

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Crieff Community Trust**  
**Wednesday 18 August 2021, 18.30 held virtually via Zoom**

**Directors:** Ailsa Campbell (AC Chair), Ann Ross (AR), James Anderson (JA), Ian Christie (IC), Claire Sanville (CS Treasurer), Daniel Grandfield (DG), Jane White (JW Secretary), Paula Brown (PB)

**Full members:** Chris McIntosh, Vicky Smith, Mark Grugiel, John Mauchline, Ian Hamilton, Caroline Murphy, Andrew Philip

**Members of the Public:** Amulree Welch, (Drummond Arms project consultant: Stephen Oswald)

1. Welcome and introductions

- Ailsa Campbell opened and chaired the meeting.

2. There were no apologies

3. Approval of 2020 AGM Minutes

- The minutes of 2020 AGM were approved by IC and seconded by AC

**4. Report from the Chair** – Ailsa Campbell’s Chair report was in the form of a presentation, which began with a general overview and then different board members reported on their specific areas of responsibility. Full details can be read in the Annual Report.

**5. Paths & Turretbank Wood** – Jim Anderson

Covid has impacted the whole of the past year’s work. In particular, negotiations, which had been going quite well between PKC Greenspace team and landowners, became much more difficult and progress dried up. Agreements are needed with the main landowners before planning permissions can be sought and then funding applications begun.

In Turret Bank Wood (TBW) we dealt with 40 trees which had been identified as needing attention in a surveyor’s report plus a further 2 which were found to also require work once contractors were on site. This involved lopping some unsafe branches and felling one tree that was dead.

We finally feel we are making progress on balsam eradication and had help in doing so from Crieff Soroptimists, who spent a day at TBW. We were lucky that balsam blitzing season coincided with Covid restrictions being eased.

In October half term Kids’ Week in Crieff put up wooden cut-out figures in TBW and children were able to explore the area, looking for the characters.

The Soroptimists donated and planted a cherry tree in meadow 1 and a weeping willow in meadow 2 donated.

The volunteer paths group did not meet at all during the year due to Covid lockdown restrictions.

We are still examining the best way to link TBW to the rest of Lady Mary's Walk. A survey of the area has been completed and the work to create an all-ability path is out for tender at the moment. We hope to see progress on this in 2021/2022.

We are purchasing a bench soon with funds donated by the CoOp.

## **6. Can Do Crieff – Ailsa Campbell**

The coworking space underneath our landlords Strathearn Arts in Lodge Street, had been open for one year before Covid hit. Having increased membership gradually, by February 2020 with 17 members we were close to breaking even with rent payments. The work from home rule was in place throughout April 2020-April 2021. Half rent payment was negotiated with Strathearn Arts from September 2020-September 2021 and we received a grant from PKC which helped to pay the remainder of the rent.

Our remaining development officer was furloughed until she could come back and run the space and work for CCT.

Before the Covid restrictions came into force we had begun a programme of Biz Chats with local entrepreneurs to provide tips on running a business. We moved these online and ran 5 more. Although these attracted a different audience (more customers and local friends and family, than new business owners) the series was successful in keeping CDC in the public eye and gave us a chance to promote and raise awareness of CDC.

Looking forward, we have been unsuccessful in a number of applications for funding for the space. We had to rebuild membership almost from scratch when we were allowed to reopen in June 2021, but by August 2021 we have 9 members. We continue with more promotion and are beginning a collaboration with Strathearn Strategic Consulting to run a Business Club for new entrepreneurs from the space.

We have also begun work with Radio Earn, who will use the recordings of our Biz Chats to train young people in how to create a podcast. We look forward to then being able to add these improved podcasts to our website.

## **7. Drummond Arms – Ian Christie, Stephen Oswald**

The biggest help has been securing continued grant funding through to March 2022 for our project coordinator Stephen Oswald. He has made great progress by being able to have a single focus on chasing people, putting in grant applications etc and we would like to express our thanks to him for his hard work and tenacity.

We were informed that our Town Centre Funding has to be spent by September 2021. Therefore, following a tender process, in April 2021 Kinetic were appointed to complete a soft strip out of the building. This has involved mainly cleaning it out by hand and wheelbarrow, so we can get an idea of the state of the remaining structure of the building. The process of removing asbestos was also begun. This has proved to be a bigger job than first anticipated. The work has sparked interest and created momentum, especially with PKC. It is a small grant, for a huge building but has enabled a better appreciation of the potential and problems of the building.

Planning consent for demolition of 2 out-buildings was received.

A £10,000 grant has been applied for, to make the front elevation look better by removing the weeds and plants and adding pictures at the windows.

A PKC officer has recommended approval for an application for funds to secure the acquisition of the former RBS and demolish one of the outbuildings.

