

HOLME HILL COMMUNITY BUYOUT
MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2005, SCOTTISH CHURCHES HOUSE

Attendees at 20 April Meeting:

Jim Bennett (Chair); Steve Mason, Rosemary Bland, Richard Bland; Deirdre Wilson, Paul Jones, John Seddon, Caroline Crawford, Malcolm Wilson, Gerard Hastings, Andy Wightman., Alastair Hulbert, Phil Tebutt

Apologies

Alison Brown, David Totten, Claire Watt, Andrew Gould

Agenda

1. Introductions

1.1 A list was circulated for attendees to enter names, telephone numbers and e-mails.

1.2 Andy Wightman was introduced to the group and he summarised his interest in the Holmehill application. Andy is an Edinburgh based writer and researcher (and author of 'Who Owns Scotland'), who has been closely involved in the drafting of the Land Reform Act. He has recently obtained funding from the Carnegie Trust for a project raise public awareness of the opportunities afforded to communities by the Act. He feels he is able to help our appeal, and this support is very much welcomed by the group.

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting

2.1 The minutes from the meeting held on 6 April were approved.

2.2 Caroline circulated copies of notes summarising the main points raised at the public meeting held on 13 April – this attracted around 70 people and went very well. These will be e-mailed out to the wider circulation group

3. Update – Jim Bennett

3.1 Jim briefly updated the group on the meeting held with Andy Wightman and the Appeal sub-group on Sunday 17 April. Andy felt there was a strong case and had suggested the general approach likely to be most effective. Legal assistance is vital, and various options were considered for obtaining this. Given our funding position we are likely to be seeking assistance on this front.

4. Appeal Procedure – Rosemary Bland

4.1 Rosemary summarised the meeting which she and Alison had attended in Perth this morning with Elliotts Solicitors. During the 2 hour meeting (for which there will apparently be no charge) they suggested that costs could be in the region of £75/hour for a junior legal partner and £150/hour for a senior legal partner, with overall costs including drafting etc likely to be in the region of £4,000. In addition to drafting work, various land searches etc would be required.

4.2 Jim had also been in contact with Burness & Co Solicitors who were interested in taking on the case, and thought it a good one, but had a conflict of interest .

4.3 Andy said that he had been in touch with a contact at FoE Scotland who had suggested that John Campbell QC might be interested in a case of this type, and may also be amenable to taking it on a pro bono basis. He would need to be instructed by a solicitor to arrange meetings etc.

4.4 Following discussion it was agreed that we should ask Douglas Brodie in Ramoyle if he would be willing to contact John Campbell to see if he was willing to meet us and consider taking on the case – Jim will get in touch with Douglas to ask him about this. If Douglas is unable to do this, it was agreed that we should go back to Elliotts in Perth and ask them to be the contact, as they are already briefed on Holmehill and have been helpful thus far.

4.5 Regarding funds, it was agreed that we would need to be open about the existing level of funds currently in our account, but in the meantime continue seeking additional funding towards costs.

5. Finance Group Report – Steve Mason

5.1 Steve reported that the ceilidh had raised an impressive total of £1288. Gerard and his helpers were thanked for their efforts. Gerard requested some Holmehill headed paper so that he can write to the musicians and thank them – Caroline agreed to provide this asap.

5.2 The account balance currently stands at £1085.

5.3 Jim noted that an application for funding is currently lodged with Forward Scotland and that the outcome of this is expected any day. There is also currently a funding application pending with the Scottish Community Development Fund which we should hear back from in around 3 weeks time. An application will not be made to the Scottish Land Fund until such time as we are in a position to hold a ballot.

5.4 It was agreed that we would discuss further fundraising at the next meeting.

6. Communications – Ian Watt

6.1 It was noted that the recent article in the Stirling Observer had provided a positive spin on the Holmehill situation and the group welcomed this.

6.2 Jim had recently appeared in a further article in the Scottish Sunday Express.

6.3 Jim agreed to check with Ian whether we were able to put notices about meetings and other activities in the library and on the notice boards in the High Street.

7. Events Group Report – Caroline Crawford

7.1 Caroline indicated that there was no real progress meantime on events planning, but that Dave and Mary were now back from Canada and it was hoped to meet up soon. Deirdre, Paul and Malcom have kindly agreed to help out with events planning as the ballot work is currently on hold. Caroline has made contact with Sarah Aldred on the Fling committee and it is hoped to have stalls at the 'Fling by the River' event and the Dunblane Centre event, though further thought and planning is needed on this.

8 Any Other Business

8.1 Rosemary has been making progress over the valuation and, having investigated various options, has instructed Mr Morrison of Hardies to prepare a valuation on our behalf. He has visited the site and is now looking into access and planning issues as these have obvious implications for land value. It is hoped to have a valuation by next week. The cost is likely to be in the region of £250.

8.2 Steve reported that he had been in touch with Mick Stewart of Stirling Council who is going to prepare a statement on the planning situation at Holmehill for us. Apparently there have been some recent changes which may strengthen the situation in our favour.

8.3 Caroline will contact Tony Otenya at Stirling Council re the TPO to see if this can be taken forward. Julian Schad has apparently offered to be of assistance in undertaking a tree survey if this is required.

8.4 The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 27 April at 7pm in the Scottish Churches House Conference Hall.

Caroline Crawford
Secretary