

BLAIRMORE VILLAGE TRUST

Minutes of Board Meeting
held on Tuesday August 25th 2015
In Blairmore Hall at 7pm

PRESENT: Agnes Harvey (Chair); Pat Lynn; Catherine Rae; Lorraine Whitton; David McKenzie; Bill MacKinnon;

APOLOGIES: Carolyn Stewart.

IN ATTENDANCE: Jim King; Anne Garrod; Becky Hothersall (minutes).

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Agnes welcomed everyone and in particular local residents Jim King and Anne Garrod both of whom had been invited to attend as they had expressed a wish to become more involved in the work of the Trust. In addition Becky Hothersall was welcomed as she had accepted the role of Administrator for the Trust and was attending the meeting for the first time.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: No conflicts of interest were declared (but see Item 6).
2. MINUTES: Minutes of the meetings of the 24th June and 13th July were confirmed as correct and signed by the chair.
3. SUMMER EVENT FEEDBACK: Pat gave a summary of the event held on the 25th July which was agreed to be a great success, with fine weather and a good balance of activities and stalls. Participating stallholders were enthusiastic about the day and helped keep everything running smoothly. The raffle raised £1010. Catherine mentioned that Ross MacArthur had cut the grass for free before the event and it was agreed that a letter of thanks would be appropriate (**ACTION: Catherine**).

a) Choice of a name for the site

Following public consultation at the AGM and summer event, the three name options that had emerged as most popular were Blairmore Field, Blairmore Green and Blairmore Meadow. Very similar numbers of votes were cast for each. It was proposed that the next step is either to ballot the entire village or for the board to choose one of the names above. As some residents have reported strong feelings about the different options, it was felt that the community would think better of the decision if it were seen to be made democratically. However, a ballot would be time-consuming and interested parties have had two opportunities to participate already. It was decided to defer the decision until further progress has been made with the site. In the meantime it will be referred to as 'the landscaping project'.

b) Landscaping

The landscaping plan produced by Yvonne was exhibited at the summer event and was well received. Pat has arranged to have 2 laminated copies printed with one

being mounted on the land for general consideration. Consideration would also be given to the possibility of displaying a copy in Blairmore Hall.

The next steps are to produce a listing (spreadsheet) of the individual components and research costs for key elements. Local residents and businesses can then be invited to sponsor particular features or offer support in kind. **(ACTION: Becky)**.

c) Catherine circulated a magazine advert for a free network of community groups, organised by Keep Scotland Beautiful, which may be useful for BVT to join. Becky to research and report back **(ACTION Becky)**.

d) The presence of a septic tank under the proposed parking area was discussed. This poses a problem that will need to be resolved when landscaping takes place, and will necessitate joint working between BVT and the Blairmore Hall Committee. David will speak to Bruce Marshall to propose a joint specification be put together. This will allow an architect to draw up plans that take into account both the landscaping project and the planned hall renovations. Ideally a joint contact for the two groups could also be identified **(ACTION: David)**.

4. LAND PLOTS UPDATE: David had recently received confirmation from Stewart and Bennett Solicitors that he can draw the outlines of the individual plots for the Land Registry documents. He will do this over the next few days so that they can be sent to the solicitors. Householders will then need to respond to indicate whether they wish to use BVT's solicitors or their own agent. It was noted that if house owners do not wish to take ownership of the plots, BVT can dispose of them to other interested parties (e.g. neighbours). Pat said that although she had discussed the Land Plot disposals with the Regulator of Community Interest Companies, this had been a telephone conversation and it will be necessary now to have written confirmation that we can proceed with the transactions. This will need to be obtained before any transactions take place. David will put together a pack for Pat to send along with our letter to the Regulator **(ACTION: Pat and David)**.

The board registered its thanks to David, Lorraine and Pat and Bill for their involvement so far in this matter.

a) It was also noted that some of the plots may be affected by Japanese knotweed and technically this will become the responsibility of the new owners. However, it is recognised that a community-wide effort is organised by Benmore & Kilmun Community Development Trust who are already treating the problem areas.

b) Giant hogweed has also been recorded in the local area and there may be a need to raise awareness of this and in particular the health hazards associated with it. This would be placed on a future agenda following further research **(ACTION: Becky & Jim)**

5. GALLIMAUFREY UPDATE: BVT had registered its interest in purchasing Gallimaufrey gallery should a commercial buyer not emerge. Our solicitor has advised us 2-3 weeks ago that the gallery is under offer and has been taken off the market. Nothing further is currently known. It was agreed that BVT should contact Sylvia and Steve to congratulate them and wish them well, and to ask that our

expression of interest remain valid should the sale not proceed (**ACTION: Becky & Agnes**).

