

DUNBLANE DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2010

Saturday 23rd October 2010 at 10.30am in the Victoria Hall, Dunblane

1. Opening remarks

1.1 The AGM Chair, Steve Mason welcomed 60 members and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Apologies were received from Ian Collie, Lynda Lord and Eric Lord.

1.2 Steve explained that Lawrie Dewar, Tim Hughes and himself had taken turns to chair meetings of the Board since the 2009 AGM, and that all the Directors had assumed collective responsibility for the actions of the Board. If members wished a special meeting of the DDT at any time to discuss any aspect of the Trust's work, this would be arranged.

1.3 The agenda for the AGM differed slightly from the one that had been circulated and copies of the full accounts, which had been put onto the website the previous evening, were available at the meeting. Steve explained that the special resolution required 75% of those present to be in favour of the proposed amendments to the Articles of Association.

1.4 Approval for the construction on the High Street gap site had been given at the 2008 AGM. Members were asked to focus on how to make a success of the project rather than on looking back over its history.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 19 September 2009

The minutes were proposed by Terence O'Byrne, seconded by Dougal Thornton, and approved as presented.

3. Minutes of the EGM held on 30th January 2010

The minutes were proposed by Dougal Thornton, seconded by John Seddon, and approved as presented.

4. Chairman's address

4.1 It had been a tough twelve months with at times 6 meetings per month but, thanks to the hard work of all the Directors, significant progress had been made. The membership had been increased to more than 600. The target is now 1,000.

4.2 Six Directors had been co-opted to the Board and the relationship with Dunblane Community Council had been stabilised. The DDT and DCC were now working well together on such issues as Stirling Council's Main Issues Report, and Abbotsford. Dialogue had begun with Dunblane Senior Citizens, the Dunblane Council of Churches and the Dunblane Traders Association.

4.3 There had been two meetings with Kippendavie Group Trust (KGT). Steve thanked KGT for their support with the financing of the High Street project, including the original purchase of the site and their provision of a match-funding loan of £23,000. It was acknowledged that they had fulfilled their side of the bargain.

4.4 Bryan Grieve, Sandy MacKay and David Gill had all stood down from the Board during the year. The hard work of Bryan and Sandy had been acknowledged at the EGM. Steve thanked David Gill, who was present, for his success in securing the £1.2m Scottish Government grant (through the Town Centre Regeneration Fund) for the High Street site, which it was expected would provide the DDT with an annual income of c£30,000. The property could be sold after six years and the proceeds reinvested in the town.

4.5 The Board had given a clear response to the Main Issues Report.

4.6 There had been improved communication through the creation of three DDT working groups and a new website would be launched shortly. Meantime 45 documents had been put onto the DDT page of Dunblaneweb, and thanks were due to Terence O'Byrne for his help with this. One newsletter had been produced for the membership and it was intended that the frequency would be increased. Members were asked to notify their email addresses to the Membership Secretary for this purpose.

4.7 The Local Development Plan would be the focus for the future. The Board is coordinating a planning-for-real exercise, which will inform the Council and developers of the community's wishes regarding the future development of the town. The Board is looking to take action on a number of empty and underused buildings in the High Street. Power generation and other sources of income were being investigated.

4.8 Steve thanked all the Directors and expressed the Board's gratitude to Margaret Stewart who had recently retired as Membership Secretary after seven years' service, and to Lorna Inglis for taking on the role. He thanked the Board minute-takers Liz Chambers, Monica Cessford and Lorna Inglis, and Alan Cessford for his work on the Mems and Arts. Thanks were due to Bill Stewart, Allan Pogson and employee Andrew Kelly for the smooth running of the Braeport Centre, and to the DDT Projects Group for their work on the High Street site. Grateful thanks were also due to the volunteers of the Dunblane in Bloom group, and the Midweek Group.

5. **Accounts for the Financial Year to 30 June 2010**

5.1 The Treasurer, Janice Stewart, presented the accounts explaining that she had taken over part way through the year. She was responsible for the three DDT accounts - the Braeport Account, the Enterprise Fund and the Business Account - as well as the DDT (Projects) Ltd accounts.

