

GBCDT Meeting 14 April 2026

PRESENT: Mark Bryant, Anna Macdonald, John Porteous, Zoe Macinnes, Peter Fleming

APOLOGIES: Calum Fraser

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The March 2026 minutes were approved by Mark, seconded by John.

2. BOARD MEMBERS

There are no new volunteers on the board. Mark has had word of interest from one or two persons who may join in the future. The board will continue to extend an open invitation to those interested in joining the Trust.

3. ACCOUNTS UPDATE

Balance on March 18th: £15,601.91

Income to April 14th: £ 748.23

Outgoings to April 14th: £ 440.81

Balance on April 14th: £15,909.33

a) Electricity charges at the pier

No further update on this matter. Callum Macaulay will continue to pursue Valda to ensure the monthly payments are being calculated correctly.

b) Insurance for the ebikes

The running costs of the ebikes insurance is still at present too costly to continue to run. The BCA are enquiring on adding the bikes to their insurance policy, but so far, have had no response. If this is not a feasible option, the Board will look at an alternative solution.

4. COMMUNICATION

a) Website

The new website was launched on 31 March and has been well-received by the community, with some feedback on some minor changes. These changes have now been made. This leads the Board to a discussion on who leads the mandate of the website. Mark suggests the groups mentioned on the website (GBCDT, BCA, BCC) continue to manage their own sections and request changes via the website designers. However, there are sections of the website not covered by these groups. The Board suggests Helen continues to liaise with the Trust on these website matters, as she is part of the website design group and an active member of the Trust. The board will confirm when they next communicate with Helen if she is happy with this arrangement.

b) Admin / Google Drive / Email traffic

Helen is continuing to monitor the email account and do other admin functions for the time being. She is in the process of setting up a new Google Drive to replace the previous (now defunct) Drive. There is a meeting set up with HIE this Friday afternoon to discuss the details of the Development Office role, which will include administration. Helen will continue to monitor the email account and other admin functions for the time being.

c) Membership audit

A plugin was installed on the new website to enable mass mailings to members, but it didn't work properly, so we opted to use an external provider (MailChimp) instead. Two emails went out to members on 30 March - one about the Writ and one about Communication in general. Only around 50% of recipients opened the emails. Some bounced due to incorrect email addresses (most of these have now been rectified) and those members without email received a hard copy (delivered in person by Anna on the same day). A notice also went out in the April issue of the Bernera Bulletin asking members to check their spam folders and contact us if they didn't receive the emails. Anna is managing the members audit to keep the memberships up to date.

5. ESTATE BUYOUT

a) Mapping

John had a meeting in Inverness on 20th March with the Estate's Solicitors Murchison Law. John has also contacted the Crofting Commission and checked 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 has sent a draft Business plan for the Asset Transfer at the Kirkibost pier. Board members are to look at this plan and send any revisions for John in the following week.

b) Rates and insurance

Confirmation that the Trust qualifies for 100% rates relief on the facilities building. John also confirmed that NFU will be able to cover the facilities building under the pontoons insurance.

c) Completion of facilities building

John has not heard back from Tim Macdonald re the rendering of the ramp and plinth, and so will continue to reach out. If that is not successful, he will look for another option for completing this work.

7. AOB

a) Communication to Trust Members on Buyout Matters

Discussions on how to communicate with the Trust's members on the details of the Buyout include ideas to address directly with members on any upcoming queries and concerns. There are various ways this could be achieved - as an example, a preliminary idea of a transparent email poll sent out to members, should this be needed. The Board agree that the whole community should have access to this communication, and so will continue to invite community members to join as a Trust Member so that they can voice their opinions on any future communications, and ensure they receive full, transparent communications.

b) Development Officer Post

John and Anna have created a draft job description and specification for the post. Board members are to look at this and finalise details on salary, post advertisement, etc. DTAS and HIE may offer advice on such matters, Mark to contact DTAS. Zoe will look into where best to advertise the job role. An appropriate screening process will be determined based on the response to the job advertisement.

c) Social Housing Project at the Glebe

As of last meeting, 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. Joanna Morrison has been in touch with the Trust to introduce herself as Housing Development Officer. She has offered to have an informal conversation either now or at a later stage. The Board are confident that seeing as HHP are fully appointed to this project, the Board should not interfere at present.

d) Writ against the Trust

In February, 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. The initial legal costs to date are £5500. The Board are looking into methods of mitigation on this matter.

Next meeting: Wednesday 20th May 2026, 7.30pm in the Small Hall