Tomintoul & Glenlivet
Development Trust

TGDT Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday 27th August

Held at Discovery Centre, Tomintoul (1700-1925)

Minutes

Present: Tilly Smith (TS, TGDT Director & Chair), Sam Robinson (SR, TGDT Director), David Toovey (DT, TGDT Director & Treasurer), Alastair Sharp (AS, TGDT Director), Sam Robinson (SR, TGDT Director), Neil Buchanan (NB, TGDT Director), Robert Mintram (RM, TGDT Director).

Apologies: Chloe Clay (CC, TGDT Director), Claire Filer (CF, TGDT)

In attendance: Oli Giles (OG, TGDT), Lydia Fisher (LF, TGDT)

Actions carried over from previous meeting (updates in *italics*)
No actions from the previous meeting.

Minutes		
Conflict of interest and governance	TS welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was a discussion about board representation given time constraints. Is Chloe Clay able to respond to emails? Try to make a plan to cover. Contact Chloe about her intentions and address the bank mandate issue before she goes away. No conflicts of interest.	
Minutes of previous meeting	Proposed by Neil Buchanan (NB), seconded by Sam Robinson (SR.)	

Core costs	OG pulled together costs for the Discovery Centre updated with July's figures. The board discussed the figures and the financial performance of the Discovery Center, which showed a small monthly surplus but was heavily subsidised by the hostel lease and commission. The group considered changing from a fee-based to a donation model to increase visitor numbers, though this would require additional infrastructure for card payments. The board explored potential cost savings through insurance adjustments and community engagement initiatives like seasonal trails and local displays. The discussion highlighted the need to balance financial	

	sustainability with community value, as closing the Discovery Center could negatively impact local confidence. NB queried the lottery sales arrangement. OG clarified that we pay the cost of the tickets and receive a small commission from selling the tickets. It used to be handled through the post office before Camelot lost the contract. Heating, energy, and staff costs are the biggest costs and these can't really be reduced. Building repairs were discussed, some items including blue door to Smiddy and signs need refreshing. Opportunity to discuss a change of use to the DC for the community. The group discussed potential uses for the DC with concerns about declining visitor numbers and financial sustainability. They debated whether to seek community input on repurposing the space, with suggestions including a youth club, restaurant, or chip shop, while being mindful of not competing with existing local businesses. The group agreed to consult with Sharon before proceeding and to present the community with a range of options, including both reuse scenarios and potential partnerships, while emphasising the need to maintain the post office and existing displays. The board discussed going out to the community. Perhaps we should be canvassing visitors? The board discussed how to involve and engage the community. How are we going to assess the ideas from the community and manage expectations? OG suggested creating some criteria. RT thinks it's more creative and positive to open it up and believes the community would be pleased to be involved. SR emphasised that it needs to be the whole community, including Glenlivet, not just Tomintoul centric. Do local people know how to join as Trust members? The group discussed the potential sale of the hostel, valued at around £200,000, as a way to generate funds and shift focus towards areas with more financial opportunities, particularly in light of upcoming wind farm developments. Oliver suggested using the proceeds to support other projects, such as affordable housing or a community sauna, while emphasising the need for community input and a new valuation of the hostel. They also explored the possibility of taking a mortgage against the hostel, though this was seen as an option to consider alongside a straightforward sale. The discussion concluded with a review of potential funding opportunities from wind farm developments, which could provide significant financial support to the community in the future. OG, SR and NB attended a presentation from Galileo. Want to work directly with community development trusts to distribute £360,000 per annum. There may be more scope in the future for the money to be shared with Tomintoul and other areas. Want to work directly with the Trust. Looking at 2032 for the money to come on line. The board members discussed funding and loans and TS pointed out that the affordable housing loan will be paid off in 7 years. *Digital archive, website, and IT* The group discussed issues with the digital archive, which is currently only partially functional due to poor search functionality and	**OG – obtain a re-evaluation for the hostel and Discovery Centre.**

