

256th Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Sleat Community Trust

On: Monday 31st of August 2026

In: Board Room & via [Teams](#)

MINUTES

1. Attendance:
 - a. **In Person:** Ashleigh Airey AA (CDO), Donnally Bettis DB, Andy Williamson AW, Duncan MacInnes DMI, Donaidh MacDonald DMD (SCT Chair), John MacDonald JMD, Eilidh Grant EG, Ruud van Ruitenbeek RvR (SCTCL Chair), Catherine de Vries CdV (Shop Manager)
 - b. **SRL Board** members for the SRL update: Chris Pendlebury (CJP), Polly MacInnes (PM), Alan Drever (AD)
 - c. **Teams:** Myrielle Macleod MML (Admin), Paddy McKay PM, Gillian Munro GM (SMO)
 - d. **Apologies:** Garry Noakes GN, Sophia Lockley SL
 - e. **The board is quorate.**
2. Items for AOB:
 - a.) Hydro Fund
3. Declarations of interest:
 - a. DMI and AW for Sleat Community Council
 - b. MML for Shop and Balmacara Community Trust
 - c. PM for Hydro, Ferry Group
4. Minutes of the last meeting, matters arising:
 - a. Proposed: DMI, Seconded: AW
 - b. See action items below

DMD was chairing the meeting.

5. SRL (Renewables): General update from the SRL Board
CJP, AD and PM joined the meeting for the beginning on behalf of the SRL Board as there have been no updates recently due to GN not being at the meetings.
CJP shared his screen and cashflow with the Board. The LTFP is now with the conservator in Dingwall after the public consultation has finished. Hopefully it will only be 2-3 months until the felling licence will be approved. A grant will have to be claimed for the LTFP which is for £3,750 and some of the money will be contributing to Adele Beck's (Ecologist who worked on the LTFP) wages.

A proposed felling map was shown to the board. There are some areas that cannot be felled during the white-tailed eagle breeding season which runs from January through to August.

CJP consulted with 3 felling contractors previously but only one showed an interest in the felling and the predicted income then was about £44,000 however the timber prices are constantly changing.

Hopefully felling can be started by late spring or early summer next year. Replanting also needs to take place and there are 120,000 trees that need planting which cost 70-80 pence per tree to buy and then the planting will also cost money. A local contractor who was used 3 years ago for planting may be interested in helping with this again however he has moved out of the area. PM to email the contractor and copy in the board and AA.

Matt Adams who operates from Tormore has bought some of his own timber in but hopefully he can start selling some of the SRL timber stock and pay SRL for this.

In his spreadsheet, CJP showed the actual figures for income and expenditure and his projections on this. There is currently £16,000 in the bank but £7,000 of this is grant money which is ringfenced for controlling invasive species, eagle work, new fencing and a drone and also to pay Adele Beck to do a survey.

a.) Suggested MOU from SRL

SRL has not been paying its MOU for a while and CJP suggests starting to pay this to SCT again from September onwards. The MOU figure was calculated by looking at admin fee for working for SRL, insurance costs for SRL and other costs such as insurance and use of SCT office including electricity. CJP also included a figure of £100 to pay back the outstanding MOU over the last year. SRL therefore proposed to pay £750 plus £100 per month starting in September and the £100 will slowly reduce the intercompany loan balance. As costs that may have occurred for SRL over time have not been factored into the calculation, CJP and DB will speak and work through the MOU separately.

What also needs to be sorted out is the Development of the Tormore Management Group and what its responsibilities are compared with SRL.

Ideally infrastructure such as fences and things that could create revenue could be SRL's responsibilities whereas things that are of community benefit could be done by the Management Group.

Any ideas for projects in Tormore are now being coordinated by AA and she is building a master plan that will include all these ideas. Being part of a plan for any project gives it a better way to get funding. The Local Place Plan as well as the LTFP will play a part in the master plan as well.

In the near future, SRL is hoping that the LTFP will be approved and felling can commence and also the rent for Matt Adams needs to be reviewed as this is now

overdue. The Head of Terms still needs to be made into a contract, but GN was working on this. The lease for the Trailer which couldn't be sold but leased out due to grant conditions will run out in December so from January there won't be a monthly income from this anymore.

AA asked the SRL board to provide a small project brief of what they hope to achieve and some precise costings for this. AA pointed out that if the LTFP is not in place yet it can impact funding with the Nature Restoration Fund. Sustainable management of Forest and woodland improvement grants are done by hectareage, and funding amounts depend on the hectareage. CJP to do some maps of Tormore for this.

AD explained that funding for a Community Ranger is applicable to the Heritage Fund (HF) but the LTFP needs to be approved, as this will form the backbone of the application. AD stressed that funding can be up to 100%, and for up to 5 years (AD exchange with HF was circulated to SCT Board following meeting). There are other potential funding sources for the post available however it needs to be proven that the post can be sustained after a year and that an exit strategy is in place and having our Community Development Officer in place should strengthen this.

