

## GBCDT Meeting 18 March 2026

**PRESENT:** Mark Bryant (via videolink), Callum Macaulay, Anna Macdonald, John Porteous, Helen Strong

**APOLOGIES:** Calum Fraser

### POINTS DISCUSSED

#### 1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The February 2026 minutes were approved by Mark and seconded by John.

#### 2. BOARD MEMBERS

There have been no further volunteers coming forward to join the Board. Joanna George has expressed an interest in getting involved in the proposed social housing project at the Glebe (see 7b below). It was confirmed that Donna Mackenzie, our Auditor at CIB Services, will become the Trust's Treasurer. Board members will continue to approach people in the community to ask if they would be interested in taking a more active role in the Trust, whether as a Board member or helping on specific projects or in an advisory capacity.

#### 3. ACCOUNTS UPDATE

Balance on 27 Jan: £18,522.23

Incomings to 18 Mar: £ 1,624.76

Outgoings to 18 Mar: £ 4,545.08

Balance on 18 Mar: £15,601.91

The large expenditures for this period included £2,807.73 for the washing machine and tumble dryer for the Facilities Building at Kirkibost pier, and £1,084.10 for electricity charges at the pier (see below).

##### a) Electricity charges at the pier

The billing agency (Valda) hadn't been debiting the correct amounts since September 2025 when we switched to them from UGP, so they took a large payment in February. The Valda invoices don't give the meter readings and Callum has already queried this with them. The payments taken since September average out at around £280 per month (approx £50 standing charge and £230 consumption). It was thought this seemed excessive considering the current usage at the pier. Callum will continue to pursue them to ensure the monthly payments are being calculated correctly.

##### b) Insurance for the ebikes

The previous insurance policy with LAKA was cancelled because it was deemed too expensive. We urgently need to find another insurer because booking enquiries have already been received for April. John will check with NFU and other insurers. Helen will contact Norma to enquire about adding it onto the Community Centre insurance.

#### 4. COMMUNICATION

##### a) Website

The website will be launched as planned at the end of March. Helen thanked the work of the Website Focus Group and asked for a contribution of approx £75 to purchase small gifts for them (5 x Bernera tea towels @ £15 each) as a token of appreciation. This was approved by the Board. The Board also agreed that the Bernera map may be used by the BCA to order Great Bernera merchandise to sell in the community shop.

##### b) Admin / Google Drive / Email traffic

Helen will continue to monitor the email account and do other admin functions for the time being.

### **c) Membership audit**

Helen will send out a mailing via the new website giving members an update on Trust matters. The mailing will include a clause stating it will be assumed they wish to remain members of the Trust unless they advise otherwise.

## **5. ESTATE BUYOUT**

### **a) Mapping**

John has a meeting in Inverness on 20 March with the Estate's Solicitors Murchison Law to ask for copies of the title plans of crofts that have changed ownership since the last mapping activity in 2022. He will also contact the Crofting Commission and check online the Crofting Register and the Register of Crofts.

### **b) Charity status**

It was agreed that this should be put on hold until the Trust has sufficient turnover to make acquiring charity status feasible.

## **6. DUBH THOB**

### **a) Business Plan**

John will use the Business Plan from the Buyout to prepare a Business Plan for Kirkibost pier. A Business Plan is needed to apply for the asset transfer (purchase of the land where the facilities are located) at a heavily discounted rate (90%).

### **b) Rates and insurance**

The Trust qualifies for 100% rates relief on the facilities building and John has already applied for this. John also confirmed that NFU will be able to cover the facilities building under the pontoons insurance.

### **c) Completion of facilities building**

John will chase up Tim Macdonald re the rendering of the ramp and plinth. If that is not successful, he will look for another option for completing this work. Callum asked for a budget to purchase a few final items needed for completion. The Board approved an amount of up to £900 for this.

## **7. AOB**

### **a) Development Officer Post**

HIE have confirmed that funding of £39k per year for three years has been granted for a Development Officer post. John will create a job description and advert for the post.

### **b) Social Housing Project at the Glebe**

Mary-Ann Graham (former Housing Development Officer at CnES) has informed us that the Estate solicitors are now keen to progress matters regarding the ransom strip at the access to the proposed development site. Mary-Ann has passed the details to HHP who will work with the Estate to finalise matters so that the land acquisition and planning application can progress. Mary-Ann has advised that the new contact person at the Comhairle is Johanna Morrison, who will be in touch with us shortly to see what other developments she can assist with.

### **c) Writ against the Trust**

Last month Claire Kellerman issued a writ against the Trust for £10k. Despite sending a letter from the Trust's solicitors advising that the Trust has nothing to do with the case in question, the writ has as yet not been withdrawn. The Trust has therefore been forced into the position of issuing a notice of intention to defend the action, which has unfortunately incurred court costs and further legal fees.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday 14 April 2026, 7pm in the Small Hall