arising which pertain to this period. **In March 2020, plans to put on the thinking caps re income generation projects had, of necessity, to be put on hold due to national circumstances.** During the first national lockdown the LSIC and community toilets, closed in March 2020. The government furlough scheme provided salary support of 80% and ACT topped up the remaining 20%. The LSIC, museum aspect entitled ACT to apply for support from a range of funding bodies - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Resilience, Museums and Galleries Scotland, National Heritage Emergency Fund and the Adapt and Thrive programme. These collective funds (totalling £40,000+) allowed the purchase of all PPE equipment, upgrading of Bill's Shed to include a water supply (in progress), erection of a LSIC outside waiting area, operational costs (electricity, insurances, broadband etc) and also the salary of the LSIC Manager.

Arisaig Community Trust – Land, Sea & Islands Centre, Arisaig PH39 4NU

Email: [info@arisaigcommunitytrust.org.uk](mailto:info@arisaigcommunitytrust.org.uk)

Registered Scottish Charity SC040977

Applications had to be specific and accurately detailed prior to submission with a report sent later outlining how the funds had been used. Proof spends via Invoices, bank statements etc were mandatory. Despite the level of bureaucracy involved, this financial support was greatly appreciated and has allowed ACT to cover costs and begin the process of moving forward, albeit much later than had been anticipated. Nevertheless in order to cover our costs we still need to focus on how our assets can generate income so the thinking caps need to go on again!

Very many thanks to everybody!