6. **ACTION ON TREES ON BVT LAND:** Before discussion commenced, Jim King declared an interest, in that one of the trees in question affected his property.

Following earlier consideration BVT had received quotes from two contractors to remove two trees on BVT land that are affecting neighbouring properties and where concerns had been raised with them. The group agreed to progress the quote from David Petro Forestry Services. It was noted that for future quotations, BVT should ask the contractor to specify what liability insurance is included. (**ACTION: Catherine** to respond to the two contractors accordingly).

7. **HAMILTON'S BRAE:** As previously requested and following neighbour concerns David had received 2 quotes for work on Hamilton's Brae. The site is affected by Japanese Knotweed and inaccessible due to overgrown shrubbery. The quotes submitted were for staged activity and it was agreed to proceed with the vegetation clearance initially. This will be followed by the knotweed treatment which would be undertaken by trained volunteers in conjunction with Benmore & Kilmun Community Development Trust. It was agreed that the quote from Ross MacArthur would be accepted (vegetation clearance element). It was clarified that trees growing out of walls will not be removed, in order to avoid the risk of causing structural damage. Thereafter a site visit would be made by the Trust board to consider any further action that may be appropriate to reinstate pedestrian access. The Trust are clear that the Brae would be unsuitable for vehicle access. **ACTION: David to contact Ross MacArthur.**

8. CORRESPONDENCE

a) Emails from Ron Fraser were discussed, regarding overgrown vegetation on BVT land. Catherine agreed to ask David Petro Forestry Services (DPFS) to trim the verges on the two triangular plots linked to Whites Brae & High Road while carrying out the removal of the trees (Item 6). **ACTIONS: Catherine to contact DPFS; Agnes/Becky to update Mr Fraser.**

b) BT OpenReach contacted BVT regarding a wayleave agreement to access equipment situated on the triangle above White's Brae. David has been trying to contact them; when he gets through he will also check whether any fees are due to BVT under this agreement (**ACTION: David**).

c) Catherine had received some information from SEPA regarding the septic tank (Item 3). Becky agreed to scan the document, which will be shared as needed when the landscaping project progresses (**ACTION: Becky**).

9. **VILLAGE HALL UPDATE:** Bruce Marshall sent apologies. Lorraine and David are both unable to attend the next Hall meeting (Sunday 6th September) but David will speak to them beforehand (**ACTION: David**). BVT has agreed to run a tombola for the Village Hall fundraising fair on Saturday 26th September. This will include a contribution to the prizes, and personnel.

10. RE-AFFIRMATION OF PRIORITIES FOR 2015-16: This item was deferred until the next meeting.

11. PUBLIC FEEDBACK ON SANTA EVENT: There was a large and supportive public response to the article in the Dunoon Observer about the Santa event coming to an end. Jim noted that it was a great event and would be sadly missed. David reported that the Dunoon Regeneration Project group (set up on Facebook) had expressed a desire to take over the event. It was agreed that BVT representatives would meet them to explain what would be needed and, if this group were able to generate sufficient numbers of committed volunteers, to pass on advice and expertise. A likely option would be a restructured Christmas Fayre type of event, in which case BVT would be interested in having a presence. **ACTION: Agnes** to meet with Dunoon Regeneration Project representatives on behalf of BVT.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

a) Affordable housing. David reported that work being carried out by Benmore and Kilmun Community Development Trust includes looking at need, and potential sites, within Blairmore, amongst other locations. The Scottish Land Fund would like to see a group with more active members pursuing this matter. It was agreed that BVT is committed to being involved in this as part of the community action plan and would be happy to contribute to a working group with BKCVT to this end.

b) Correspondence had been received from the Lottery that appeared to confuse the Hall Trust with BVT. This had now been clarified with the Lottery's representative.

c) Several items have been donated by local residents for raffle or auction. In particular a spectacular original commissioned painting had been donated by Winton Miller. It was recognised that this was a very generous and valuable donation and that a letter of thanks would be sent to him. It was agreed that the board would think about how to make best use of the donations and Pat would co-ordinate thoughts on this; in the meantime Pat will write to Winton Miller to thank him. (**ACTION: Pat**).

d) At the close of the meeting Anne and Jim confirmed that they would be happy to formally join the board of BVT and their contribution was greatly welcomed.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 27th October at 7pm in Blairmore Hall subject to availability of Hall (**ACTION: Becky**)