

## 1 Million Acre – Strategic Group Meeting

1130-1530, Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Saughton House, Room G1-1

### MINUTES

**Present:**

Dave Thomson (Chair, SG)  
Lindsay Chalmers (CLS)  
Linda Gillespie (COSS)  
Malcolm Wield (FCS)  
Ailsa Raeburn (HIE)  
Neil Ritch (Big Lottery)

**Apologies:**

Sarah Skerratt (SRUC)  
Sarah-Jane Laing (SLE)  
Stephen Sadler (SG)

1. Attendees were welcomed to the fourth 1m acre strategic group meeting.
2. **Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

3. **Action Points from the last meeting**

#### **Community Land Ownership Literature**

**AP1:** It was agreed to develop a short leaflet as a single first point of information for a range of general audiences. The information on the leaflet should be brief and contain key messages. Branding will be SG.

**ACTION:** A first printed draft was circulated for comments. The group were happy with the leaflet. Any further comments to be sent to LG as soon as possible. DT to provide a paragraph on the Community Land Team for the back page.

*AP1: All to provide final comments to LG*

*AP2: DT to provide paragraph for Community Land Team*

**AP2:** The group agreed to identify common links to sources of information so that each organisation is referring people to the same links/ information in other organisations.

**ACTION:** HIE website had recently launched it's "10 steps to community ownership" but had still to identify any further gaps in their information (primarily around post-acquisition support). CLS were about to update their website and would ensure that

links were included. COSS website had seen a 12.5% increase in downloads compared to last year (which was around 23,500), but still needed to ensure that links to other organisations were included. FES/FCS structural changes were making it difficult to assess the coverage across a changing platform, but this would be done ASAP.

*AP3: AR to send a list of common links to all*

**AP3:** It was also agreed to develop a briefing note for MSPs/MPs/ Elected members.

**ACTION:** The briefing note was ready to be sent out to MSPs ahead of the parliamentary event.

*AP4: LC to send copy to all*

**AP4:** A set of FAQ's is to be developed for the strategic group to use as a source of reference. This needs to also include a definition of community. NR to circulate Big Lottery FAQ list.

**ACTION:** NR confirmed that Big Lottery no longer held an FAQ list. It was felt that it would be better to expand on the contents of the leaflet under AP1 in terms of a key facts document.

### **Raising awareness of community land ownership**

**AP5:** LC to speak to RACCE and LG Clerks re possibility of jointly hosted event for MSPs in September

**ACTION:** Parliamentary event has now been arranged for 11 January 2017. Further discussion of the event will take place later on in the meeting.

**AP6:** ALL to send info to LC on upcoming events over next 6 months to populate comms action plan

**ACTION:** HIE had sent details of some events to LC but continued communication by all is key. NR noted that the change in their grant schemes to small/medium/large grants , along with the product focus, had encouraged more groups to apply. There have been a significant number of medium grant awards for amenity and food production.

**AP:** ALL to collectively organise 'seeing is believing' trips for journalists. DT to speak with SG Comms. Particularly need to target urban areas

**ACTION:** AR had put forward a list of potential visits for discussion later in the meeting.

### **Developing road map of support**

It was agreed that a set of coordinated and complementary road maps should be developed to cover asset transfer, community right to buy legislation and willing buyer/willing seller scenarios. These should follow on naturally from the general information leaflet by providing more guided detail for groups on how to proceed

**AP:** COSS will update asset transfer road map to reflect CEB requirements. HIE, CLS and COSS will develop additional road maps for remaining scenarios.

**ACTION:** Draft copies of roadmaps for Community Right to Buy (Part 2), Crofting Community Right to Buy (Part 3), Negotiated Sales and Asset Transfer were supplied for

further comments. In addition, an entry level booklet was also provided for further comments and additional contributions from CLS and SG

*AP5: All to provide comments on route maps and leaflet.*

*AP6: DT and LC to provide text for back page of leaflet.*

#### 4. **Activities since last meeting**

**COSS/DTAS:** COSS have been holding a series of events focussing on the three R's of resources, rights and revenue, which are proving to be successful. There are still another couple to go.

**FCS:** MW reported that there had been a series of forestry summits and the recent forestry consultation had attracted over 600 responses.

**CLS:** CLS have the Island Gathering in March, and the recent awareness in Newton Stewart was full.

**SG:** DT said that he was also speaking to property lawyers from a couple of firms in the new year, as part of their CPD programme.

**HIE:** HIE have events planned for Aberdeenshire and the Cairngorms, which are seen as "quieter" areas for community ownership, and recently spoke at a RICS seminar. There is a feeling that interest in community ownership is growing within this sector, as it is now being seen as a potential business opportunity.

#### 5. **Case Studies**

It was felt that it would be useful to have some good examples of successful urban community collaborations with local authorities. Keeping it to the central belt would make it more accessible for journalists, and increase the likelihood of attendance. It would be helpful to link this visit to and Big Lottery comms around that time.

*AP7: All to provide examples to DT for discussion with SG comms.*

*AP8: DT to check with SG comms for template for information*

#### 6. **Parliamentary Event.**

Arrangements for the parliamentary event were well underway and invitations will be sent out this week. There is still room for more to attend so additional nominations would be helpful. There would be three or four short presentations/speeches from Roseanna Cunningham, Wanlockhead and Action Party community groups and DT/LC on Top 10 Things to Do. There would be tables with various community ownership literature and it was hoped that, although the event is targeted at informing MSPs, other attendees would be able to take the opportunity to network.

There was some discussion about whether or not we wanted infograms or videos to be playing in the background, and it was felt that if we had some to hand that didn't require sounds, that would be useful. It was agreed that the community groups should be asked to focus on three key points in their presentations (Why did the group choose community

ownership?, What have been the impacts of ownership? and What are the groups plans for the future?)

*AP9: All to provide any infograms or videos for event*

*AP10: All to suggest additional attendees.*

*AP11: DT to check with SG comms about further promotion of event.*

## **7. Funding Imbalance**

Sandra Holmes (HIE) had produced a paper on the imbalance between pre- and post-acquisition funding and has asked the group for comments.

It was felt that community group expectations were having to be “reined in” as a result of the lack of post-acquisition funding that was available. There need to be a better understanding of the classes of assets that groups were looking to acquire. Some would require very little post-acquisition development (and some none at all), whilst others would require quite significant levels. It would not be desirable to focus on those that didn’t require funding later on, simply because of the lack of available funding, as these assets can quite often have the biggest impact on a community.

NR noted that while 22 communities who acquired assets with support from SLF1, secured a further £11m through GCA, only a relatively small number of SLF2 and 3 acquisitions have moved into the GCA or CA pipelines.

It was felt that the incoming asset transfer provisions would only exacerbate the issue, and we really needed to figure out what the potential scale and timescale of the problem is, so that appropriate action can be taken. Some suggestions were; amend the resource/capital balance of the SLF, increase the amount of funding available, better co-ordination of all post-acquisition funding.

## **8. Any other Business**

No other items were raised

## **9. Date of next meeting.**

**AP:** DT to arrange for Mid-March.