DMI wrote a booklet about what a countryside ranger is, and AA will be turning this into a digital copy.

CJP, PM and AD left after the SRL part.

6. Finance:

DB circulated the latest Finance pack with the board ahead of the meeting.

The slides show the bank balance ticking over quite nicely this month with headline numbers on the slides. The shop is forecasting a loss currently for the full year and the Trust's funds are still declining.

The new tracker is work in progress and therefore has not been send round yet for review. DB will be working with AA to capture everything including the net position but also costs associated with fulfilling terms of grants and mitigation of any downside risks and then the tracker will be sent out for everyone to review and comment.

DB also mentioned again that Xero reporting needs to be looked at to get quality information from the system. The data structure and financial plan need to be looked at to compare the actual performance to the forecasts.

It is possible to go for an annual fixed budget or to refresh planning data to align with each quarterly forecast. The boards need to agree on timelines of submission and review of the data before it gets put in the system. The Finance Pack will be updated using actuals of banking in the first week of the month usually.

Submission could be done in the second week of month following quarter end to review, consolidate and get numbers into the system.

7. Finance Working Group Update:

The Finance Working Group met last week and discussed and were happy with the following:

- MOUs for Shop and SRL
- RBS Mentor was discussed and agreed to do a 1-year trial to see if there is any benefit from it
- Seed Funding and funding: there is a surplus of £7,500 in the strengthening communities fund which could be taken and used to create an internal seed fund which can then be used for the mountain bike return trail where planning permission, mapping and other things are needed for. There is also £2,000 sitting in the restricted funds for the Carpark at Tormore

a.) Terms of Reference (TOR)

The TOR was circulated to the board ahead of the meeting to explain that the Finance Working Group which was originally set up to work through the accounts for the AGM and was then used to provide financial oversight to all boards, is a group that will never make decisions but will simply advise the boards.

b.) Setting up a Sub Development Group

AW suggested setting up a Sub Development Group which would include people on the board (ideally one from each board) as well as people from outside the board as well as AA.

8. SCTCL (Trading): General Update:

RvR explained that Skyenet had an uptime of nearly 100% last months and only some minor problems. There is still an ongoing and longer-term project of getting internet access through fibre instead of the radio link and if that proves too much work for Calum the board has agreed to let him get external help for this as it would need to be someone with specialised knowledge.

Visit Sleat which has been run for years by Jane McDermott and PM needs to find people to run it as both Jane and PM are not intending to run it much longer. An email will need to be sent out to members of VS to ask if any of them are interested in doing some of the work Jane and PM have been doing for years. There needs to be some impetus behind that and if there are no positive responses the board will have to think of people that may be interested. RvR asked if anyone knows people that might be interested to help run VS, please get in touch with RvR.

It was also discussed if VS should maybe reinvent itself as a networking type instead, but this needs some discussions and to find out if anyone is interested in that sort of organisation. RvR, PM and AA to get together with Jane and discuss this.

CdV joined the meeting on behalf of the Shop. The Minutes of the Trading meeting and the board report were sent out prior to the meeting.

The extended opening hours at the shop have been well received in the community with loads of positive messages with people appreciating the times for shopping and this has also made a bit of a difference in the turnover, but it hasn't really changed the net profit. Therefore, the trial period will be extended and reviewed at the end of the season by looking closely at the figures and see if this is worth doing again in the next season. There is still on Sunday to be done as it is still busy, and staff are happy to work the Sunday. The shop managers have decided though to stick with 5pm closing time on a Saturday but this will not apply during the winter months.

There has been an update about generator funding. The application with the Community Regeneration Fund has gone through the Expression of Interest and is now going in for the main application of the fund. AA has tried to talk to several contractors for renewing quotes but there have been no replies as of yet. Local fundraising has raised about £2,000 so far and the application that is in with the Highland Council is looking for £17,000; this is more than what is necessary. This would leave about £6,000 to be raised from a crowd funder.

There is damage to the guttering in the asphalt in the forecourt that needs to be attended to as pipes are broken and metal bits are sticking up. The board needs to find someone to look at this and decide what needs to be done.

The Shop Managers have requested that for meetings during the day people find parking space elsewhere such as the housing estate or land on road towards the old pier to leave spaces for customers to park during the Shop's opening hours.

EG and AA to work on a map to show where to park.

DB noticed that the Shop is paying about £2,000 per year to RBS for cashing money in with them. This affects all entities, but the material cost is greatest with Trading. RBS charges 95 pence per £100 being deposited plus a transaction charge. This time last year the charge was at 70 pence per £100 plus a transaction charge. Giving customers the option to pay via cash is great customer service but it needs to be looked at alternatives to RBS. The card costs also need to be looked up to see if they can be reduced.

There is the option of opening a bank account somewhere else purely to pay in the cash while receiving money, normal banking and paying suppliers could remain with

RBS. This may reduce the bank charges, but this may result in more staff time spent on it. If money was deposited via the Post Office RBS will still charge the 95 pence but there may be a small amount of money given back via the Post Office.

