

240th Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Sleat Community Trust

On: Monday 28th of April 2025

In: Board Room

At: 18.00pm

MINUTES

1. Attendance, Apologies, and absences:

Ade Stokes AS, Eilidh Grant EG, Garry Noakes GN, Duncan MacInnes DM, Donald MacDonald DMD (meeting chair), John MacDonald JMD, Myrielle Macleod MML (Admin)

Apologies : Ruud van Ruitenbeek (SCTCL Chair) RvR

Teams: Ciorstan Howarth CH, Andy Williamson AW, Paddy McKay PM

The board is quorate.

2. Items for AOB:

- | | |
|--|--------|
| a.) CPS Transition | MML |
| b.) CDI Request of Minibus Use | MML |
| c.) Sleat Hydro Community Benefit Fund | PM/MML |
| d.) Community Land Scotland AGM Confirmation | MML |
| e.) Approval of New Members | MML |
| f.) Representation on new Sound of Sleat Ferries Committee | MML |
| g.) Polytunnel update | DM |
| h.) Housing | EG |

3. Declarations of Interest:

PM for Sleat Hydro

MML as Shop Supplier

CH as Shop Worker

AW for Community Council

DM for Community Council

4. Minutes of the last meeting, matters arising:

Proposed by DM, seconded by JMD.

Any still outstanding Action Points can be found in the table at the end of the document.

5. Finance AS

AS shared some documents prior to the meeting. The SCT Board Quarterly Cashflow Report from 2024/2025 was issued to review the final quarter of the financial year and to review the year as a whole. This is the old style of reporting which will be changed.

The consolidated Accounts showed that the balance carried forward in Q1 was down by about £49,000.00. The reasons for this can be seen in the individual entities reports.

The SCT report shows that the income has been affected by the missing SRL WOC payments. There was also the loan of £5,000 to SRL in January which wasn't in the forecast.

The end of year balance was higher than forecasted due to the contribution from the shop, which was not in the forecast. The unrestricted funds reserve is set at £20,000 for SCT. This is to cover about 3 months of "normal" outgoings.

After taking the reserve off, this leaves SCT with an unrestricted balance of about £11,000. The status for SCT is Amber due to the declining funds.

The SCTCL report has not got any commentary from the SCTCL board. However, the expenditure shows that it is £21,000 over the forecast but this includes the MOU payment to the Trust and the payment for the building of an awning. The stock demands also change the expenditure and income.

Income was down on forecast for the year by around £24,000. Together with the increased expenditure, this accounts for most of the shortfall in the consolidated balance versus the forecast.

The shop also has a separate savings account which was at £9,372.42 at the end of the financial year. The overall status of SCTCL is green.

The SRL report shows that the finances remain in a precarious situation. Loss of woodchip sales, loan from SCT totalling £15,000 plus WOC payment holiday are slowing but not stopping decline in funds. Going forward, a local wood fuel business will provide regular monthly income and selling assets to the business and separately should help the funds as well. The forecast shows a slowly improving outlook subject to business proposal proceedings but overall, Tree felling income is needed to reimburse SCT and reinvest in forestry in Tormore. Tree felling licence depending on Long Term Forest Plan being completed and approved. SRL bank balance only just in plus with £1,799.95 at the moment. Status therefore remains in Red.

AS also showed the new SCT Cashflow Report for 2025/26 which is a new way of reporting, but this is currently not finalised.

A Summary and Status Page shows that SCT is assuming a 5% increase in MOUs from April 2025 subject to approval of the boards. This is to compensate for rising costs. SRL support package is forecast to be at £32,505 by the end of March 2026 if there is no earlier repayment. SCTs unrestricted balance is therefore forecast to be below £10,000 by end of March 2026 without the SRL repayment. That brings it below its reserve level of £20,000 and is a concern. Status Amber.

SCT Income and Costs overview for 2025/26 shows the figures now in a graph. The graph gets copied from an Excel spreadsheet with the tables, so the figures are linked and accurate. The actual figures will be on the same slide as the forecast figures and the projections can therefore be easily seen. For example, in the current forecast the peaks in costs (Accountancy fees) and peaks in Income (EV grant) can easily be seen and show the gap between income and expenditure. The EV Grant income should not be relied on as this was reduced last year so may be reduced further soon.

A slide showing the SCT support for SRL shows the full support package consisting of the loan and the WOC payment holiday.

There is no commentary for SCTCL yet and the projections are not available yet.

For SRL, with the agreement for the new wood fuel business taking over and the winding down of wood chip business and the sale of machinery this should hopefully negate any further loans from SCT. Tree felling will provide cash inflow which will enable SRL to repay SCT loans and bring WOC payments up to date. However, current WOC is not going to be sustainable going forward as funds from felling will need to be reinvested in Tormore. Status remains Red.

The graph for 25/26 for SRL shows the fluctuations in income and costs. It showed though that the expenses will go over the income once monthly WOC is reinstated. This will cause a falling bank balance each month.

The new forecast was seen as easy to understand however some board members would like to be able to see the numbers behind it. This can be solved by sharing the underlying spreadsheet with board members. It was also suggested to make sure to use the colours on the graph consistently and making a Dashboard front page for the report so the projected end of year figures can be shown. Overall, the new forecast shows visual variations and is better for presenting. All present agreed to go forward using the new format for presenting rather than the old providing some amendments are taken into account.

It was suggested to use and share these graphs with SCTCL and SRL as well.

6. SRL (Renewables): General Update and Actions required GN:

GN updated the board on the current SRL position. Last Friday was SRL's board meeting where the upcoming agreement with Matthew Adam's for a fire log business was discussed. GN emailed a copy of the proposed Head of Terms to the SCT board prior to the meeting. This will help get everyone moving as Matt is already working up in the forest.

