

ECC_Minutes 2026 01 15

Present: Sara Twaddle, Alistair Danter, Chris Whatley, Andrew Prendegast, Sandra Wilson, Roddy Macfarlane, Karen Pettit, Billy Shanks

In attendance: James Mountner

Apologies: Kenny Mackinnon, John Boyle

Guest speaker: Elizabeth Macleod Communities Housing Trust (CHT)

Declarations of Interest: Chris Whatley in relation to Potter Apprenticeship 2nd year funding application

1. Minutes of last meeting approved with 1 amendment
2. Matters arising:
 - All Directors have now received self verification codes from Co.s House, these are now held in ECC files. New Directors once approved by ECC Board will have to apply for their own self verification code before becoming a full Board member, instructions how to do this held on file.
 - Second Signatory for RBS account – ongoing KP / ST to contact Stuart Whatley Co. Sec
 - Funding application Dev Worker via DTAS – application not successful due to over subscription
 - Remembrance Day event / Xmas lunch, both events were successful. Meeting discussed increased cost of xmas lunch + noted:
 - The event is a legitimate use of ECC funds under the constitution
 - The logistical challenge of doing it in the Community Hall at a potentially cheaper price would be significant
 - The money is being spent in a local business
 - It is an important annual social event for the community
 - Agreed to continue
3. Support available through CHT – see appendix 1, CHT can assist / act on behalf of communities at every stage of housing development from enquiry through to construction and management.
4. Housing Paper – the Role of ECC. Following input / info received from CHT + Paper produced by the Development Officer – appendix 2 meeting agreed ECC position as follows:

- In order to be able to ensure an allocations policy that is favourable to those with a link to the community, ECC needs to maintain a degree of involvement in any development. If THC allocation policy is enforced this is a points based system where links with immediate community carry limited weight. ECC's concern is that local people should have priority and that there is also an option for local businesses to have properties for staff
- ECC does not have the management competence or capacity to carry out a housing development + subsequent management itself so a partnership for this will be required. This includes development for affordable Housing and Mid Market rent.
- Partnership could involve a range of organisations; Highland Council, Community Housing Trust, Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association, Highland Housing Alliance (Mid Market rental properties), Infrastructure developer eg Windfarm developer, Building contractor working on public utilities etc
- Purchase of the land from THC would ensure greatest form of control, issue would be access to grant funding and / or use of ECC Windfarm Benefit investment Funds. It was noted that historically when ECC had been offered funding from the Landfund to purchase service plots from the form private owner and had had to decline the offer, the landfund had informed ECC that the door would still be open for any future application. ACTION AP to check with Landfund potential for an ECC application.

5. Master plan update

- Waiting for update from Rural Design ACTION AP to follow up
- AGM update will report progress but not a substantive item as discussion has to be led by THC as land owners who are paying for the plan.

6. Shop update

- Building redesign has taken place following visits to a number of other local community shops that identified significant design requirements
- Following design approval architect will submit design for planning
- THC have agreed to continue funding for the design process
- Community consultation will include; Agenda item at AGM, Drop in event + a questionnaire to be circulated to all households to be returned to the pottery. Aim of consultation will be to identify factors such as what is sold in the shop, opening hours etc.

