

## Minutes of Steering Group meeting 08/02/10

Held at Cul Mor, Elphin from 7.30pm

Present: Jan, Brian, Rosie, Will, Wendy, Russell

1] Chair – Jan  
Minute-taker – Rosie

2] Feedback from previous meeting

a] access to school/legal position

George Farlowe [Councillor] had sent email round to whole of Elphin list before Christmas stating no problem with access providing we write to Colin Anderson [Highland Council North Property Manager] and “obtain a letter from him to cover any eventualities”. We discussed that state of the building and felt it would be useful to ask Highland Council to send in a plumber and electrician to ensure its' safety before the public meeting [particularly in regard to the effects of the extreme cold on the water supply!].

**Rosie to write to CA once date of public meeting confirmed – text to be circulated to group prior to sending**

From same email, Council are unlikely to force sale of school on to open market unless building becomes derelict – there is also a “burden” on this building which may mean it reverts to the Estate if it falls into complete disuse.

b] contacts

We have been in touch with Jean Urquhart and George Farlowe about the public meeting. Jan had spoken to Jean recently and she would like to meet us before the public meeting, agreed to invite her to the next steering group, or to go and see her at the Ceilidh Place.

GF had mentioned the HIE Community Land Unit in above email, agreed to invite Neil Gerrard to next steering group – see article on page 21 of Ullapool News 050210 for what this unit does.

**Rosie to write to Neil Gerrard**

c] other

Jan raised the issue of recruiting more members for the steering group. It was agreed just to try and involve more people on specific issues for now. For instance, **Tim** has done some background work on cost issues, so he and Wendy will continue to work on this area. **Simon** could continue to provide help with the legal issues [as he has already done admirable research in this area].

**Jan will approach Kay and Stuart [Charlton]** to see if they would be willing to help.

3] Date for public meeting

Proposed date **13<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

From 6pm – access to building from say 4pm for people to look round.

**Rosie to write to Jean Urquhart to see if this date possible for her** [also to ask for date/time for her to meet steering group]

## 4] Agenda and structure for public meeting

Using Simons' outline and the points we raised at last group meeting-

- 1] General introduction/background/history – **Russell**
- 2] The idea – turning it into a village hall/community centre – **Jan**  
comparison with other similar projects – **Wendy/Tim**
- 3] Making it happen – raising money/grants – **Clive Shephard**  
renewables – **Will**  
legal structure – **Simon**
- 4] Does the community support it? - **Jean**

## Points raised:-

How to present the idea of a limited company structure

Cost comparison with running costs of Lochinver Village Hall

Renewables – how to steer focus away from wind turbine/negativity

**Agreed that we say our remit is confined to within the boundaries of the school grounds** [this rules out having a wind turbine and can also deflect negative debate about the access way/parking area]

Staging revenue raising event

Sources of support/grants both for running costs and repairs – Clive

Friends of Elphin School – annual subscription, contact with past pupils

Insurance – mixed messages, some charities do pay some don't, needs more research

What are the likely running costs?

What are the biggest expenses – probably electricity [heating] and insurances

We need more information on likely costs to have answers to questions from floor but not to give out too much detail in presentations as this may be offputting and generate negative debate?

There is also the question of what will happen to the renewable energy budget after the cut off point in April.

**Wendy will continue to work with Tim on finance/costings** and ask if he's prepared to do a short presentation under item 2.

**Wendy to contact Alex Dickson at Achins Bookshop** about Lochinver Village Hall running costs and insurances

**Russell to contact NFU** about insurances

## Structure

Guillotine for the meeting of around 40 minutes

Keep the presentations for each item short, punchy and positive

Chair has power to enforce time limits on each item

Tea and biscuits will be provided to people while they are seated

A discussion session will follow [with a time limit]

and a show of hands asked for at the end of this as to whether the meeting is in favour of going forward with the project.

The agenda will be circulated prior to the meeting and we must make sure people understand the steering group is in favour.

5] List of contacts for public meeting

Lots of names were put forward. Agreed to write generic letter which will be circulated to group members for them to send on to targeted names [see list below] without alteration or additional wording.

**Jan will write generic letter and circulate copy.**

**Contact list**

John Thurso MP – **Brian**

Ministers – Free Church [Lochinver] - **Jan**

Church of Scotland [Scourie] - **Jan**

Mountaineering group – **Kay and Stuart/Jan**

Dave and Jenny at Elphin Tea Rooms – **Jan**

Cavers – **Russell**

Doctors – **Russell**

Knockan Grazings Committee clerk – Ray Strang – **Russell**

Mike and Kate at the Alt – **Russell**

Assynt Community Council – **Wendy**

The Vestseys – **Tim/Wendy**

Andy Summers – **Rosie**

Sue Agnew SNH – **Rosie**

Peter Voy, Ledmore Estate – **Rosie**

Lochinver Police – **Will**

Elphin Grazings Committee Clerk, Iain MacKenzie – **Wil**

Iain Bryan – Ledmore Lodge Estate, via Iain MacKenzie – **Will**

There was a debate about the role of the pub in our community. The general feeling was that the proposed use of the school as a village hall will be complementary to the pub and not in competition with it.

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6] Publicity

Leaflet Elphin again

Posters on noticeboard, phone box, poles [if laminated]

Articles in Ullapool News, Assynt News, Northern Times

[if 13<sup>th</sup> March probably missed deadline for Am Bradach but can always write report for publication after meeting]

**Copy for leaflet – Jan**

**Leaflet deliivery – Brian**

**Picture of school – Rosie to Jan**

**Press articles – Will**

**Poster enlargement A4-A3 – Russell**

7] Preparation of building

Agreed to leave to next meeting

8] Any Other Business

Can everyone make sure that if they are sending something on behalf of the steering group a copy it goes to us al?

If replying to an email, please trim emails so that the recipient doesn't end up with loads of copies of the same messages!

**Next Meeting**

**22<sup>nd</sup> February at 7.30pm, provisionally at Cul Mor**