

**Minutes of the Board meeting held on
25th October 2023**

1. Present/apologies for absence:

- **Present:** Iain Frazer (Treasurer), Fran Hall, Anne Hislop (Chair), David Howell, Isla Kinnear, Sharon McMurtrie, Chris Robinson(Co.Sec), Kayt Howell (Manager), Kirsty Murray (Admin Officer) Gordon Cowtan (Consultant)
- **Apologies:** Iain MacKay

2. Any Conflict of Interest (COI) on the agenda items?

- There were no COIs.

3. Approve minutes of last Board meeting 06.09.23 and minutes of IT meeting

- Both sets of minutes were approved.

4. Reminder from the Chair

- AH reminded the Board that it was agreed a while ago that KH would circulate an email at the end of her working week on a Thursday for the Board to read, give comments, make decisions etc. so that KH can move on with projects when she is back in work on a Tuesday. The system has not been working for a while – there is very little interaction from the Directors. AH reminded the Board that one of the FDT policies which was reviewed and approved in July was about Board Conduct. This stated that all Directors need to engage; no-one can take a back seat. AH asked the Board for their thoughts and if they had any ideas for a better way for KH to get the decisions she needs to move forward with things. KM also has the same difficulty. Emails which are marked 'Action needed' are responded to but the end of week emails are not. KH pointed out that less time could be spent explaining things at Board meetings if Directors have looked at the emails and/or links which have been sent to them. Sometimes, all that is required is a response to acknowledge that the email has been seen and this can be sent just to KH. Only points which may need to be seen by other Directors need to be sent as a reply to all. Some Directors mentioned issues with FDT emails clashing with their work/university accounts. KH/KM will discuss this with the IT consultants. IF wondered if there could be a 'Board only' section on the website. There is also an FDT WhatsApp group which could be used to remind Directors to check their emails.

5. Vice-Chair position

- AH reminded the Board that there is no Vice-Chair at the moment. She clarified that being Vice-Chair does not mean an automatic move to being Chair at some point. The role would involve chairing meetings if AH could not attend. **The Directors were asked to give the matter serious consideration so that a Vice-Chair can be named at the next meeting.**

6. Financial Report (IF)

- IF had circulated a spreadsheet prior to the meeting.
- IF confirmed that he checks all accounts every couple of days and moves money around if required. All accounts are looking good at the moment. Money is due in from heat sales soon.

7. Balgair update and decision on next steps (GC)

- GC referred to the recent meeting with Steve Luker (Luker Consulting Ltd). At that meeting it was agreed that a decision on next steps would be made at this meeting. GC had circulated a list of pros and cons prior to the meeting. He felt that optimisation followed by a sale of the system would be a good option. This would be easier in the short term, less disruptive and more appealing to the residents. There is a chance, however, that it may not work and the situation may not be any better in 12 months' time than it is now. DH was concerned that the FDT have employed consultants in the past and acted on their advice but it has not helped. He wondered if Steve was prepared to stand by his assertions that the optimisation will work i.e. is he able to underwrite this. GC agreed that this was a good point and will ask Steve to clarify some points and chase him for his recommendations. AH noted that the big difference with Steve is that he has worked in this industry for a while and has been involved in similar successful optimisation schemes.

- The Board discussed the possibility of the Scottish Government (SG) wanting to reinstate the loan for the installation of the heating system that was written off recently. It was felt that this was not likely as it would damage SG's reputation. GC and KH felt that they should push SG for a statement to confirm that but also reminded the Board that a proviso of cancelling the loan was that the SG would get the proceeds from the sale of the heat cabin. It was agreed that it would be useful to organise a meeting with the SG to explain that better data and information has led to the parameters changing and that this is a good thing. SL has indicated that he would be happy to attend such a meeting and present his findings. **It was agreed that GC should contact Scott (from the office of Evelyn Tweed (ET) MSP for Stirling) and ask him to invite the SG to a meeting with the FDT and SL.**
- IF pointed out that, regardless of how the SG feels about the situation, a decision needs to be made about what to do next. Some of the changes suggested by SL about reconfiguring the system can be done now and will save money over the winter months. CR was concerned that changing the configuration of the system when it has been running as it is for several years may cause problems. In addition to reconfiguring the system, it was suggested that money could be saved by renegotiating the deal with AMP and by using the caravan park owners as a means to triage any problems so that AMP are not called out needlessly.
- It was felt that SG had behaved unprofessionally in withholding the grant for SL's work and being seemingly unhappy that the heating system may be retained. The Board confirmed that they would continue paying SL to continue with his work but that the SG should not be allowed to go back on their grant offer. GC will re-do the initial agreement with SL as the requirements have changed slightly. He will also confirm that the Board are happy to go ahead with his proposals on an incremental basis and ask him to put the steps in a hierarchical order with a timetable for the work to be done.
- The Secretary of the Residents Committee had emailed GC to ask if there was an update on what was happening as their Annual General Meeting (AGM) is coming up soon. It was agreed that it would be better to organise a separate meeting to explain what is happening rather than do it at the AGM. SL is happy to attend such a meeting.

