

**Holmehill Community Buyout**  
**Meeting Held on 15th June 2005, Scottish Churches House Annexe**

**In attendance:**

**Jim Bennett (Chair), Steve Mason, Dave Totten, Rosemary Bland, Richard Bland, Caroline Smillie, Gerard Hastings, Sarah Aldred, Dave Topliff, Andy Gould, Malcolm Wilson, Claire Watt**

**Apologies:**

**Caroline Crawford, Deirdre Wilson, Alastair Hulbert, Liz Law, Ian Watt, Paul Jones, Alison Brown**

**Agenda**

**1. Introductions**

1.1 All present introduced themselves.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held 27th April were approved

**3. Matters Arising**

3.1 There were no matters arising

**4. Update**

4.1 The Appeal has been entered. John Campbell Q.C. has agreed to take it on at a reduced fee. The first Hearing was on Tuesday 14th June at Stirling Sheriff Court – the purpose of this was to set the timescale of the Appeal. The Scottish Executive/Hilton have 2 weeks to make their case, this will then be copied to the QC. All parties then have 3 weeks to adjust their case. The next Court date will be 26th July. Jim will investigate as to whether this is open to the public and also how long the hearing is likely to take. The QC is of the opinion that we have a strong case.

4.2 Since the last meeting Gerard Hastings agreed to try talking direct to Hilton and recently met with Adrian Bradley (Senior Vice President Real Estate). Their discussion was lengthy and Gerard summarised it as follows;

- Hilton is a business and has a responsibility to the shareholders, the value of the property matters to them
- They do however put value on social matters and public relations. This could mean that they might be prepared to pay to avoid bad publicity or court good publicity
- They see little to be gained in PR terms from courting us
- They have two hard offers on the table which could be as high as £750,000 or even £1,000,000 if planning permission is achieved. Therefore Gerard's suggestion that we might offer £250,000 was of no interest to them. When questioned if £500,000 would be acceptable he was also refused. Since this meeting he has been unable to make further contact with Adrian Bradley
- This would lead to the obvious conclusion that to negotiate further with Hilton we must increase the value of our offer and also increase its value socially – i.e. make it more attractive from a PR viewpoint.
- It is possible that they are awaiting the outcome of the court case before proceeding further with us or any other potential buyer.

This gave rise to some difficult discussion about how we could possibly compete on this scale. Jim said that he had recently been contacted by a Quaker Housing Association who would be willing to offer money towards the purchase of the land if they could have part of it on which to develop Social Housing. Whilst this would be an anathema to many of the group who will not be willing to consider any possibility of development of any kind, if the value is placed as high as is suggested, we will need to maximise what we can raise. After MUCH discussion it was agreed that the negotiation sub committee will look into this simply as a possibility and report back at the next meeting. It was agreed that there will be difficulty selling this idea to some of the group.

## **5. Appeal Procedure**

5.1 This is covered in point 4.1 above

## **6. Finance Group Report**

6.1 A summary of the current financial situation is attached to these minutes. Scottish Churches House will be given £300 for the use of their facilities over the last few months.

## **7. Communications Group**

7.1 There was general consensus that the profile of the group has been low of late. It was suggested that we need another Public Meeting to raise awareness of the current situation and also possibly to gain new ideas for the way forward. Dave suggested that we should be starting to spread the word that there is going to be a requirement to raise a lot of money so that any suggestion of controlled

development on Holmehill might come as less of a shock to people. The meeting will be held on 27th July in Scottish Churches House or the Dunblane Centre as available. It will begin at 8pm to encourage more people to attend. Jim will ask Deirdre to organise a postal run for those who don't have email.

## **8. Events Group**

8.1 There is nothing to report from the Events Group.

## **9. Any Other Business**

9.1 Dave had been invited to go to Dunning to do some storytelling. The group there are keen for us to provide mutual support.

9.2 Caroline has recently been 'dousing' for roman remains on the hill and there are signs of extensive remains. There was much interest in an organized dousing session. Dave offered to come up with a possible timetable for events such as this through the summer.

9.3 Caroline also suggested that there is a need for a good map of Holmehill. She will go to the Scottish Map Library and also contact local orienteers about making a map.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

10.1 The next meeting will be the Public Meeting at a venue yet to be arranged.