5.2 The Fixed Assets (trailer, polytunnel, hotbox, strimmers, computer, etc) depreciated at different rates.

5.3 The main expenditure of the Braeport Account was the cleaner's salary; other costs were the utilities and repairs.

5.4 The Enterprise Fund had been renamed (from Projects Account) to distinguish it from the DDT (Projects) Ltd Account. The Airtricity Project simply recorded the receipt and distribution of the 'windfarm money' from Scottish and Southern Energy. The Midweek Group had been ascribed a small budget from which materials for the Faery Bridge refurbishment were paid. Miscellaneous Projects included a survey undertaken by University of Stirling students, which was a condition of the application to the Big Lottery Fund. The Dunblane in Bloom group had raised funds from collecting cans, Potato Day (£169) and at the Doune and Dunblane Fling. A grant of £500 had been received from Stirling Council and a donation of £1,000 had been received from the Rock Garden Club. The expenditure from the Community Plan Project had been mostly on printing costs. The High Street Feasibility Account would shortly stand at zero with all funds being transferred to the DDT (Projects) Ltd account, except for £342.23 which was being transferred to the Enterprise Fund. There was expenditure of £35,000 for professional fees. Where possible, local firms had been employed.

5.5 The accounts for DDT (Projects) Ltd did not need to be audited until May 2011, when all DDT's accounts would be audited. The best rate of interest for investing the grant monies was from Scottish Widows, but some had been left with Royal Bank of Scotland for business reasons.

5.6 The Business Account appeared to show a loss, but monies from the Feasibility Account would make this up.

5.7 Chris Finnarty proposed, and Keir Bloomer seconded, the adoption of the accounts and Janice Stewart was thanked for her clear presentation.

6. Election of Directors

6.1 The two elected Directors who were standing for re election (the other elected directors were not required to stand for re-election) and those appointed Directors standing for election were all introduced. They were:-

Elected Directors standing for re election - John Seddon, Bill Stewart

Appointed Directors standing for election - Malcolm Dougall, Janice Stewart, Morag Watson, Tim Hughes, Jessica Lindohf and Keir Bloomer.

6.2 Chris Finnerty proposed, and Ken Mitchell seconded, and they were all elected unopposed.

6.2 There was no nomination for the remaining place on the Board.

7. Special Resolution - proposed changes to the DDT's Mems & Articles of Association

7.1 Tim Hughes reminded members that the DDT was a membership-based charitable trust with company status, the directors being trustees. The Memorandum & Articles of Association provided an important legal framework, which ensured accountability and responsible management and policy-making. Advice on the suggested changes had been received from the Development Trusts Association for Scotland (DTAS) and the Office of the Scottish Charities Registrar (OSCR). He thanked Alan Cessford for his work on the proposed amendments.

7.2 The changes needed to be made to bring the Mems & Arts in line with the requirements of Scottish Land Registration, and changes made in 2006 to Companies law. Having taken legal advice, and based on the DTAS model, no change to the Memorandum was being proposed as any change might have undermined the DDT's charity status. The Objects were still as originally written.

7.3 The main change - to the number of directors - was intended to ensure more membership involvement in the absence of any employed staff. It would allow skilled people to be co-opted for a short time and it clarified who would be eligible.

7.4 In response to Ian Stein asking whether the DCC representative would be elected or co-opted, Tim Hughes confirmed that a separate, formal agreement had been made with the DCC, which was on the website. This ensured that the DDT Board would always include a DCC member, but that member would not hold any other office on the Board. If they withdrew within the year, a replacement would be found by the DCC. If an elected member director withdrew within the year, the Board would have the authority to replace them.

7.5 The motion "...that the new Memorandum and Articles of Association be adopted in their entirety " was proposed by Tim Hughes, seconded by Dougal Thornton and approved unanimously.

8. High Street Project

8.1 Malcolm Dougall reminded members that at the 2009 AGM planning permission was in place for the building to contain three flats, two offices, a restaurant and basement storage space. A grant from the Town Centre Regeneration Fund of £1.2m had been awarded, and the DDT was in the process of applying to the Big Lottery Fund, which was subsequently unsuccessful. One of the conditions of the TCRF was that it should be spent by April 2010 but after meetings with the Scottish Government it was agreed that entering into a construction contract prior to that deadline would show a positive commitment to spend it. Consequently, a contract had to be put in place with a building contractor, the site had to be purchased and a building warrant obtained by mid March 2010. These conditions were met.

8.2 The design team was made up of local firms as far as possible - Robert Paul, architect; AKM Project Management, project management; Brownriggs, quantity surveyor; David Reid Group, civil and structural engineers and Henderson Warnock, mechanical and electrical engineers.