Discussions are ongoing with the Heritage Enterprise Fund. A conservation deficit of about £3 million has been identified, which could then trigger a further £3 million investment by a hotel operator partner, to turn the Drummond Arms back into a hotel. VAT registration has allowed us to reclaim 20% on everything we have spent which will provide some further funds.

DARL is hoping to secure insurance for the building.

Once the demolition at the back of the main building is complete, space could be made available for pop-ups, extra car parking etc. whilst work continues in the former hotel.

## **8. Crieff Community Action Plan & Uniting Crieff – Jane White**

The idea for the new community website [www.unitingcrieff.org.uk](http://www.unitingcrieff.org.uk) stemmed from the first Crieff Community Action Plan (CAP) and was reinforced by the 'Cash for Crieff' process. The website is in 2 parts. The first is an interactive database of local groups divided into 5 categories. It is still in its infancy. Lots of groups have already registered their details but there are many more still to do so and we will continue to promote registration. Also, we need local people to know about the database and use it. We are encouraging local schools, estate agents, the Library, Crieff Connexions etc. to help us populate and promote it. The second part of the website is designed as an easy access point for all Crieff related documents. At the moment it only has the new Crieff CAP and related questionnaire responses etc. But we will be encouraging others to share funding applications and add any relevant information from PKC etc. We are very pleased with the format and functionality of the website and grateful to Kona @ FidgetyLizard for design and coding. The website will only be worthwhile though if well used.

Refreshing the 2013-18 CAP was another area of progress this year. Our delay in delivery was actually a good thing in hindsight as the new plan is firmly rooted in the reality of Covid and its consequences. Sadly, it was formulated before the reality of a town without a BID and this is something which we need to reflect upon, as their contribution to the process and proposed delivery of the plan was huge. Consultation during the pandemic was not easy and despite our best efforts not as inclusive as we might have liked. However, one positive was the great steering group, whom we hope will be the foundation of a quarterly forum to take the delivery of the plan forward. We are calling this the Uniting Crieff forum and hope to get it up and running in the autumn of 2021.

The 2021-2026 Crieff Community Action Plan can be accessed online on the Uniting Crieff and CCT websites. Hard copies are available from Crieff Connexions and there will be a summary in the October Quair. We will be holding a launch event on Saturday 25 September at 2pm at Strathearn Arts. Our MP and one MSP, local councillors and lots of community groups have already confirmed attendance. It would be great to get a good turnout from the local community as well.

## **9. Treasurer's Report – Claire Sanville**

As has been expressed throughout this meeting – it has been a challenging year for the trust, especially on the financial front. There was very little income from CDC. A grant from PKC, the ICF and furlough money paid our community development officer's salary up to end May 2021.

For 2021-2021 with low revenue, it will be a juggling act between building membership usage at CDC and using up our PKC grant. We hope that we will be able to make a success of CDC, with the renewed interest in membership currently being experienced, and prove the concept is workable in Crieff.

#### **Questions/ Comments arising:**

TBW

- 'Himalyan balsam on Morrison's side of the river between their playing fields and the burn.' So efficient at propagation that will need tackling.
- 'Can you look at the option of coming down from Lagan Road to join the path through TBW?' We will not try to re-establish the current path – SEPA will not allow it. Best option is to come from meadow 1, up the side of the railway embankment. We are in talks with the landowner.

Drummond Arms

- 'Will scaffolding stay?' Beautifying is just to clean the front façade. Edge protection will remain in place.
- 'Is demolition still an option?' It is a receding option. Work we are doing at the moment as a soft strip would have to be done anyway, as we cannot demolish with asbestos in place. We have an interested investment partner if we can bridge the financial deficient. It would be a huge battle to get permission to demolish the listed building, but demolition remains as a final option to make the area safe. If the current grant application is not successful, the matched private equity will also fall by wayside. But we will keep applying for smaller grants – it will just take a lot longer. The £3 million grant is a big shot but worthwhile.
- 'If you cannot buy RBS what are the other options?' We have explored compulsory purchase orders, but these are very difficult, and PKC is not willing to go down that route. We commissioned a small legal report to explore the use of the Tenement Act, which, because the building is in such a bad state of repairs the act will allow access for repairs. If we are not given that and cannot purchase, then we will use funding towards such legal action.

#### **10. Election of Directors\***

Ann Ross is retiring - seeking re-election, proposed by AC, seconded by CS  
Ian Christie is retiring - seeking re-election, proposed by JA, seconded by DG  
Dan Grandfield is retiring. Thanks to him for his service.

#### **11. Any other competent business**

The board registered the fact that BID was not re-elected. For CCT this will have considerable consequences. CCT cannot take on BID work, we have our hands full with current projects and as a charity many of their proposed projects could not be undertaken by CCT. We will carry on working on existing projects to find resolution for the long-term issues they seek to address.

Our annual report will be available online and sent to members once the accounts are finalised.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19.20