



Minutes of the Board meeting held on
26th July 2023

1. Present/apologies for absence:

- **Present:** Iain Frazer (Treasurer), Fran Hall, Anne Hislop (Chair), David Howell, Isla Kinnear, Iain MacKay, Sharon McMurtrie, Kayt Howell (Manager), Gordon Cowtan (Consultant), Kirsty Murray (Admin Officer)
- **Apologies:** None

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

- There were no COIs.

3. Approve minutes of both the financial meeting and last Board meeting 31.05.23

- Both sets of minutes were approved.

4. Financial Report (IF)

- IF had circulated a spreadsheet prior to the meeting. All bank balances are good. A 32 day account for the FDT has been opened and is already accruing interest. There is a good sum of money in the instant access accounts for projects etc. but it is easy to get money from the 32 day account if necessary.
- GC noted that the wholesale price of electricity is slowly dropping and that wind speed has been poor in the last few months. The income generated in June was 50% less than would be expected so the next payment from Earlsburn in October may not be that big.

5. Balgair update (GC)

- Steve Luker has started his initial phase of work and is getting up to speed with the situation. KH, KM and GC met with him yesterday and he gave his initial thoughts. These were consistent with what others have said. SL plans to visit the site around the 13th/14th August with a colleague for a thorough survey. They hope to look at some of the Heat Interface Units (HIUs), the heat cabin and look at the internal systems of some of the properties
- There has still been no official grant offer letter from the Scottish Government (SG) for SL's work. GC has emailed them and received a reply to say they are working as fast as they can. SL's short term contract expires on Monday. GC is reluctant to hold up SL's work but extending his contract before the official letter from SG would be at the FDT's risk. GC proposed extending the contract for another month. The Board agreed as they felt it was best to keep the momentum going. GC will speak to SL and follow up again with the SG in a week's time. If nothing has been forthcoming by then, he will ask Evelyn Tweed (ET) for help.
- There was an issue with the electricity supply to the heat cabin which put it out of action for 24 hours. This meant that households were without heat and hot water. Douglas Young (DY) who has been an unofficial intermediary between the Balgair residents and the FDT got a lot of hassle from some residents about the lack of hot water and has decided to step down from his role. He is still happy to retain his link with the FDT.

6. Outsourcing IT (KM & GC)

- Illuminate IT have been appointed as consultants. There are some documents to complete and then they will have 1:1 meetings with everyone who has an FDT laptop. There will be a meeting in August to finalise things and then the contract will start at the beginning of September.

7. Grants update

a. Energy Efficiency (EE) (KM)

- There has been a steady trickle of enquiries. KM will put out a reminder to let people know that it is still open. The criteria have been extended slightly to confirm that money can be used to repair or renew older systems. There have been 31 applications at a cost of £28K. Next month, KM will chase up a few recipients of the grant for photographs and evidence.

b. Prep for this winter's Fuel Payment grants with Energy Action Scotland (EAS) (KH & GC)

- These will be picked up again this winter. KH/GC will get in touch with EAS next month. KH asked the Board to consider the following questions: do they want to set a budget? Do the criteria need changing

(for example, looking at household outgoings as well as their income)? KH & GC will have an initial discussion with EAS and feed back to the Board. The initial formula can be revisited. KH felt that the grants could be marketed better and had considered running a workshop to raise awareness of the grants and provide information about conserving energy usage. SM asked how the grants had been marketed last time. Poster had been put up in various places around the village, there had been online advertising and leaflets had been distributed to all households. The FDT had also passed information on to Fintry Community Council (FCC) as they were aware of the households that would meet the criteria. Other suggestions were to ask the Sports Centre if the FDT could put some A5 size displays somewhere there; speak to Hugh Edmonds and/or Meg Duckworth about advertising the grants at the old peoples' lunch club; asking the primary school to include information in an email to all parents; using existing village WhatsApp groups; posters on the noticeboards in the Hub and the Menzies Hall; word of mouth. **ACTION: KH to look at how much was paid out last year to help set the budget for the next round.**

8. Next two policies. Approved – sign off

- KH had circulated the policies by email. A few minor updates were suggested and approved. The next two policies will now be circulated.

9. Website – update on illustrations (KH & KM)

- KH & KM have seen some examples of the illustrators work but have not been shown any that were specific to the FDT. They are becoming frustrated with the speed of the process and KH is planning to speak to the main guy (David) next week.