- Meeting noted that it is still the intention of ECC to run and manage the shop as an arms length entity from ECC as opposed to leasing it to a private individual, this is to ensure that it is run as a local shop for local benefit.
 - ACTION KP to develop consultation questionnaire
7. Links Path, planning permission still outstanding, THC are considering taking over the project
8. Village Centre – Main groundworks complete, installation of seating + archway to be carried out in coming months, all work has to be completed by end of March '26. AD has contacted Louise Kerr (original designer) to develop an installation spec for timber seating provided by Caledonia play. Edinbane Primary school children have provided art work for metal bench and archway design being carried out by Dave Salt.
9. Administrator recruitment:
- Board approved Job Description
 - Ad to be placed in WHFP + circulated locally + via other community trusts / Co.s on Skye + SLCVO
 - Interviews to be carried out by ST + CW
10. Finance and Admin report noted, key points included:
- Annual expenditure is well within budget
 - 1/4ly VAT return made, no monies due
 - Annual account submitted to Co.s House
 - Annual return made to OSCR
 - Lyndale Farm had requested a copy of ECC Public Liab Insurance as Karen's Track runs over their ground + they are having to update their own public liab insurance; it has been supplied.
 - ECC has been represented at local Community Trust / Co. meetings held with THC + HIE under the SARF (Skye and Raasay Futures) banner
 - ECC has been represented with other Trusts, Community Co.s and Community Councils in relation to development of a 'Skye Wide' Community Benefit / Investment fund arising from any windfarm developments. These meeting have been managed to date by HIE.
11. Wind farm updates - nothing to report

12. DATE of AGM – provisionally 19th Feb ACTIONS:

- AD to check with CSM accountants to see if they can make the date to present the annual accounts
- Once date confirmed notice in WHFP + Community Newsletter
- Pre meeting Board meet up 12th Feb
- Check hall availability – ST? KP?
- BS has now completed 6 years as a Director so will need to stand down for a minimum period of a year
- Nominations for new directors to be included in Newsletter

13. Applications

- Edinbane Pottery 2nd year apprenticeship funding £4,000 - approved
- Rob Welton – Marine operator qualifications £ 2,598 – approved

14. Playpark maintenance – last official inspection was 2022, an inspection is recommended every 3 years. ACTION BS to pass on contact to AD / KM to organise

15. Village Maintenance – Current contract with Peter Nicholson has a year to run, contract includes Playpark + other public areas in the village, Karens Track + length of old road running parallel to main road from Arnisort to Fanks Road end.

16. AOCB – James Mountner’s application to join the Board approved ACTION JM to apply to Co.s House for Identity Certification, once complete he will be come a full Board member. JM requested to pass on his ID code + copy of Passport or driving licence to AD once available.

17. DONM 12th Feb

Community Led Housing in Scotland: RouteMap overview



More resources at: www.chtrust.co.uk/routemap

STAGE 1

ENQUIRY

- ⇒ Establish clear aspirations and requirements
- ⇒ Information and advice
- ⇒ Assess need for affordable housing and complementary opportunities
- ⇒ Consider likely funding solutions
- ⇒ Determine capacity and support/advice needed
- ⇒ Community and partner engagement

WATCH
Balmaha case study



STAGE 2

FEASIBILITY

- ⇒ Housing and Business Needs Survey
- ⇒ Land audit for availability of land (no land available – call for sites)
- ⇒ Feasibility/development funding
- ⇒ Technical appraisal of site and utilities
- ⇒ Business Plan, including initial Allocation Policy & tenure mix
- ⇒ Community input and partner engagement

WATCH
Staffin case study



STAGE 3

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

- ⇒ Secure funding for land purchase and legal fees
- ⇒ Land acquisition (secure consents to develop land)
- ⇒ Consultants and Development Agent appointed
- ⇒ Agree procurement route to tender for project
- ⇒ Secure funding package for consents and construction project
- ⇒ Apply for planning and pre-construction consents

WATCH
Gairloch case study



STAGE 4

CONSTRUCTION

- ⇒ Appoint contractor
- ⇒ Start building
- ⇒ Continue liaison with contractor and community
- ⇒ Manage funding package drawdowns
- ⇒ Handover of properties
- ⇒ Community Open Day – celebrate!
- ⇒ End of defects period (12 months after handover)

WATCH
Ardgeal case study



STAGE 5

HOUSING MANAGEMENT

- ⇒ Advertise properties
- ⇒ Allocate properties
- ⇒ Legal agreements to rent or buy
- ⇒ Residents move into new homes
- ⇒ Ongoing housing management: allocations, rent collection and sales
- ⇒ Ongoing housing maintenance: repairs, long-term maintenance and annual servicing