	navigation. Digital archive was originally designed to be an in-person resource. They considered upgrading the archive or creating an Instagram page as alternatives. LF said that digital and community archives were going to be the focus at an upcoming heritage event hosted by CNP and planned for October. Recognition that there are issues with other organisations.Concerns were raised about their email hosting contract with GoDaddy, noting they may have the wrong deal. The group also discussed the need to upgrade their website to stay current with technology. RM queried TGDT directors having access to email addresses and provision of email accounts Important to be able to communicate effectively, it's a shop window for the trust. They agreed to review a quote for website upgrades and consider developing an IT policy for the Development Trust. *Core costs, grants update* The group discussed funding challenges for their development trust, noting that core funding from HIE and DTAS will end in March next year unless attached to a significant capital project. They explored potential dark sky tourism initiatives, including setting aside private rooms for stargazing activities and considering a planetarium, though there was skepticism about the latter's viability. Look at capital funding, pods, re-invent hostel, look at renaming it? The group also discussed a potential learning exchange visit to Kielder Observatory and noted that while the Crown has funding available, securing it would require a strong project proposal and coordination with multiple stakeholders. The group discussed the Crown Estate having funding for infrastructure and money for the SkyHide. It will cost more money to develop better infrastructure. CNPA may get involved but they need someone to make a good go of it. *Profit & Loss* OG gave an update of the profit and loss accounts. See accompanying figures. SR queried the Dark Sky costs and agreed to discuss further at the DSP meeting. NB queried the cost of Digital Archive. Does it make sense to keep paying for it? The board discussed photo sizes and challenges of maintaining database.	**LF – Investigate opportunities for a learning exchange with Kielder and the Twice Brewed Inn.**
Development Plan Projects	*Affordable Housing* The board discussed updates on property surveys, legal actions, and the potential purchase of a property by the Community Housing Trust (CHT). OG reported that an architect has been appointed to conduct surveys on four properties, focusing on structural assessments, with work expected to begin in late September. There may be remedial works required after invasive survey. The group also addressed concerns about a property being sold and its valuation. The board discussed concerns about a property purchase decision. AS explained that if the seller's report did not consider the DM Hall report, they would need to revisit the decision and wait for a new valuation, potentially causing delays. Queried the home report that was undertaken by DM Hall.	

	The board discussed the property sale and buyback by CHT. There was a discussion by the board members about how decisions were made and timelines. The group agreed to email CHT to inform them of the board's concerns. The conversation ended with plans for a follow-up discussion, possibly online, to address these issues. Two members of the board had to leave at this point TS and RM. DT agreed to deputise. <u>*Factoring Update and* grounds maintenance</u> OG gave an overview of grounds maintenance. The board reviewed updates on factoring, communal areas, and maintenance. They agreed on a three-year rent increase plan, with a 5% increase in the first year and 5% in the second year for two-bedroom units, and a 5% increase in the first year for three-bedroom units. the average in Scotland is 11% which would put the increases well below the Scottish average. OG noted that some owners were not paying their factoring fees and emphasised the need to recoup these funds. The board also discussed obtaining a quote for landscaping and planned to hold a general meeting of owners to approve the budget once all costs were finalised. OG also gave a overview of the redecoration cost for the rental property. <u>Glenlivet Projects</u> *Tea in the Park* A resounding success! Claire's management of crises during the event was praised. Overall income was up, but costs may have gone up also. Awaiting final numbers. A few challenges were managed well by CF such as diverting a bridge closure and issues with water. There will be a wash up meeting in September. Oliver reported on the success of the Tea in the Park event, noting increased income but uncertain cost offsets. *Development Officer* OG gave an update on behalf of CF. Upcoming projects include the refurbishment of Glenlivet Hall and the potential Inveravon church buyout, pending Scottish Land Fund approval. Should know about Inveravon by end of month. Funding applied for from the Scottish Land Fund. Claire is also working on the creation of the Memorial Garden in the Braes. *Heritage Ranger* LF gave an update on recent Heritage Ranger walks and activities. Drumin Castle has recently reopened by Blairfindy is unfortuanetly still closed and awaiting remedial works. Inveravon talks going well and we are looking at hosting an exhibition there. DSP season and projects and planning with SR is underway with two events planned for the coming weeks. SR said there has also been lots of interest via direct enquiries about stargazing and telescope sessions. LF agreed that it was good to have the CAG website and to keep it updated.	

Hostel and DC Update	Financial updates showed improved hostel and Discovery Center income compared to the previous year, with wage costs covered by grants. The group also touched on website updates and digital archive costs, agreeing to further investigate the latter. **Hostel income** OG reviewed the figures. Total payments of £3005.30. Closing balance of £9291.05. Total bank balance of £16872.42. Figures are up on last year. See discussion about DC above in core costs discussion.	
Finance	See accompanying finance documents	
AOB		
DONM	24th September 2025?	