8.3 When the site was investigated by the civil engineers, it was discovered that the ground conditions did not allow for the design as originally envisaged because of potential disturbance to neighbouring buildings and the potential collapse of the High Street retaining wall. Consequently, the building had to be redesigned to reduce the footprint of the lower basement by 50% which resulted in the elimination of the planned storage cages.

8.4 Tenders were invited from a short-list of 6 contractors and the bids received ranged from £1.17m to £1.65m. Negotiations were entered into with the lowest bidder with a view to reducing the contract price, and the building was redesigned again. The two offices on the 1st floor were changed to two one bedroom flats, the restaurant toilets were relocated, and the two restaurant floors were left as a shells to be completed by potential restaurateurs. A contract was subsequently entered into with John Graham (Dromore) Limited for £1.1m on 12th March 2010. Construction began on 12th April with a contractual completion date of 14th March 2011.

8.5 Once construction works commenced, the ground conditions were found to be even worse than anticipated - neither the High Street retaining wall nor the staircase from Mill Row had proper structural foundations. Extensive mass concrete underpinning works had to be carried out to provide proper foundations to these structures at significant additional cost to the contract. Notwithstanding these problems with redesign and additional foundation works, the project was currently progressing in line with the contractor's programme and it was expected that the building would be wind and watertight by mid November. First fix joiner and electrical work had begun.

8.6 Up to the end of October 2011, £803,000 had been spent including £57,000 VAT, which should be refunded. Professional fees and reports had cost circa £300,000. With four months until completion, it was impossible at present to tell what the final cost would be given that variations had been instructed, but it was clear that additional funds would be needed.

8.7 A Factor and Leasing Agents were being sought to manage the building and seek potential tenants for the flats and restaurant. It was anticipated that rental income from the flats alone would bring in a gross income of circa £26,000 per annum, producing a gross profit of circa £10,000 before financing costs and tax. Income from the restaurant would be in addition to the above figures

8.8 Asked about the changes to the toilets, Malcolm confirmed that toilets would be accessible from both restaurant floors via the lift. In answer to a question about the funding shortfall, Malcolm confirmed that RBS had changed its mind about supporting speculative projects and that buy to let mortgage finance for the penthouse flat might be the way forward. However, discussions were ongoing. Asked whether the pavement use by the business adjacent to the building would be protected, Malcolm confirmed that it would be.

9. Development Working Group

9.1 Alan Booth explained that the purpose of the Group, which had met three times, was to consider realistic community-led projects that could complement and inform the higher level planning process. Their first action was to feed into the DDT's and DCC's responses to the Main Issues Report.

9.2 Whilst accepting that what the community wanted was not necessarily what was needed, their wish list included:-

- revisiting the ideas of the Dunblane Forum in relation to the High Street;
- sponsoring an objective Spatial Town Planning exercise;
- promoting creative approaches to town centre development in terms of future; residential expansion, (consideration of) relocating the abattoir and pedestrianisation of the High Street;
- considering what developments could arise from unused High Street buildings, in particular the old Co-operative building, the Chinese restaurant and the Stirling Arms;
- wider involvement of traders in the group's activities;

- engaging with transport issues, eg reviewing parking at Mill Row and seeking community gain from the activities of rail transport providers.

9.3 The Group was aiming to initiate community consultation with a view to having a spatial plan incorporated into the Local Development Plan.

9.4 Chris Anderson asked the group to look at the Anchorscross scheme to satisfy the community that the increased number of dwellings stayed within the agreed footprint, and (whilst intimating that responding to active planning applications was not the purpose of the group) Alan Booth agreed to do this.

10. Environment Working Group

10.1 Janice Stewart explained that the group had agreed to consider three main themes:- children's playparks, the Haugh (Memorial Park), and the High Street shop fronts.

10.2 All the playparks in Dunblane and Ashfield were visited, as were playparks in Causewayhead and Stirling for comparison purposes, and a meeting was held with the Head of Stirling Council's Land Services department. A report was compiled and put onto the website. The playparks were all found to be well maintained but many were very 'tired'. The Midweek Group had been asked for assistance in Spring 2010 to spruce up the Mill Row playpark in the first instance, with the agreement of Stirling Council.

