

# BLAIRMORE VILLAGE TRUST

Minutes of Board Meeting  
held on Tuesday October 27<sup>th</sup> 2015  
In Blairmore Hall at 7pm

PRESENT: Agnes Harvey (Chair); Pat Lynn; Catherine Rae; Lorraine Whitton; David McKenzie; Bill MacKinnon; Carolyn Stewart; Jim King.

IN ATTENDANCE: Becky Hothersall (minutes).

1. APOLOGIES: Anne Garrod.
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: No conflicts of interest were declared.
3. MINUTES: Minutes of the meeting of the 25<sup>th</sup> August were confirmed as correct and signed by the chair.
4. MATTERS ARISING
  - a) *Actions from previous meeting not covered in agenda:*
    - i) Becky had investigated the Keep Scotland Beautiful 'It's your Neighbourhood' scheme. The scheme has closed for this year but could provide useful support for BVT in 2016. **Action: Becky** to place on agenda for first meeting of 2016.
    - ii) Gallimaufry will be taken over by its new owners in early November. **Action: Pat** to make contact with the new owners on behalf of BVT.
  - b) *Update on land plots*

David reported that his line drawings were acceptable to the lawyers and a surveyor would not be required. Offers are due to go out to frontagers within the week. The cost will be around £900 for those who participate and make use of the services of BVT's lawyer. The committee thanked David for all his work on this project. Pat confirmed that the Regulator of Community Interest Companies has now provided written confirmation that we can proceed with the transactions. A discussion followed about possible restrictions and permissions associated with use of the plots by their new owners. It was agreed that it is not BVT's place to advise – owners must take responsibility for investigating restrictions or responsibilities pertaining to their individual plots.
  - c) *Donation for Hamilton's Brae*

Shortly after the last meeting, a donation of £2000 was received specifically for the improvement of Hamilton's Brae. A letter of thanks has been sent to the donor, and Agnes and Pat met with him in October; the board formally acknowledged and minuted this generous donation.
5. JAPANESE KNOTWEED UPDATE
  - a) *Hamilton's Brae*

David provided an update on progress at this site. Contracts had been issued by BVT to Ross MacArthur (for vegetation clearance excluding knotweed) and Wise Property Group (for knotweed clearance). David had met the surveyors on site; the surveyor from Wise group identified a large clump of knotweed with roots extending under adjacent property. It was agreed that Ross MacArthur's team

would clear the remaining vegetation and David believed this had now been done. Wise have carried out one treatment of the knotweed with another to follow in late October/early November, followed by annual treatment for 5 years. They state that earth should not be removed during this time. Access to the site was discussed at the BVT meeting and it was thought that the Brae should be accessible with care by pedestrians following the imminent second treatment. There was a discussion about possible soil erosion due to water movement down the Brae following the vegetation clearance, which could lead to debris on the pavement. **Action: David** agreed to speak to Wise group to discuss whether some form of a barrier might be needed.

*b) The Field/Green*

Knotweed treatment on the field/green did not appear to have been completed this year by David Petro Forestry. Pat had contacted Ross Petro, who thought it had been done recently. The board agreed that if it was not completed this week, a letter should be written to Benmore, as a 3 year treatment plan was included within the conditions of sale of the land to BVT. David reported that a Blairmore resident had queried, via KCC, why BVT was spending money on treatment of knotweed on Hamilton's Brae rather than White's Brae. It was explained that BVT owns Hamilton's Brae but not White's Brae, and also there was concern about damage to neighbouring property. This led to a discussion about the High Road and David agreed he would prepare a briefing for KCC about BVT's plans for the High Road (see Item 9).

*c) Other BVT locations*

Jim mentioned the presence of knotweed opposite his house; David said that B&KCDT have been out spraying and that he will seek confirmation of areas already treated and proposed treatment plans. (**Action: David**).

## 6. TREES, SHRUBBERY & VEGETATION UPDATES

*a) Hamilton's Brae*

Covered in Item 5.

*b) Trees on the green and triangle*

Ross Petro had agreed with Pat that he would complete the tree clearance on the green/field and the triangle this week. (See also item 7c).

*c) High Road verges*

The board thanked Catherine for all her work clearing verges over the late summer.

