

22nd Annual General Meeting of Sleat Community Trust

Date: Thursday, 22nd of January 2026

Venue:

Time: 7:00 pm

1. Welcome from the Meeting Chair:

Andy Williamson welcomed the board as chair of the meeting while the Sleat Community Trust Board Chair Donaidh MacDonald sent his apologies.

The meeting was deemed quorate so the proceedings could start. The Meeting was a hybrid meeting which means people were joining online.

All attendees were informed of where the fire exits and toilets in the building are, and everyone was also advised that the meeting was being recorded for minuting purposes.

2. Attendance, Apologies and absences: the meeting was quorate with over 10%.

Attendees, Members:

Angay	Hugh
Ashford	David
Barrington	Veronica
De Vries	Catherine
De Vries	Mark
Drever	Alan
Godfrey	Tim
Grant	Eilidh
Hall	Ian
Howarth	Ciorstan
MacDonald	John
MacDonald	Margaret
MacEachern	Calum
MacGillivray	Martin
MacInnes	Duncan
MacInnes	Polly
MacKinnon	Colleen
MacKinnon	Donnie
MacLean	Mary Flora
McKay	Patrick Neil
Morgan	Lesley
Noakes	Garry
Pendlebury	Christopher
Rawlinson	Kathryn
Roberts	Peter

Roberts	Sheana
Shone	Richard
Stokes	Adrian
Stokes	Jo
Van	
Ruitenbeek	Di
Van	
Ruitenbeek	Ruud
Venters	Angus
Venters	Patricia M
Weir	John
Williamson	Andrew

Attendees, Non-Members:

Burney	Rod
Burney	Ryan
Dallorzo-Hanley	Emma
Hanley	Jon
Gardiner	Geoff
Gourlay	Fergus
Lockley	Sophia Rose
	Angus John
Pritchard	Lowell

All above signed up to become members on the day

Macleod Myrielle (Company Secretary)

Stiven Calum (Skyenet)

Via Zoom:

Members:

Jackson	Dorothy
MacDonald	Janet
Munro	Gillian
Petri-Clark	Tricia
Zajac	Anne

Non- members:

Cumming	Andy
Hoyle	Su
Robertson	Ian

Roxburgh Kim

Proxies:

Brews	Marianne
MacDonald	Allan
MacDonald	Morag
McGillivray	Alison
Petri	Hans
Rosie	Mairi
White	Rosy

Apologies:

MacDonald	Donaidh
McGillivray	Margaret
McDermott	Jane
Pidduck	Peter
Walsh	Pat

3. Minutes of the last AGM

There were no action points from the last AGM and no questions on them were raised.

4. Presentation of accounts and reappointment of auditors

Mann Judd Gordon has been the long running accountant and auditor for the whole of the Trust.

Andy Cumming (senior accountant and auditor) joined the meeting via Zoom to present the Accounts from April 2024- March 2025. Andy reminded the Membership of the Structure of the Trust with Trading and Renewables.

The total assets of the Trust are just over 2 million and just under 2 million is fixed assets. £97,000.00 of other liabilities are not assets.

Sleat Community Trading has had figures similar to the previous year with a total income of just under £1,000.00 under the previous year. Direct costs are also like the last year and the main overhead for Trading is the wages. The increased wages have gone up with the general wage inflation. The Payments from Trading to the Trust have dropped the same as the wages have gone up indicating profitability has not been as good.

Sleat Renewables has had decreasing finances with the number of Sales droppings. The company contribution to the Trust has therefore also dropped significantly. This decrease in funds is causing pressure on Trading to cover the Trusts costs.

The charity has had a total income which is made up of the income from Trading and Renewables as well as Grants from the Highland Council and Rent from the garage. This shows that the only regular income for the Trust is the garage rent which further causes a tighter budget.

The Trust itself made a small loss in the year 2024-2025 but after depreciation the Trust did break even.

Reserves at the end of the year are enough to cover 3 months' worth of costs which is in line with the Trustees target. There has however been a reduction of the reserves from 7 months down to 3 months. The Trust will soon eat into its reserves if there isn't a continued review by the Trustees to stop this which is in progress.

No questions were raised during this and Andy Williamson thanked Andy Cumming on behalf of the board. Andy Cumming left the meeting at 19:14 pm.

The board and membership were happy to reappoint Mann Judd Gordon as Auditors for the next year.