This form will be signed first before a full contract will formalised by a lawyer. The sale of Equipment to Matt will be imbedded in the contract. He is looking at buying the Truck, forklift and Timber loader. There have been discussions on the prices of these with the offer from Matt being lower than anticipated.

All present agreed they were happy for SRL to proceed with the Head of Terms prior to some adjustments being made by GN. Gn will then sign the paper on behalf of SCT.

The timber loader has still got conditions on it from the grant which was used to purchase it. These conditions do not allow a sale of the item within 5 years which means until December 2026. However, a lease of the equipment to Matt is possible. GN to follow up with Marie-Anne about grant conditions for the log trailer.

Regarding the Long Term Forest Plan, this is now awaiting some maps which Alan Drever and Chris Pendlebury are working on. This can then be submitted and hopefully it will be approved.

Once the LTFP is approved, felling can commence.

It was agreed that it would be worth pushing the department responsible for approval of the plan and maybe speak to other members of the Community woodland Association to see if they had similar issues with approval. GN to follow up.

7. SCTCL (Trading): General Update RvR:

There was no representative or update available.

8. Strategy, governance and management:

This will be skipped for this meeting.

9. Projects/Funding

- a.) CRF2165: Playpark Report

The work on the Playpark is due to start in May. All old equipment needs to be removed first, the ground needs to be levelled and paths laid so there is no update on when this may be finished. All work is also weather dependent. Once the Playpark is finished this should be communicated to the Sleat residents.

10. CDLT:

AW provided a quick update on what's been happening since the last meeting.

An email that was received earlier from Alex Stoddart needs to be replied to with the names of the liaison group members from SCT which will be EG, AW and DMD.

PM will action this email and set up Trust email addressed to those involved in the liaison group so they can keep personal communication separate from this.

11. AOB:

a.) CPS Transition

MML

MML explained that CPS who do back office work for the EV minibus and provide solutions for charging issues etc will be disbanded at the end of the year. In its place there are recommendations for joining other institutions. MML asked for help in understanding the requirements and what needs to be done going forward. JMD offered to help.

b.) CDI Request of Minibus Use

MML

CDI approached MML to ask about the possibility of using the Minibus to bring people from Sleat up to CDI in the autumn for Community Cafes there. All present agreed that this is fine in principle providing the bus gets booked. MML to put CDI in contact with AS going forward.

c.) Sleat Hydro Community Benefit Fund

PM/MML

PM explained that the Hydro Scheme is not to make a profit and that to avoid any funds being lost, they need to be spent otherwise there will be tax implications. There is money available via the restricted SCT fund but there is more available in the Hydro Fund itself that can be drawn on if needed.

PM left the meeting to avoid any conflict of interest.

It was then discussed how Hydro funds should be used and if there are any guidelines or sponsor structures. DM will pull together some information on this.

d.) Community Land Scotland AGM Confirmation

MML

MML asked about the number of representatives of SCT taking part in the Community Land Scotland AGM which is on the 30th and 31st of May. It was agreed to book this for 3 SCT participants and SCT will cover the cost for this.

e.) Approval of New Members

MML

New Trust members Marianne and Christina Brews were approved by all present.

f.) Representation on new Sound of Sleat Ferries Committee

PM

Pm is joining the new Sound of Sleat Ferries Committee for all the shops at the Pier and was asking if he should also join this in the name of SCT. All present agreed.

g.) Polytunnel update

DM

DM updated the board that there is the intention to put the new cover on the Polytunnel this Saturday if there are enough volunteers.

h.) Housing

EG

EG asked about priorities in Housing allocations and where to bring this up. It was suggested for EG to email the Community Council about this.

The meeting ended at 19:21 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 28th of April at 18:00 pm in the Boardroom.

	ACTION POINT	RESPONSIBLE	OUTCOME
1	Contact Highland Council to discuss removing affordable housing conditions	JMD	Highland Council has been contacted, awaiting reply
2	Contact Highland Small Community Housing Trust about housing conditions	JMD	
3	Risk Register: all boards to look individually at their risks and report back to main board	SRL board, SCTCL board	
4	Convert Tormore Document into Word and forward to SCT board	PM	
5	Comment and review Tormore Document	All Board Members	
6	Give PM access to Mailchimp	DM	
7	Wording for Blue Plaque	DM, to be put on next month's Agenda	
8	Carry Forward	Board Makeup (incl.co-opt from SMO)	
9	Skills Review	To be put on next month's Agenda	
10	Remove Mike and Martin from RBS bank	MML	MML to phone RBS
11	HIE representation at next Meeting	To be put on next month's Agenda	
12	Amend Head of Terms and sign on behalf of SCT	GN	
13	Follow up with Marie-Anne on Grant terms in regards to log trailer	GN	
14	Push for answer for approval of LTFP	GN	
15	Speak to Community Woodlands Association Members to see if similar issue with LTFP waiting time	GN	
16	Set up Email addresses for CDLT Liasion group members	PM	
17	Reply to Email from A. Stoddart with Liasion Group members email addresses	PM	
18	Put together a sponsor structure for Hydro Donations	DM	
19	Circulate Hydro Donation list to DM	MML	
20	Email reply to Pipe Band about Donation Request	EG to send from Sleat.org. Email account	

21	Book and pay for Community Land Scotland AGM for 3 SCT board members	MML	
22	Send new members email addresses to DM	MML	
23	Reply to CDI about using Minibus for their Community Cafes	MML	
24	Put CDI in contact with AS over Community Cafes	MML	
25	Email Community Council about Housing Allocations	EG	
26	Email copies of CPS Transition to JMD for help with this	MML	