Committee Meeting Minutes: 7pm 24th August 2026

1 Welcome & Apologies:
Present: Jason Bold (JB), Colin Ewing (CE), Angela Wallis (AW), Stuart Cullen (SC), Bryony Anderson (BA), Mali MacLennan (MM), Carwyn Llewellyn (CL), Jenny Hey (JH)

Apologies: Mandy Boswell (MB)

JB to chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Adoption of previous minutes: Proposed CE, Seconded AW

Actions: CL will upload previous minutes to the website

3 Conflicts of interest
None

4 Financial update

- There was a separate finance meeting on 3rd August for trustees to discuss grants and budgets. From this meeting, SC needs to upload a grant template to google drive. Draft accounts have been received from the accountant and need to be checked over. The Report of Trustees also needs to be completed to add to the accounts, which SC volunteers to do. The Accountant needs a week from the return of the Report of Trustees to finalise the accounts to be signed by DCT. SC will update and circulate the report amongst the trustees upon completion. The Trustees will aim to meet on 9th September to sign the final accounts, so will complete the Report of Trustees a week before. BA to check this timeline with the Accountant.
- We are now being charged fees by both Bankline and RBS for transactions made from the current account, discussion on whether DCT should move their current account to another provider. . All attendees will look for suggestions at the DTAS meeting in Glasgow next week. JB suggests another finance meeting dedicated to discussing banking options where this could be addressed and suggested Wednesday 9th.
-

Action: SC to update Report of Trustees by Wednesday 2nd September (1 week before accounts due to be signed)

5 Statutory updates

- MM undertook the park inspection. There's been some intentional damage to the vinyl decals since the last inspection, joint social post with Dunvegan Community Park page went out on facebook to ask for people to be more responsible. One of the gate posts is loose, BA will get quotes from hebridean fences for repair.
- Minibus: MM requests mobile tyre pressure pump - approved.
- Memberships: 5 new members. 3 full, 2 associates 76.8% full memberships. Question on when members are removed from the list. BA confirms they can email to request to be

removed, and we can also periodically contact members to confirm they want to remain on the register.

6 Strategy exercise and update

- Next step towards Vision, Mission Values objective is completing a strategic plan for the trust. MM has pulled projects from community action plan to propose a 5 year plan for the trust workload. Large capital projects underway are: Gaeltec community hub, further housing at Orbost, Community hall investment, Community Pitch, local resilience and developing community energy. Softer projects such as workshops and shorter contracts will fill in the gaps. Strategic plan will prevent DCT over committing to work and spreading too thin. Local resilience is a key theme and MB will be working with DCC for local preparedness project and ties DCT in with local organizations. Committee agree there's enough capital projects to keep the trust busy for next 5 years.
- Draft of the strategic plan will be sent to trustees and members soon.

7 Staff updates

Development Officer Update

- BA got a quote for first aid training “Emergency first aid at work” at UHI college in Portree £85 per person. Question proposed on whether to offer training to DCT staff or invite wider Dunvegan community in order to reduce costs. Cheaper to host it in Dunvegan if 8 people or over. Trustees note that hosting it at the Gaeltec Hub builds on the DCT’s community objectives, however facilities are not ready yet.Committee agree to provided 2-3 staff/trustees with First aid training this year in order to meet our needs and then pursue the option to provide training to the wider community at the Gaeltec Community Hub once capacity is available.
- MM Orbost project - EDF energy account is in credit yet has an overdue bill.. Currently in communication with EDF to resolve the issue.

Woodland Officer

- There is not currently a committed group of volunteers willing to take on long-term responsibility and maintenance of Bluebell Hill. JH recommends the committee consider how that will be managed once the woodland officer contract expires. In order to budget for contractors, JB asks how long strimming works take? JH says work can be done in an afternoon by one person (recommended done 3-5 times this summer)
- CE questions if the goal of strimming is to eliminate. JH confirms bracken spreads by rhizomes so that the goal of the strimming is to prevent further spread and weaken the plant to allow natural regeneration of other species.
- JH suggested drafting a summary budget for DCT woodland projects and the management involved thereof for next financial year to inform committee budgets and enable committee to execute duties.
- CE notes problematic sycamore in recent woodland report, JH says could be canopy die-back due to age or rot at base caused by fungus. Consultation with ecological expert planned, tree could be fenced off or felled depending on expert advice.
- Board approve of freestanding welcome sign. JH & CL to organise.
- Ecologist on site next week to do first surveys - both ecologist and tree surgeon are positive that all trees can be felled this autumn, however If it runs over into next year the woodland post responsibility needs to be considered.

