

Minutes of Aviemore & Glenmore Community Trust meeting at the Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore

07/11/2018

Present:

Full attendee list was taken on arrival

Interim Directors: Mike Gale (Chair), Duncan Swarbrick, Gary MacLennan, Mike Dearman (treasurer), Alex Ash, Kelley Hall

Apologies:

Scott Simon, David Leadbetter, Mike Kochalski, Jacqueline Stuart, Elspeth Byrne, Alan Bain, John Goldsworth, Peter Dunford

Appointment of Directors:

All interim directors were individually nominated and seconded, no additional directors were appointed.

Accounts:

The current account balance is £3827.26, the accounts were approved

Subscription:

Duncan Swarbrick proposed that membership to AGCT remained at £0 to continue to allow maximum community participation, this was seconded and approved

Community engagement events:

Mike Gale indicated that these events had been an opportunity for AGCT to listen to the community. An engagement event had been held in each of the eight Badenoch & Strathspey communities, although they hadn't been particularly well attended, partially due to the weather. The overall message that AGCT had taken from these events was that the community wanted change at Cairngorm Mountain (CM), and that they all wanted a successful ski area more than anything. It was highlighted that the community really valued the staff at CM and fully supported them

It was suggested that any Community Asset Transfer would be a positive change, and could influence how the mountain is run. It was clearly stated that AGCT were looking for fairness and engagement across all parties.

The AGCT board stated that they fully support Highland & Island Enterprises (HIE) new acquisition of a snow factory for CM

It was discussed that stakeholder groups (SNH, HIE, CNPA) have become increasingly supportive of the work AGCT are undertaking – they have agreed that development can be achieved in a sustainable way and that AGCT need to continue to engage.

Uplift Review

It was indicated that HIE had not planned to release the Uplift Review until they were pressured to do so by the AGCT and CMT representatives at the funicular response meetings. The AGCT board stated that the review was a tremendous starting point for a new era at CM, and that the group should aim to give solutions rather than criticisms

AGCT referred to the vision for CM they had put forward in 2017 and how these ideas had come though in the uplift review:

Snow Factory – guaranteed snow and increased uplift capacity

Hydro – snow making uses a huge amount of power, it would be great if this could be sustainable as far as possible

MTB – contentious, but achievable and stakeholders are willing to engage on this

Alpine Coaster – the alpine coaster in Snowdonia has been a hugely successful,

Environmental Education Centre – aim to make CM a nicer place to be and enhance the environment

There was general discussion around the fact that some parts of the community had not been engaged in the HIE uplift review; there was general consensus that the results were not a community vision.

It was stated that the review had not included the Funicular – the review took place before the current issues had arisen.

It was questioned why the full review had not been released. AGCT board stated that they had pushed hard to get the summary released. It was stated that the HIE board had not had time to review the full report, and this may be why the full review was not available.

It was stated that there was limited consultation with CM staff during the uplift review

General Uplift Review discussion:

There were general concerns about the potential removal of ground uplift ahead of chairlifts being put in.

It was pointed out that although the review declared road closure to be a critical issue, the subsequent vision had done nothing to address this.

Zip Wires – general discussion about whether these were practical as regards helicopter rescues, concerns over ice clearing from wires so they could be skied under during winter

Chair lifts – general discussion whether these had been suitably located

Ciste – General discussion around the push to increase skier days and the effect this would have on the use of the Ciste car park.

One member suggested that the Ciste should be first point of development, as the car park currently has no toilet facilities etc. An impromptu show of hands indicated there was general support for this.

Transport Links – it was mentioned that access to CM is critical and this should include suitable transport links which are currently considered lacking

Lift from Glenmore – it was stated that previous to instalment of the funicular, the idea of a gondola from Glenmore to the Ptarmigan bowl, with a mid-station stop at the Cas car park, had been proposed. There was general discussion about this as an alternative.

There much discussion regarding the community coming up with a response to the Uplift Review, it was suggested that a possible steering group could be brought together to use the extensive expertise within the community.

HIE Response Group

It was stated that following the uncertain future of the Funicular a number of stakeholder groups, including AGCT, had been brought together in a bid to market Badenoch & Strathspey as a year round destination not simply dependent on snowsports. VisitCairngorms, Cairngorm Mountain Trust, HIE, Natural Retreats etc were all involved to ensure that this message was clearly understood especially following some recent press coverage which seemed to state that the area was closed.

It was stated that it was heartening to see how quickly HIE had been able to bring this group together, and that this group had great potential for increased opportunity and access for the local community.

Engagement with NR & HIE

It was again stated how engagement with HIE had increasingly improved, and that they were keen to work closely with AGCT going forward.

It was stated that AGCT had been pursuing a productive relationship with Natural Retreats, until this had been undermined by the announcement of the closure of the ski school.

There was general discussion about whether NR had a vision for the future at CM

There was general discussion about NR's financial state and their current ownership of shares relating to CML

Cairngorm Mountain Facebook page – It was noted that the CM Facebook page had been removed which had created speculation. CM staff stated this may be due to the amount of abuse that was being directed at the page.

Mike Gale closed the meeting by thanking members for attending the meeting and reiterating that AGCT's goal was a future successful ski area at Cairngorm Mountain