5. Appointment of Trustees

Two Board Directors are stepping down at this AGM: Ciorstan Howarth and Ade Stokes. Andy W thanked both on behalf of the board and for their help over the last year(s). Both Directors will be missed.

Two elected Board Members are stepping down for re-election:

- Duncan MacInnes
- Paddy McKay

Both were proposed by Chris Pendlebury and seconded by Di van Ruitenbeek. The membership unanimously accepted the election.

Gillian Munro, the Sabhal Mor Ostaig Director, had joined the Trust in 2025 as a co-opted director. Gillian was nominated by Ade Stokes and Duncan MacInnes to become an elected director. An unanimously show of hands confirmed the election.

The number of elected Directors of the Sleat Community Trust is now 8 with no co-opted directors and 1 appointed director (Andy Williamson, appointed by the Sleat Community Council).

This leaves space for others to join the board either as a board member or volunteer.

There is also space for a young person to join (25 years or under).

Anybody who is interested can contact the office or speak to any board member.

6. Report from the Board

Sleat Community Trading Ltd. – Chair: Ruud Van Ruitenbeek

Ruud introduced himself as chair of the Trading board. He mentioned that the shop has had a good year with a stabilised performance which is the same as last year.

Ruud then handed over to Catherine de Vries, one of the 3 Shop Managers.

Armadale Stores – Catherine de Vries

Catherine updated the membership on the past year in the Shop.

The new Armadale Stores is now 5 years old as it was opened in March 2021 in the current building.

Financially, it has always been challenging but there has been help in form of good suppliers, good support from everyone and a good team of staff.

The customer base is increasing with more local people now shopping at Armadale Stores. To determine this, Catherine looked at the winter figures for the shop which are out with the tourist season.

The shop is continuing to make a modest profit which then goes back into the Trust to maintain and improve the shop.

There are currently 14 members of Staff employed which also includes a lot of younger staff (from 14 years onwards) which brings in a younger clientele.

The shop is still offering home deliveries to vulnerable people and a huge thank you to the delivery driver volunteers for this.

Armadale Stores is a good alternative to the supermarkets and where it cannot always compete on price it can on range: the shop offers refill stock, gluten free and vegan options.

There are some challenges such as the wages going up in line with the Real Living Wage which the shop is paying. The extreme weather recently has also ended in stock from the fridges and freezers being lost. The snow has put pressure on as members of staff struggled to get in.

Overall, there have been fewer visitors to Sleat, probably due to the Clan Donald closure and the erratic ferry service. However, creative thinking has brought people in. The shop now offers loyalty cards for coffee, has promotions on, new products are in store including home baked cinnamon buns and baguette and even local water from Broadford. To make more money there are also reusable bags and cups for sale which reduce plastic consumption and make excellent souvenirs.

Extending opening hours in the summer and on a Thursday were very popular and this will hopefully be continuing but is dependent on staff.

The Foyer of the shop is now being used by people and charities to do bake sales and has also been extended to the use for local artists and businesses.

The shop is trying to stay community focussed by raising money for charities, helping with the breakfast club at school and offering pill pack recycling.

Going forward, Armadale Stores hope to continue to grow the customer base, learn and share experiences with other independent and community owned shops across the Highlands, be innovative and keep sustainability at the core of everything.

Catherine then thanked all members, shop staff and volunteers for their continued support. She also thanked the Trading Board and Administration for their support.

Skyenet- Calum Stiven

Calum Stiven, who is the engineer and technical support for Skyenet introduced himself.

Skyenet has had a good year with an uptime of 99.99 to 100%. Some things that went wrong were radios jumping channels.

There were also challenges due to the storms. There have been back up batteries placed on masts, but they are not enough for these bigger outages. For the next year, Calum is hoping to double the battery capacities. Overall, the service provided was good during the extreme weather.

Looking at the bigger picture, with the roll out of Fibre in Sleat from Open Reach and Starlink there have been some customers lost. There were also still some new customers that have signed up with Skyenet. Overall, Skyenet has been making a moderate profit.

Calum reminded the membership that his customer support is available per email, Facebook page/messages or via calling the office.

Skyenet has now had its 10th anniversary as it was established in late spring 2015 and is still going strong.

Calum finished by thanking the community for their continued support.

Visit Sleat – Paddy McKay

Paddy McKay who runs Visit Sleat with Jane McDermott gave a brief update.