8. Financial subgroup report AH (IF, GC & KH)

- The subgroup agreed that the focus at the moment should be to get the job description for the financial consultant completed. KH has made some tweaks and GC's partner has looked over it. She suggested adding a section at the beginning to set the context – what the FDT is about and why they now need a financial consultant. The job description will be finalised and circulated to the Board.
- KH has been given some good advice about who to approach to find the right person.
- **Another subgroup meeting will be held at the beginning of November.**

9. IT update (KM/KH)

- KH & KM have sent the queries that were raised at the recent IT meeting to Illuminate IT. A meeting with them is arranged for 7th November. **KH/KM will feed back to Directors at the next Board meeting.**

10. Grants update

a. EE Grants (KM)

- 44 grants have been paid out to a total of £41K. One application was rejected because it was from a business. 27 projects have been completed with photographs and receipts supplied. There was a query about whether the grant could be used to upgrade double glazing or if it was only for a change from single to double. As long as energy efficiency is being improved it can be an upgrade of existing double glazing. **This information can be included on the application form and mentioned in Fintry Buddies.**

b. Log grants (KM)

- Six grants have been approved so far to a total of £330

c. FP grants (KH)

- All documents have been signed for the agreements for this year. Energy Action Scotland (EAS) have phoned the people who received the grants last year with a good response. There have only been five new applications this year but word is spreading. The household income bar is now £41,700. Good feedback has been received from people in the village. The posters on the tables in the Sports Centre are being looked at.

FH complimented KM on the Facebook posts she has been doing and Directors were encouraged to share any FDT posts.

11. Next two policies. Approved – sign off.

- The last two policies were approved. **The next two will be circulated.**

12. Website – update on illustrations and development (KH & KM)

- Progress has been slower than anticipated but the proposed Home page has been circulated and is looking good. KH and KM felt that there was too much information on Page 1. They have made some changes/suggestions and will draft an email to the web designers. The plan is to keep it simple and add more to it at a later date if needed.

a. Strap line decision

- The proposed strap line is 'Empowering an environmentally sustainable future for our community'. The Board approved this suggestion.

13. Community Woodland (Fintry Primary School (FPS) outdoor classroom) (ALL)

- An email has been sent to the Headteacher of FPS. No reply has been received yet.

14. EV charging (KH)

- KH has spoken to several installers but they all give different information so it is difficult to compare. The plan is to upgrade the charger that is already there and to add a 'hub' with more chargers. The next step is to speak to the Sports Centre to discuss the addition of more charging places. There has been some opposition to this suggestion already as it will use up parking spaces that are needed at rugby events. There was a suggestion to check how many EV/hybrid cars are actually present at these events. KH asked that at least one Director attended that meeting with her. AH and IF volunteered. KH will draft an email to the SC requesting a meeting as well as asking them to remove their belongings from the shed and to discuss the siting of a bike maintenance unit.
- The Sports Centre is definitely the best site for more EV chargers – there was some discussion about who actually owns the land in question.
- The electricity supply to the chargers may also need to be changed. One quote did include a cost for this and it was around £5-6K. This work would need to be done by a Distribution Network Operator (DNO).
- KH noted that this was not an easy project. As well as the issues already mentioned, insurance and ongoing maintenance were also a consideration.

15. Thermal Imaging Project (KH)

- At least 60 households have expressed interest in getting this done. The cost to the FDT may go up slightly because of the number of households being surveyed. KH has asked the thermal imaging company for an information sheet to send to each household.

16. Drop-in sessions at the club (KH)

- There are a lot of people in the village who do not use social media and do not have all the information regarding the various grants. KH and KM propose to have a regular drop-in session on the first Tuesday of every month. They could also ask for suggestions about other things the FDT could be doing. There was also a suggestion for KH and/or KM to give a small presentation about the work the FDT does at some of the local groups.

17. Feedback on Food fayre (ALL)

- Everyone felt that this had gone better than expected considering the weather. The jam and chutney tasting went well and there was a lot of interest in the hamper. There was good interaction from people during the day and it was good to build up the FDT's visibility. The Board agreed that it had worked well.

18. Carbon Free Christmas (KH/KM)

- This had been intended to be a swapshop/workshop event but KH and KM have too much to do at the moment to put on an event. Instead, they will provide information about how to have a carbon free Christmas on Facebook and in the FDT newsletter. It may also be possible to put together some information which can be available at other Christmas events being held in the village. Other related suggestions included information or possibly facilitating post-Christmas recycling in the New Year including IT recycling; a jumble trail where people set up stalls at their own homes and a map is provided to show people where there are stalls. **KH asked that Directors put their ideas into the Ideas Bank.**

19. Letter to Minister (KH)

- **KH will draft a response.**

20. FCC minutes (KH)

a. Invite to chat

- **KH will send an email invitation to the FCC admin address.**

b. Who wishes to participate?

- To be confirmed.

c. Outline agenda

- The meeting will be to discuss things that the FDT can link in with but also to address some items in the recent FCC minutes which mention the FDT and are not accurate.

Michele Bennett (FCC Chair) has provided a list of items which could be purchased to help residents in need.

21. Fintry Sports and Recreation Club (FSRC)

a. EV charging points

- See Agenda point 14

b. Bike Maintenance Unit

- See Agenda point 14

c. Drop in desk

- See Agenda point 16

d. Moving stuff out of shed

- See Agenda point 14

22. A.O.B

a. **Mince pie meeting on 13/12?**

- There will be an opportunity to deal with some small bits of business and then socialise. **Christmas jumpers are to be worn.**

b. **Shed clear out**

- FSRC need to clear their stuff out first and then FDT can take stock of what is left. A fire-proof filing cabinet may be required. **A date will be set in the New Year.**

c. **Brownies**

- The Brownies are holding a Christmas event on November 25th and were asking for a raffle donation from the FDT. The FDT do not really have anything suitable but **KH will look for any items which could be donated. The FDT is also willing to sponsor a 'green' badge.**

Next meetings

- Board meeting – 29th November, 7.30 p.m. at the Hub
- Mince pie meeting – 13th December, 7.30 p.m. at the Hub