

The Glenkens & District Trust

SC042489

Report from meeting of Trustees on 17 March 2020

The Glenkens & District Trust held a meeting of Trustees on the evening of 17 March 2020. This was held by telephone conference call in recognition of the current guidance around COVID-19. We were also supported on the call by Foundation Scotland.

We noted that Paul Hodson, who was nominated by Parton Community Council had resigned due to on-going work commitments and welcomed his replacement, Tom Marshall, to the meeting. The Trustees thanked Paul for his support.

There were two key areas of focus for the meeting, the current award round and the Community Action Plan. Given the wide-ranging uncertainty arising from COVID-19 the Trustees spent considerable time discussing how we should approach our current tasks. We all recognise that we need to do our best to balance the different interests and so after discussion agreed the following:

AWARDS FROM THE FUND

We will continue, as planned, with the round of funding for Blackcraig Wind Farm Community Fund which is due to close on 27th March 2020 as we know that a number of organisations are working on applications to submit to this round.

However, the Trustees are aware that we are all in rapidly changing times and therefore will consider any significant developments in relation to COVID-19 as they assess applications and make decisions on awards going forward. Applicants should be aware that, as part of this process, GDT will now bear in mind the time criticality of projects to ensure that we can support our communities now and also in a way that enhances our ability to recover from this crisis in the longer term.

In addition, while there was a timetable in place for making decisions by the end of May 2020, this date is now uncertain due to uncertainty on the availability of both the GDT Trustees and the Foundation Scotland workforce during the assessment and decision making process.

In parallel, GDT, is also considering and exploring the implementation of an emergency funding process whereby organisations can apply for special funds to help meet unexpected needs arising as a result of the current circumstances. Further information regarding this will be published in due course. GDT wants to be supportive of the communities it serves at this time, while honouring their existing commitments.

During this time we will continue to draw on the invaluable experience that Foundation Scotland have in managing numerous funds across Scotland who are all grappling with similar issues.

Foundation Scotland is communicating with all current Blackcraig Fund grantees to provide reassurance around current grant arrangements, acknowledging that projects and services funded with grants may be adversely by the situation we are all now facing and relaxing reporting requirements for the time being.

Finally we are still planning on a second round in the Autumn but will obviously need to react to any developments.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Following on from the well attended workshops in early February which brought together people from across the area covered by the plan, Community Enterprise have been working hard on both the Report and on the Plan itself. We were delighted with the engagement and enthusiasm of attendees at the workshops and with the variety of ideas and suggestions made. We are lucky to have people who are very passionate about ensuring our area continues to thrive and to be a great place to live and work in.

We have received the draft report and we agreed that a small group of the trustees would work with Community Enterprise to bring back a final version to the GDT Board for approval. This process is likely to take longer than we originally intended primarily due to the varied ramifications of COVID-19. First there are the obvious practicalities arising from social distancing/self isolation etc. Secondly we want to ensure that the plan is realistic and robust to address both the issues we have identified to date but also the changes and developments that could arise from the current and rapidly developing social and economic situation. While we all agree that the Plan should be capable of evolving as things develop we believe that it would be prudent to delay finalising the plan until we are clearer on the longer-term impacts of COVID-19. We will however continue to work on it to ensure that it is ready to go out as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATIONS

To date we have relied on reports of our meetings etc to be communicated via our Community Councils. However, as what we do develops, we feel that in addition to this we should also put these reports of our meetings on the webpage that Foundation Scotland host for the Blackcraig Wind Farm Fund. The link to that webpage is:
<https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/programmes/blackcraig/>

MESSAGE FROM TRUSTEES

In our discussions we all recognised that we are living in uncertain and difficult times with no certainty as to how long they will last and how they will impact on our loved ones, our communities and us in the long term. We all have a role to play to support each other during these times and are very grateful for the actions people and organisations across the area are taking to help each other in both big and small ways. We are a great community, which has achieved great things over the years, and by continuing to work together we are confident these foundations will help us weather the storm. We in GDT are committed to playing our part in this.

Fiona Smith