Visit Sleat continues to promote the area with leaflets, website and interactive screens in the Shop Foyer and at An Crùbh.

Sound of Sleat Ferry User Group- Paddy McKay

As Paddy is also part of the Sound of Sleat Ferry User Group, he also provided an update about this.

The last year was not good for businesses in Sleat as well as Mallaig due to the constant disruptions with the ferry service. A meeting was held last week and there is now a letter in draft to CalMac and politicians to address the issue and raise the concern from businesses. A Facebook page is also live, and any businesses affected by ferry disruption can fill in a survey online to report their concerns to CalMac. The idea of the group is to work together to show a single voice. Paddy thanked Martin MacGillivray for his help and involvement in this.

Sleat Community Trading Board – Ruud van Ruitenbeek:

Ruud let everyone know that there is also space on the Trading board for new Directors to join especially if they are interested in how the shop runs, help with Skynet or Visit Sleat.

Ruud also informed everyone that the shop is looking into buying a generator in this calendar year to keep the Shop as well as Office going during major power cuts.

Sleat Renewables Ltd. – Polly MacInnes

Polly MacInnes spoke on behalf of Sleat Renewables. The Finances for Renewables have generated a lot of money for the Trust over the years. Now there is a reduction in it.

Almost all timber in Tormore is already felled and due to the disturbed ferry sailings, SRL lost their biggest customers for woodchip. SRL itself has now been placed on a back burner as a business. Instead, Matt Adams has now been welcomed. Matt uses the woodshed in Tormore for his Log Fire Business and producing soft and hard wood for wood burning stoves.

Polly mentioned that the board is pleased and proud to support a local business and local employment.

Tormore Forest which was bought in 2011 was for a long time the only funding scheme for the Trust. The timber is now limited in the forest and to fell the remaining timber SRL requires renewal of their Long-Term Forest Plan which is proving difficult and frustrating to get. Once the plan is approved, felling can commence and timber can be sold which gives much needed reserves to repair the deer fencing.

In regard to the management of the Forest, SRL is looking to move away from the commercial to a more biodiverse planting which is now the goal for the forest. For this, Rowan Duff from Glenelg has provided trees for planting which will be paid for by funding from the International Tree Foundation. This all helps to rebuild the forest however this takes a lot of time and volunteer work.

Polly highlighted what a fantastic asset the forest is for the community and encourage the use of it.

Tormore Volunteers – Duncan MacInnes:

Duncan MacInnes has worked with volunteers in the forest for the last years and organises the volunteer activities. The current management of Tormore relies entirely on volunteers.

Nevertheless, Tormore Forest won an award at Scotland's Finest Woodlands and Tormore hosts Radical Travel who are volunteers that come to Tormore twice a year and they have also won an award recently for their community engagement. Radical Travel brings up 12 young people for 4 mornings of help in Tormore and the volunteers get to know Sleat. Duncan thanked the local community and volunteers for their support with this and their stellar baking.

Duncan then thanked Chris Pendlebury for his help and work in Tormore and for SRL.

Tormore has now got several miles of footpath, various walking possibilities, leaflets at the gate and is well established for locals and visitors. The footpath however needs developing and maintaining and trees need to be planted.

Duncan then reminded everyone that there is a volunteer day every 2nd Sunday of the month where volunteers can help and everyone is welcome. All tools are provided.

The Community Payback Scheme is also helping in Tormore, and they are out this weekend to plant some trees.

Duncan then mentioned users of Tormore such as Ian Hall who has organised a downhill cycle track and Sleat Nature Group who are advising and doing events on invasive species, bats etc. Campervan Parking is also proving popular with an honesty scheme for payment in place.

There is potential for other activities and better connections between users in Tormore. A collective management is needed and Duncan also advised everyone to continue visiting Tormore.

Community Benefit Fund from Hydro Scheme – Duncan MacInnes:

Duncan informed everyone about the Community Benefit Fund from the Hydro Scheme that is in place. Donations from the Hydro are received through the Trust to then be given to local groups for funding. Recently the Strath Choir, Pipe band and others have received funding.

If anyone is interested in getting funding, the next deadline will be advertised.

Sleat Community Trust –Andy Williamson:

Andy started off by saying that the Trust's governance is now stronger and the strategic direction of the Trust has more clarity.

The Trading subsidiaries are performing as projected and with new directors on the board there are also new skills and new energy. Donaidh has stepped up as Chair of the Trust, and he brings a lot of experience and energy.