Having a bank account with the Coop bank means their Grant Scheme can be used for seed funding as funding is restricted to account holders.

Ciorstan will be going to the Fresher's Fayre to represent the shop.

CdV and RvR left at 18:55pm.

9. CDO Monthly Update:

AA informed the board about the Highland and Island Resilience Fund, and someone will be coming up next week to look at the EV Charger and if this can be updated or replaced. There would be a free charger for the bus and one commercial charger and possibly an upgrade to a DC charger. The survey is totally free, and the project would then be signed over to Connekt who would provide 10 years of maintenance as well as back-office support. For this however, the Parking issue would need to be looked at. The charger would also be put on a powermap which is available for viewing by every EV Rental car and this spot would be the only one in the South of Sleat as the only other ones are at An Crùbh and a BnB in Ord.

To see what power this would use a separate meter could be installed at the charger. DB mentioned that the financial component of this needs to be looked at carefully. 25% of the public charging fee would go to the Trust but it would have to cover the electricity costs to be profitable.

The Community transport grant for the EV Bus is now in.

For Armadale Pier, a working group has been established, and this is now awaiting further information from FEI. There are also challenges with the boundaries in the shore area which were drawn on by FEI.

AA is working on the Tormore 10-year plan and is visiting sites and looking at and accumulating projects and to see how this fits into the larger plan. The National Heritage Fund could potentially be good for a ranger post.

There is the SEE reinforcement fund and coastal communities fund which could be helpful for a Ranger funding, but they would need revenue coming in for that.

AA and AW met with SSE Community engagement person last week and talked to them about working together with CDI on projects.

AA also had meetings with SSE, CRF and NRF 2.

The board acknowledged that having an update from the CDO in advance is helpful and makes the meeting more efficient.

10. Tormore Community:

DMI informed the board that the Group is meeting up once a month and people are giving suggestions at these meetings. The next Tormore meeting is in 10 days' time,

and it is usually about 20 people that meet. It is planned to try a meeting halfway through the month at 4pm and maybe get some guided walks going.

Change in the Data Protection law means contacts can be reused so people that donated money to Tormore for camping can be informed if crowdfunding comes up. However, it needs to be made sure there is an opting out box in the email.

DMI is also looking at the current Fire Plan and trying to rewrite this. A very simple plan is the only thing that is needed.

11. An Slèiteach:

£97 was given in donation so far for the Newsletters and some more to make it to about £115. 250 Newsletter were printed and about 120 have been sold. The amount to print for the next newsletter needs to be reviewed.

12. Strategy, governance and management:

AW informed the board that soon a branding exercise will be brought to the meeting. This will include the visual image and disparate number of brands we have and modernise the image as well as the website. This update can be done at the same time as branding review and will include some updates to the wording and include the Trust's history.

13. IT Matters:

No update, PM left at 19:00 pm

14. Plot C Update:

JMD spoke to John Finlayson after the last meeting and the planners have now indicated that they realise they can regard the Trust as being different from housing development and private housing developers and therefore take a more tailored approach. They asked for a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Trust as well as a formal letter indicating that the Trust would spend any proceeds it gets from the sale to the community. This has all been sent off. Hopefully there will be a quick response to this and then the Trust could get a planning permission in principle and look at advertising. This can be done ourselves or via solicitor. There are already some indications of interest in the Plot. Anyone buying the plot would have to get planning permission themselves.

a.) Plot A adjacent land

Some communication from the solicitors has been sent back to the Trust but not sure what they required. JMD will look into this.

15. Data Protection Policies Approval:

GM at SMO send some updates to this so the policies need reviewing again and will then be circulated.

16. AOB – from items given in 2 above

a.) Hydro Funding:

EG asked if going forward all were happy to just have EG and JMD deal with Hydro applications. All are happy to proceed with this.

The meeting concluded at 19:39 pm and the next meeting is on Monday, 28th of September 2026 in the Boardroom.

ACTION ITEMS

	ACTION POINT	RESPONSIBLE	OUTCOME
1	Speak to Accountants about keeping old loan from SCT to SCTCL on books or negate against paid MOU/Profits	RvR	
2	Review of Trading Forecast with TP and RvR	DB	
3	SRL: email contractor about planting trees	PM	Done
4	SRL: check SRL MOU figure	CJP and DB	
5	SRL: small project brief to AA	SRL Board	
6	SRL: make map with hectarage	CJP	
7	Turn DMI's Countryside Ranger booklet digital	AA	
8	SCTCL: discuss future of VS	RvR, PM, AA and Jane McDermott	
9	Set up sub development Group	AW	
10	Fix the forecourt damage	SCT Board	
11	Work on Parking Map	AA and EG	
12	Look at different accounts for Cash banking	SCTCL Board and DB	
13	Look at Card Payment Charges	SCTCL Board and DB	
14	Look at Plot A solicitor's questions	JMD	
15	Update Data Protection policies and resend	MML	