10.3 Three DDT members attended a workshop on designing open spaces, supported by DTAS, and produced a scale model of the Haugh. This was being used as a tool for consulting the community on how they would like to see the park developed. A community-volunteering day was arranged for 9th October and litter picking was undertaken in the area of the Haugh and the Laighhills. In addition, five tonnes of compost provided by Stirling Council was barrowed to the poplar border and about 50 hostas, donated by members of the community, were planted. The idea was eventually to create the longest hosta border in Scotland along the 200 metre length of the poplars as a visitor attraction. The event would be repeated every Spring and Autumn until the woodland/hosta border was completed.

10.4 Plans for restoring the High Street shop fronts to their original look were formulated by the Dunblane Forum, and these were reviewed. It was hoped a grant could be secured in the future to undertake this work.

10.5 Stirling Council was due to produce a Master Plan for the Laighhills in 2011, and no action could be undertaken by the Environment Group until it was published, however, dialogue had begun with the Council about the derelict toilets adjacent to the Changing Rooms.

11. Communities Facilities Working Group

11.1 Jessica Lindohf explained that the Community Facilities Working Group had begun by reviewing all community activities in Dunblane, discussing how best to coordinate them, and identifying what was missing.

11.2 A survey of all community facilities was being finalised and it was expected to identify what facilities were open to the public, what they offered, and where there were gaps in provision.

11.3 The Group would be considering how best to support work in the community with young people, and with older people, and identifying community services that were missing.

12. Braeport Centre

12.1 Bill Stewart reviewed the history of the Braeport, explaining that the DDT took over its management in 2004. It had been leased from Stirling Council since 1st May 2007, and had been operating successfully in profit since then. The only expenditure was the salary of our cleaner.

12.2 Bill thanked Allan Pogson and Pat Chisholm for volunteering their services and asked if any other members would be prepared to offer their time.

12.3 There were currently 26 weekly classes and 16 groups hired rooms on a regular basis. There had been a big growth in children's parties at weekends.

12.4 Options for improvement and development were described as were the dilemmas. Stirling Council has no funding to spend on the Braeport and the disrepair of the toilet block could lead to closure. The publication of the survey of community facilities, and the community consultation that would follow, was awaited with interest. Funding possibilities were outlined and would be followed up.

13. Midweek Group

13.1 Monica Cessford listed the Group's activities over the previous 12 months. The first six months, October to March, had been devoted to the refurbishment of the Faery Bridge during the worst winter weather for decades. An event to mark the completion of the project was arranged and Morag Matheson and Hunter Mackay were invited to attend. Ken Matheson had been Provost at the time of the bridge's restoration in 1974, and Basil Mackay had been the Burgh Surveyor at the time.

13.2 A new sign pointing in the direction of the Museum was added to the ornamental direction sign at the Fourways Roundabout. Six High Street benches were refurbished in the summer and thanks to Ian Robb were recorded for making available premises for undertaking this work. The benches in the Children's Memorial Garden beside the Fourways Roundabout were also receiving attention. The Group undertook several projects at the Braeport over the year, including painting windows, both sets of toilets, and the timber walls of the kitchen, and replacing the kitchen gutters.

13.3 Future projects would include refurbishing benches near the War Memorial, in the Community Garden, the Laighhills and Ochloch Park, and some of the play equipment at Mill Row playpark.

13.4 The Midweek Group had been working together for the benefit of the community since July 2003 and the meeting showed their appreciation with a generous round of applause.

14. Dunblane in Bloom

14.1 Sandy MacKay explained that the group had had another successful year providing colourful displays in the town centre and on the dual carriageway. They had raised funds by providing teas at the Fling, and lunches at the Potato Day as well as via collecting cans.

14.2 The award of the Provost's Civic Award to DDT was appreciated by all.

14.3 The current new project was the creation of a Rock Garden beside the Community Garden and thanks were due to KGT for donating tons of stone and to the volunteers for their skill in building the walls. The Rock Garden Club had kindly donated funding, and would be offering advice on planting in the Spring. The compost bins at Ashfield had been built with the help of Ian Robb, to whom thanks were due, and were now beginning to produce compost.

14.4 The competition for the DDT awards had been keenly contested and the judging had been undertaken this year by Liz Rankin of the Friends of Bridge of Allan.

14.5 Sandy MacKay concluded by thanking all the volunteers and they were given a generous round of applause by the meeting.

15. Chairman's concluding remarks

Steve Mason thanked members for attending and invited everyone to get involved with the work of the Trust. The meeting closed at 12.30pm.