This year the board has reviewed its strategic priorities and looked at its risk management and done a skills review.

However, funding opportunities are limited and fierce, the competition is tighter. Unless there is money coming in, it is difficult to operate. There are new ideas such as buying the Old Pier or developing Tormore, but they require the help of a Business Operations Manager (BDO). The recent application for a BDO was not successful due to the fund being oversubscribed.

Andy acknowledged Armadale Stores and the effort they have put in to make the shop successful and an anchor in the community. Local shops will need supporting overall especially if a Tesco gets build on the island.

There have been major disruptions throughout the year, especially the Armadale estate sale. A working group was formed to look at the options for the Trust, but these were limited and the funds would not be able to be raised. The risks were also deemed to be too great to proceed. Andy thanked all the volunteers on the working group for their help and input.

The Armadale Estate Sale has now gone through as a single lot and the outlook is positive. Sleat Community Trust is looking forward to working with the new owners and welcomed them to Sleat.

SRL has had a challenging year but by pivoting the business model they have done better than anticipated. Remarkable work has been done with a renewed bout of energy. Andy thanked the SRL board for their work and especially Chris Pendlebury for turning a bad case to good.

The Sleat Community Trust Board is delighted to say that the Sleat Local Place Plan is now registered and a statutory document for planning. This is now a blueprint for the future. Andy extended his thanks to the Sleat Community Council for their working partnership.

Finally, Andy thanked the staff and volunteers with the Trust and all the boards for their commitment and hard work. A thanks was also given to Myrielle Macleod, the Company Secretary and Office Administrator. Andy thanked Ade and Ciorstan for their work as they are stepping down.

Overall, there is impressive team of people involved with the Trust but there is space for more to get involved.

7. AOB

a.) Tormore Management Group

Andy outlined the idea behind the Tormore Management Group. The Group is a new way of running Tormore. There is an opportunity there for anyone who would like to get involved with this.

Duncan added that there is an opportunity to raise funds and make earnings from the Forest and there is a focus on getting a Community Countryside Ranger in. A Ranger could bring together community use and guided walks for visitors etc. There is also an opportunity to involve the local school and college and an opportunity to develop things and make the Forest financially more stable.

Alan Drever added that a Ranger is essential to implementing the Long-Term Forest Plan. Tormore Management Group would oversee the management of Tormore and get people more involved with it. It will be an active role in the group and people are needed to step up.

b.) Development Sub-Group

Andy mentioned earlier that the Trust applied for Funding but did not get it due to the fund being oversubscribed. The Trust has had some ideas for the future on paper but nothing concrete. A BDO needs to be hired to build up funding and if the projects are ready to go this may be a way to get funding for the BDO role. Therefore, the setting up of a development subgroup is vital. Members can then develop proposal packs, chase up proposals, match ideas to funding etc. Andy invited help from everyone even if it is only little bits of help here and there. Therefore, anyone who has skills and time, their help is greatly appreciated. There is also an option for learning new things such as writing proposals and fundraising.

Financially, the Trust relied on Tormore revenue too much and now that this is gone, alternatives need to be looked at. The last felling in Tormore can only keep up with maintaining Tormore and the shop money is not enough to keep the Trust funded. The Trusts strategic objective is now to become financially self-sufficient. The formation of a sub-group is the first step towards this. It is critical for the Trusts survival to increase revenue via projects and funding. Some ideas of projects are setting up an eco-lodge in the Forest which would be off grid and can host school children for educational purposes. There is also the idea of improving the footpaths further and link tourism routes as well as buying the Ardvasar Hotel. Overall, the idea is to build community assets that give to the community but also generate revenue.

Startup funding is easy to get but that operational funding is near impossible to get. A lot of projects fail as their running costs are not included and it is important to pick the right projects to begin with.

Anybody wanting to be involved with the Development Sub-Group should contact the office or speak to a director.

8. Questions

No Questions were posed.

Sheana Roberts praised Armadale Stores for their plastic free approach to fruit and vegetables and how remarkable they are doing. The shop is a meeting place for the community.

Adding a generator will therefore benefit the community as well during power cuts.

Polly thanked the volunteers and especially all the Minibus Volunteers for their hard work.

Andy thanked everyone for coming and the board members for the organisation and An Crùbh for hosting the AGM.

The AGM closed at 20:30 pm.