WATCH
Applecross case study



APPENDIX 2

COISHLETTER MASTERPLAN & DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION PAPER FOR ECC BOARD – January 2026

Background

ECC has been pursuing the development of affordable housing on the Coishletter site for 10 years. Initially with private owners who needed to fulfil their affordable housing obligation, latterly with Highland Council who purchased part of the site in 2024. Successive AGM's and community meetings have backed the principle of housing development on this site, though a vocal minority of neighbouring residents are opposed. With Highland Council's purchase, all the housing developed on the 2.5 ha is set to be affordable, and ECC has an opportunity to be as involved in the development as we want to be.

Masterplanning Exercise

Highland Council have agreed that the Coishletter site can be developed in partnership with the Edinbane community and Communities Housing Trust (CHT), and to that end a masterplan will set out how the site should be developed over the next 5-20 years. The masterplan will inform the density, layout, settlement pattern, open space, materials and house sizes of future development proposals. Although not a statutory document it is still expected to be given material consideration in planning applications. Following on from the community consultation last month, Rural Design will now complete the initial draft of the masterplan for consideration by ECC and the Council.

Development Options

The masterplan will set out how the Coishletter site should be developed irrespective of who actually constructs the houses. The principle of housing development on that site is already settled in planning terms. The question for ECC is whether we want to be involved in the development process, and to what extent. Helen Cameron has confirmed that Highland Council would be open to a variety of approaches to delivering affordable homes at Coishletter including;

- Direct provision by Highland Council or a housing association.
- Private housing developer providing specific product (eg: mid-market rent)
- CHT delivering rent-to-buy on its own sites
- A Community-led housing project by ECC on all or part of the site (delivered either solely by ECC, or in partnership with a housing enabler like CHT or LSHA)

With a large site like Coishletter it is possible for more than one delivery method to be used on different parts of the site. The attached 'Collaborations Options' paper sets out a number of different scenarios.

Issues to be considered

There are a number of issues that need to be considered;

- Influence over allocations & tenure type: housing provided by the Council or LSHA will be allocated from the shared local housing list according to points. Local connection is a consideration, but other criteria take precedent. Community controlled housing can be subject to an allocation policy where local connection is given higher priority.

- Community-led housing projects can explore alternative delivery options like a housing co-operative, self-build group or housing for specific groups (eg: older residents).
- Community capacity to deliver and manage housing: acquiring sites, delivering housing and then owning and managing it would require a lot more hands-on involvement from ECC directors and volunteers. There are options for ECC to collaborate with either CHT or Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association (LSHA) to provide and manage housing, with varying degrees of control and responsibility. (See Collaboration Options)
- Site servicing and infrastructure costs: The initial phase of developing a new site like Coishletter will incur a disproportionate share of the up-front infrastructure costs (access road, water, drainage etc.) This will make the first phase relatively expensive per unit, influencing the minimum number of units needed to make the first phase viable. As a result any community-led housing project might be better 'piggy-backing' on a larger first phase undertaken by another developer/provider.
- Asset creation: ownership of development sites, and the houses built on them represent long-term community owned assets with a modest but stable income stream (once loans are paid off).
- Risk: the development process is inherently risky, prone to unforeseen delays and cost increases. Significant sums are involved and ECC will need to take on a 25-40 year loan for part of the finance package. Having an independent income source (windfarm benefit income) gives ECC some financial resilience.

The question of ECC's future involvement in the development of Coishletter is likely to come up during community meetings. It would be preferable for the Board to have had prior discussion and consideration of the issues involved so that there is a clear message going out to the community and partners regarding the role ECC intends to play. Even if the Board ultimately decides that ECC isn't going to take an active role in delivering housing at Coishletter, it is important that ECC supports and engages with the process.

AM Prendergast - Development Worker