

**Pairc Trust**  
**AGM: Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2017, 7.30pm Pairc School**  
**Chairman's Report**

**Firstly to focus on activity from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

- **Option to Tax:** Regarding VAT, the previous landlord of the estate warranted that he had an Option to Tax, but failed to supply details at the appropriate time. Pairc Trust had no option but to follow a legal route. This VAT issue is the reason that Pairc Trust could not issue the 2016 rent invoices, or indeed any invoices, until earlier this year. But thank fully we are now back to the normal timescale.
- **Community Consultation:** We carried out various community consultation events over Summer 2016. This was an opportunity to ask members of the community what they would like to see us progress with, and these conversations shaped our Strategic Business Plan.
- **Working Groups:** We set up working groups for Crofting, Tourism, Housing and Renewable Energy. The groups consist of directors and members of the community. We hope that more of you will join these groups and contribute to the work we are doing. If you are interested in joining one of the sub-groups please contact either Fiona or a director, you will be most welcome.
- **Social Media:** We set up our website and Facebook during this period and use these to keep the community informed and updated. We appreciate that some people do not use the internet so we always have updated in the MCWFT newsletter. We also distributed newsletters to all households before Christmas 2017.
- **Housing Needs Analysis :** During summer 2016 – thanks to funding from MCWFT - we employed Al Reed as a Housing Needs Officer and we would like to thank him for all his work. We carried out a Housing Needs Analysis and this was based on surveys and conversations from house visits and drop in sessions. The Housing Needs Analysis showed that there is strong local support for affordable housing in the estate. We have purchased the old Care Unit from the Council and we are waiting for them to transfer the title. We know that it is difficult for people on lower than average salaries to purchase a property and there is a lack of accommodation available for rent. We also understand that fuel poverty is an issue and we intend to provide accommodation that is energy efficient and cheap to heat. TIG are very experienced in the housing sector and they are project managing this on our behalf.
- **HIE CAM organisation:** We became account managed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in November 2016. In addition to this we have secured 2 masters students through HIE. One is carrying out research into the historical sites of interest in Pairc, and the other is carrying out work on a Tourism Strategy. Both these pieces of work are for the estate, and will be available to anyone who would like to see them. We expect these pieces of work to be completed in September.
- **Renewables:** Pairc Trust is one of the 20 Community Trusts throughout the Western Isles who meet regularly to look into providing a positive renewable energy future for communities. If the

interconnector to the mainland goes ahead, we will be looking into renewable energy options which would bring an income to the estate. In the meantime, we have been looking into the possibility of providing local businesses with renewable energy but this has not yet come to fruition.

- **Walkways:** We received funding from the Tesco Bags of Help and we are using this to improve access to Steimreway from Orinsay. We are doing this in partnership with the Orinsay Village Association. We are also carrying out improvements to the Cromore walk.
- **GP Surgery/Resource Centre:** We held an open meeting earlier in the year to discuss a proposal for Pairc Trust to purchase the Doctor's House and GP Surgery from the NHS. We were looking into the possibility of rehoming the surgery in the Resource Centre in Kershader. The property in Gravir would have been used for affordable housing, and the GP Surgery was willing to pay a long term rental which would have covered the running costs of the Resource Centre. Following the open meeting we conducted a survey and visited a number of households. The overwhelming response from the community was that they want the surgery to remain where it is in Gravir. We fed this back to the NHS and they have agreed that the surgery will stay where it is.
- **Croft Rents:** We have now taken all crofting administration in house and we deal with the invoices and leases. This means that the money that was going to a solicitor firm in Stornoway is now staying in the district, and we are employing a local person to do this. Due to VAT issues we were late in issuing the rents last year. However, we are now up to date and you can expect to receive your invoices in June each year from now on.
- **Review of Memo and Arts:** We asked Third Sector Hebrides to look at our governance document and they are happy that it is still fit for purpose. We have since spoken to other Community Trusts who have amended their Memo and Arts regarding the length of time that directors can stand for. They recommend changing this and we will look into this further.
- **Croft Tenancy Vacancies:** Two vacant crofts in Cromore and Gravir have new tenants. The croft tenancies were let by the Crofting Commission and we are delighted to have two new crofters in the estate. Pairc trust was not able to be involved in the allocation of the tenants, which was made by an open draw, but we are pleased to be supporting the new tenants in any way we can.

## **To Update on Recent Developments:**

### **April 2017 to present day**

**Staffing:** Pairc Trust employed two full time members of staff in February and April 2016. Sandra has since moved back to Nairn to be with her family and Jen has moved to a new post, as Practice Manager of the Group Practice in Stornoway. Fiona Stokes started to work in the office in March 2017 and she has taken over the crofting, and office administration support role. Fiona has a contract until next March, which Pairc Trust expects to be able to extend.

Pairc Trust is actively looking for a three-year funding package which will help with the costs of employing a Development Manager. Applications have recently been sent to both MCWFT and the Scottish Land Fund. This will give us time to increase our income, and become self-sustainable. It is our goal to be in a position where we can cover the staffing costs without any external assistance by the end of the three-year period.

**Additional Legal Costs:** Pairc Trust received two loans, one from MCWFT and the other from CNES to assist with purchase of the estate and all the additional legal costs involved. We are at present in discussions with both bodies to try and come to a satisfactory resolution. Pairc Trust will update the community on the outcomes in due course.

**Strategic & Business Plans:** We have developed a Strategic Plan which outlines our aspirations for the next few years. We will now focus on producing an operational business plan. This will focus on specific projects which will bring an income to the estate, benefits to the local community, such as local employment opportunities.

**Tourism:** Once the research being carried out by the Masters students is complete we will meet with members of the community to decide which tourism projects we will proceed with. We hope that a specific Tourism Strategy will identify any gaps in the current provision for visitors and give suggestions for increasing the number of visitors to the area.