10. Locality - feedback and next steps (GC & KH)

- The meeting with Graham last month has left the FDT with a lot to think about. Graham provided a framework to feed information and ideas into for next steps. He created different scenarios about what to do with the income for example, to invest half the income and use the other half for projects. The Board now has to make a decision. There was a suggestion to establish a finance sub-group to look at the specification for a financial director and discuss how to allocate the income. A sub-group was formed consisting of AH, IF and GC. It was agreed that now may not be the right time to change accountants and that the FDT would stick with the current ones that understand the FDT's history. It may be advisable to request an external auditor. KH will put together an agenda for a sub-group meeting. The sub-group will report back to the Board to make any decisions.

11. Fintry Sustainable Food Festival (KH & KM)

- This will be part of the Fintry Fun Day to be held on 9th September. KH, KM, AH and FH met to discuss what would work and have narrowed down the focus. There will be a 'Spread the love' competition for best preserve, pickle or chutney. People will vote for their favourite and there will be an FDT apron as a prize. Hopefully there will be some experienced jam makers available to give people advice and information beforehand and on the day. Forth Environment Link (FEL) will bring their smoothie bike and speak about initiatives in the area. The Hub G63 will be there with information about their seed bank. There will be a table for residents to share surplus fruit and veg. For the children there will be colouring sheets and bug-hunting kits. There will also be a quiz with a prize. KH suggested having some generic FDT banners made that can be used at events. They could have a QR code to scan to access the FDT website. There could also be some smaller ones with the history of the FDT and how to become a member. One of the prizes will be a hamper of locally produced food – local businesses are being asked for donations. KH is meeting David Smith next week to discuss the FDT's plans.

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

- The Head Teacher (HT) of FPS contacted the FDT just before the summer holidays about the woodland beside the school. They currently have issues with the management of the trees. Stirling Council (SC) are reluctant to manage it. The HT contacted the FDT and FCC to see if they would be interested in taking on the costs and management of the woodland. The owner of the land, Andrew Haslam, is willing to transfer ownership of the land if the legal fees are paid. The current records are vague about actual boundaries and ownership but this could be ironed out with the involvement of a lawyer. Some trees are unsafe. There was a suggestion to look at grants from The Woodland Trust. If the FDT took over ownership of the land, they would need to consider liability. It was agreed that KH should circulate all the relevant documents and the Board would discuss the options at the next Board meeting. KH noted that the FDT has membership with the Community Woodland Association and they may be able to give advice. KH will contact FCC to let them know of the FDT's interest. IK pointed out that the play equipment in that area may also be unsafe and may need to be replaced. It is part of the FDT's Articles of Association 'to advance education in the fields of renewable energy, energy conservation, and similar areas' so helping to facilitate an outdoor classroom would meet that objective. FH also suggested funding training for FPS staff to ensure the best use of the area.

13. EV charging – email from a resident & Charge Place Scotland (CPS) progress (KH)

- KH has been trying to address the issues with CPS for a long time. A reply to the residents email has been drafted and will be sent once it has been approved. Still waiting for a reply from CPS.

14. Training for Microsoft 365 & TEAMS from Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) (KH)

- A reminder to the Board to continue with the Microsoft training. It was agreed that it will be worthwhile. KH will resend the training email.

15. Ideas Bank (KH)

- The Ideas Bank is on One Drive. KH encouraged the Board to add to it.

16. Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) drop-ins (KH)

- DTAS organise online drop-ins for development trust managers and development officers. KH tries to attend as many as possible as they are very useful and supportive. Issues can be raised and DTAS provide answers. DTAS are in the process of setting up drop-ins for trustees. KH will circulate the link.

17. A.O.B

- DH noted that a recent planning application to build an industrial unit on the field beside the cemetery had been withdrawn. He wondered if the field could be purchased by the FDT and turned into a community woodland burial area. The Board agreed that this was a good idea but there were some contentious issues with that particular plot of land. DH was asked to put this idea in the Ideas Bank to be looked at again in the future. Other areas of land may be available.
- Recycle-a-bike has funding to provide a full day event with their bike doctor. They have suggested doing this at the Sports Centre on 22nd August. The squash courts have been booked in case of bad weather. It was noted that the museum currently has a bicycle exhibition on. It was agreed that refreshments could also be offered to any residents who attend the event.
- Thermal imaging camera – a final decision was not made about this last year. The suggestion had been to purchase a thermal imaging camera that FDT members could borrow but there were several difficulties in doing this. It was suggested that the FDT contract someone to do thermal imaging surveys to any interested residents to identify areas of heat loss. The FDT could subsidise the cost of this. It was agreed that this was a good time to start thinking about this in preparation for the winter. KH will make some initial enquiries.
- SM has now attended 3 Board meetings as an observer. AH asked if she was interested in joining the Board. SM confirmed that she was. The Board can now vote for her to be co-opted onto the Board and she can then stand at the next Annual General Meeting to be accepted as a full member.

Next meeting

- Board meeting – 6th September, 7.30 p.m. at the Hub (Apologies from SM and JS)