

Present: D Steel (Chair); P Addison; I Burnie; W Finlay; R Forster; J Hutchinson; W McKie; J Morton; K Smyth.

1. **Apologies:** F Bruno; C Gillespie; J Jameson.

2. **Minutes 31 March.** Accepted. Proposed R Forster; seconded W McKie.

3. **Matters arising:** None.

4. **Finance**

Bank balances:

- Main Account £8000, of which approximately £2000 is restricted. In the absence of any new income from the wind-turbine, this is a relatively healthy position, thanks mainly to a steady flow of income from the web-site and the country markets.
- No.2 Account (Cally Boundaries): £11600.
- No.3 Account (Carbon Action project): £7000, most of which is reserved for salary payments for the next quarter.

Financial report

- Copies of the Annual Accounts were circulated and approval will be sought at the July Meeting. Board Members are invited to discuss any concerns or queries with the Treasurer before the next meeting.
- The lack of income from the wind turbine remains a cause for concern. There is some prospect of technical assistance from a Canadian engineer and much depends on the outcome. It is believed that the current insurance policy will cover the major part of the repair costs to the electrical systems but the long-term prospects for the wind turbine must remain highly uncertain..
- Agreement with Visit Scotland for a 10 year peppercorn rental for the Kiosk is to be welcomed. Discussions with Dumfries & Galloway Council over the development of the Kiosk and surrounding area are now in progress.

The Treasurer suggested that in view of the problems with the turbine, and following discussions with the accountants, the value of the turbine be marked down in the assets. This may open the way for deregulation from VAT which is dependent on turnover. However it is the intention to wait until the current turbine problems have been fixed and then assess the position again on the basis of turbine performance.

Wilma Finlay advised the meeting that the current turbine problem was caused by a power surge from local generating equipment. A report on repair work is currently being prepared.

Wilma also reported that Cream 'o Galloway had been approached by a local turbine installer offering a deal on a new turbine. The company provide the capital costs and maintenance. After costs, the profit is split with the client, but the proposed turbine, although only slightly taller, is rated at 225KW compared with the current 50KW machine generating potentially a much greater income. It is felt that as the current turbine is still relatively new it is important to see if its performance can be stabilised. It would also be necessary to involve the funders in any decision making process on its future. One possible scenario however would be for the community to seek another site for a second turbine to add to the income from the current one, once it is fixed.

5. Current Projects

Cally Designed Landscape. **Cally Walls.** Dykers have been working on the walls by Robbers Gate, and on the sunken dyke, below Laundry Cottage. Work will start on the walls either side of the A75 once sillaging is complete.

Old School House. Tenders for work on the building will be looked at in early June. The area is now clear and ready for the next stage of work to start. A draft of the interpretation panel for the building was circulated.

Country Market: Both the monthly market and the smaller weekly markets are running smoothly. All interested Council departments seem happy with the proposed work. A draft lease from Visit Scotland is currently awaited. *[Since the meeting this has now been received, including agreement to a 10 year lease at a peppercorn rent].*

Kiosk: Also awaiting completion of lease negotiations with Visit Scotland. Quotes are being received for improvements to the building, some of which will form part of an application to the CARES fund. Discussions are also going on to see what may be available from the Targeted Support Fund money put aside for the project - all of which has been effectively saved for the Council by the GDI's refusal to allow it to be paid over to Visit Scotland.

Economic Development: The Community Council Housing Sub-group have submitted a request under the Local Plan procedure that the former garage site be redesignated as 'recreation and amenity' ground rather than its current 'mixed use'.

A letter will also be sent setting out the basic principles for future development in Gatehouse, emphasising the importance of the National Trust agreements, and the need to affirm the importance of the conservation status, and the town's history and heritage, as supported by the CADISPA survey findings.

Galloway Carbon Action Project: This is progressing well locally, with the team working well within the community and organising and being involved with a range of community activities. Quiz nights have been held in conjunction with the Murray Arms and the Bank of Fleet Hotels. The project's presence in the Kiosk is working well with a fair bit of interest being generated with visitors. Cold calling is underway, but other approaches and possibly some incentives such as prize draws etc may need to be tried to draw attention/engage with the community. There has been some concern that people may not be willing to undertake a survey because it is invasive. The survey is not invasive - probably the most sensitive information being how much a household is spending on its power bills. Away from the community there have been ongoing difficulties with the agencies partnering the project. The survey tool - now in its 10th edition - is only now more or less as it should be. The Crichton Carbon Centre have not as yet sent out any of the follow up packs which are an integral part of the survey process and should be received by households soon after the survey is done, but there is some sign that they have woken up to community/project concerns and that they are moving quickly on this now.

Garries Park: Garries Wood. A letter will be sent to the Council supporting the recommendations presented in the Garries Wood report.

Garries Park Car Park Entrance. A new arrangement for the bins is still being discussed. The entrance to the park would be enhanced by a new notice/interpretation panel. It would also be beneficial to both the park and the Kiosk to screen the transformer box next to the Kiosk. A living willow fence was suggested for this. The feasibility of this and any associated issues will be explored.

Garries Park. Small fires have been lit on the Wildflower Meadow causing some damage. A letter will be sent to Ian Brown requesting the help of the Volunteer Group with remedial action. The Council will spray the path to the Sensory Garden for weed encroachment while treating other paths.

Sensory Garden. The graffiti on the Sensory Garden was removed very swiftly by the Council. The GDI is very grateful for their swift action on this.

Newsletter: The first edition of the newsletter has been well received. There may have been some problems with distribution in some areas, and this will be looked at again for the next issue which should be ready in early July.

Walks: Core Paths. There remains one objection to the proposed network. The objector is concerned with the potential waste of money on the project. The production of locally devised walks guides may be a much better approach to providing the information.

Website: Ongoing.

Wind Turbine: Reported on above under finance.

6. Any other business: Ron Forster reported that one of the workers on the sunken dyke has reported seeing a grey squirrel. Peter Addison indicated that he wished to retire from the GDI. The Chairman on behalf of the meeting wished him well and thanked him for all the work he has done on the GDI's behalf and for his work on walks related business.

7. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 28 July, 7.30pm, Community Centre.