DRAFT

- JH says waiting for naturescot to internally approve costs before analysis of bat monitors can be undertaken. JH will update when she learns more.
- JH and MM have done preliminary work on the structure of the lease for woodland crofts and suggest seeking legal advice to better understand the responsibilities involved. MM has contacted highlands and islands climate hub to apply for funds to cover costs of one afternoon of agricultural crofting lawyers legal advice.
- While waiting for advice, JH states that the project could be moved forwards by deciding on and constructing a site access point before tenancies start to enable potential tenants to view the site.
- CE notes complications with communicating with the Highland roads department regarding drainage, visibility issues, etc.
- SC notes advantage and flexibility of DCT having the control and decision making power for access point location. This makes it easier for potential tenants to consult on or seek planning permission. Trustees discuss engaging with stakeholders such as DCC, consultants, planning officials, roads department, local groundworkers and contractors such as Peter Armitage, residents at Orbost to officially advise, identify and plan the best access point for the crofts. Jenny to organise open event to discuss various scenarios for woodland leasing to engage and understand local community desire.
- On management of salmonberry and sitka species in DCT woodland, JH warns that no funding has been secured yet, one or two options remain but could be late in the woodland officer contract to fit in. JH suggests to make it a part of the lease agreement that tenants will manage invasive species and change rent to reflect this responsibility. CE opinion: sitka should be kept under DCT control/responsibility, JH: DCT are limited by Scottish Forestry regulations in how much they can remove. Trustees recognise that this sort of responsibility reflects the “woodland croft” management and expectations. JH mentions that tenant could use targeting chainsawing/ringbarking techniques to harvest less than 5cubic metres a quarter before licence needed. Trustees agree a gesture/effort of goodwill such as sitka sapling pulling and organizing volunteer days would reassure potential tenants.
- SC asks when is the earliest a tenant could move into a plot? JH: Entirely depends on what type of lease the community decides. There needs to be detailed community consultation to decide on tenancy options the community want but tenancies should be longer than 5 years to be sensible and manageable. The committee questions the use of the term croft in this context and JH explains that it's mostly for simplicity in naming at this stage as there are a number of concepts from crofting definitions that would be beneficial but lots of regulations preventing this being an official croft and joining the appropriate associations. CE: DCT must be very careful of the terminology when consulting and explaining this opportunity to the community.
- CE opinion: Picnic table at bluebell hill would be a bad idea as it provides an opportunity and increases the risk of inappropriate barbeque disposal in the woodland.

Action: JH and MM to contact PA for advice
JH and MM organising community engagement around leases.

Gaeltec community hub

- CE had queried the cost change of the refurbishments. BA says that report has been updated to reflect an increase in cost from £712,700 in 2025 cost plan to £814,342 in the most recent cost plan. Full cost estimate including all management and fees has increased from £907,000 to £1,031,000 (pre tender 2-3 weeks ago) These are QS Estimates and not

calculated figures. BA will confirm with the Architect whether contingency is included in the meeting this week.
- Tender return date has been extended to 9th September. One construction contractor has requested the extension and another construction contractor has pulled out of the process. We are still expecting 3 tender returns.
- The Highland Council Skye and Raasay Committee have a meeting on 31st August where DCT's application to the Community Regeneration Fund will be considered.
- Trustees consider the impacts of active construction throughout the Gaeltec building especially to DCT staff and tenants, trustees agree to be involved throughout the pre-construction and construction process in order to support the DCT staff.
- BA confirms that all tendering companies are based on Skye.
- JB suggested a meeting to discuss and plan rentable spaces in the Gaeltec building, both following successful renovation works on building 1 and in the plans for building 2.
- BA has a meeting with Nick at rural design this week to discuss ideas package additional to what's in tender including signage, exterior decoration, built in furniture etc.
- Alan (Jamieson) Gordon to be co-opted as trustee with a specific brief to assist with the tool library.
- JB calls a vote to co-opt Alan: 4 votes for 0 against.

Actions: BA to email Alan about him being co-opted.
CL to organise rentable space meeting

8 Funding Discussions
- Chiara's application for an education grant. The committee is aware that providing funding for education is a top priority of the trust. She has received £5,000 by records and there's no limitations on the number of times you can ask. There is no cap but £1000 for a year for a 3 year course has been the precedent. Trustees agree it can be considered once she's started in January.

Actions: CL to reply to Chiara.

9 DCC updates
- DCC thanks for the grant and the input towards the community hall roof.

10 AOB
- BA asks trustees to confirm per diem expenses for DTAS trip/meeting. JB: Same as suggested HMRC amount.
- CE informs that Energy for all is hosting a Webinar for community power clubs. Could be useful to Gaeltec for supplying power.

Date of Next meeting: Wednesday 7th October 2026

Meeting closed at 9:35

DRAFT