

ARISAIG COMMUNITY TRUST – AGM

TREASURER’S 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 Playing Field 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 - 3rd 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.

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!