## 7. THE LANDSCAPE PROJECT

*a) Update on joint architect*

David had spoken to Bruce Marshall about BVT and the Hall Trust co-employing<sup>[b1]</sup> an architect. Bruce was keen and will discuss the matter at the next committee meeting. Agnes mentioned that approximately £4000 was left over from a grant awarded to BVT by Investing in Ideas in 2013 (See Item 13). The money was intended for consultation and feasibility studies and Agnes had obtained permission from the funders to use it for further feasibility work – ideally in partnership with the Hall Trust. This must be done by March 2016, leaving 5 months to commission someone. **Action: David** to go ahead with commissioning, with or without the Hall Trust's involvement.

b) *Spreadsheet/costings*

The laminated plan for the landscaping project has been erected on the site, though it is to be moved slightly. The board thanked Eric Whitton for doing this. Agnes and Becky introduced a spreadsheet they have produced to start working out costs for the various elements of the plan. This is at an early stage and others were invited to add any ideas, suggestions or information they have found (via Becky). Not everyone was able to open the current Excel format. **Action: Agnes and Becky** to discuss best format for ongoing use.

c) *Tree (chainsaw art)*

Pat had contacted Andy McLaughlin (chainsaw artist) about the possibility of creating a sculpture using the trunk of the felled ash tree on the field/green. This would involve leaving the stems 7-8ft high. The board agreed to instruct Ross Petro to go ahead with this, leaving open the option of a sculpture at a later date. **Action: Pat** to instruct Ross to cut the tree as described. It was agreed that once the felling was completed, a notice would be placed on the website to indicate that the resulting wood was available for residents to take away.

d) *BT telephone poles*

Lorraine had suggested that the telegraph poles being removed locally by BT could be purchased a small cost and stored for use in the landscaping plans. David had contacted BT but found that the process of purchasing the poles was very complex so it was agreed that it would not be pursued at this time. Catherine offered an alternative source of wood (tree trunks).

8. UPDATE ON HALL TRUST

*Hall charges/fundraising/minutes* – Following a query from BVT, it transpired that the Hall Trust does not apply the regular users' discounted rate to full day hires. This has a disproportionate effect on BVT and Blairmore Heritage, the only organisations to use full day hire. BVT will consider shorter bookings in future to minimise cost. Pat ran a tombola at the Hall Trust's Autumn Fayre with BVT providing a prize of family membership of the Royal Botanical Gardens of Edinburgh. This raised £141.60.

9. THE HIGH ROAD PROJECT

*Views on consultation and focus* – Agnes updated the group on the status of the High Road and a possible approach to contacting residents to canvass views about pursuing adoption of the High Road. This had previously been done several years ago. The Board discussed the document, and agreed to change focus slightly and resurvey frontagers initially to ask whether or not they were in favour of action.

Catherine noted that BVT had obtained an estimate from Ross MacArthur almost a year ago, relating to work required to fix the culvert below White's Brae. It was agreed that the work was needed to maintain the integrity of White's Brae (and so access to the High Road) but that there were questions about responsibility for it, and liability for this section of road by whatever body commissioned the work. It was also agreed that BVT had sufficient

funds and would be prepared to pay for the work; however, it was noted that this should not set a precedent that BVT is responsible for maintaining the road in future. It may also be necessary to obtain a second quote. **Action: Agnes** to contact Paul Farrell (Roads Department) to discuss the suitability of the spec, and to report back.

#### 10. CHRISTMAS 2015 IN BLAIRMORE

##### *a) Support for DRP Christmas event*

Agnes had prepared a document clarifying the relationship between BVT and the Dunoon Regeneration Party (DRP), and the support offered to DRG by BVT in running the Christmas event this year. The document was approved and will be retained by both parties.

##### *b) 14<sup>th</sup> December opportunity*

BVT has the opportunity to use the marquee from the DRG Christmas event for a separate community event on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December. Pat had approached Strone Primary about getting the pupils involved for some carol singing. It was agreed that we wished to go ahead with the event, which would be by donation. Soup and sandwiches would be provided, the winter raffle would be drawn, and some consultation materials would be available about specific BVT projects. Pat agreed to run a tombola, with other BVT members and volunteers asked to help out on the day and by providing home baking. **Action: Becky** to report back to school, suggesting pupils attend from 2.30pm, and to book hall.

##### *c) Seasonal raffle/tombola*

See above; in addition, Pat mentioned that BVT would need contents cover for raffle prizes and in future for items under the landscaping project. She has obtained a quote from BVT's existing insurer and it was agreed that she would accept this by email (**Action: Pat**).

##### *d) Tree lighting?*

It was agreed that the event on the 14<sup>th</sup> would replace the usual tree lighting ceremony. The tree would be lit this year but without an associated event.

#### 11. THE PHONE BOX

Re-visiting community views/action – Ideas were discussed for possible uses of the telephone box. Most centred around artistic embellishment. Jim's son is a stained glass artist and Jim agreed to ask him to look at it and present a costed proposal for a project if interested (**Action: Jim**). Becky suggested that Strone Primary pupils could be invited to create pictures for display as a temporary Christmas exhibition. **Action: Becky** to liaise with school.

#### 12. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Ian had provided a financial update for August/September by email, but this had been overlooked. Becky summarised the contents and agreed to remind Agnes about it. (**Action: Becky**).

#### 13. CORRESPONDENCE

##### *a) Investing in Ideas 2013 grant – evaluation – see Item 7a.*

*b) Hamilton's Brae (Jenny Waine) and High Road (Ron Fraser).* Correspondence from local residents was noted.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November (restricted agenda). **Action: Becky** to book hall.