

IGHT Members Meeting Thursday 11th April 2024 7pm Gigha Village Hall

IGHT Board: Graham White, Ian Wilson, Fergus Christie, Jane Clements, Adam Murphy, Tim Lister

Apologies: Ian Pinniger

Minutes: Casey-Jo Zammit

Members in attendance: 31

MQ: member question

MC: member comment

Response in italics

1. Welcome from Ian Wilson.

2. Vote to take forward in principle a distillery at the proposed location.

This vote is for a distillery in the proposed location in principle. If the community vote yes, the community will vote again in the future based on the details and terms. This vote is not a binding contract.

3 members volunteered to count votes.

MQ: is the vote for the site or simply a distillery?

Full vote question read: to vote in favour or against the board pursuing the prospect of a whisky distillery sited on North Ardmish land.

MQ: could the location name be changed to North Ardmish Farm Land.

Not possible to change the question as the vote papers have been printed. But the distillery will only be on land that IGH has ownership over.

MC: Statement issued by local resident read aloud to membership. **Please see separate document.**

3. Vote outcome

In favour of distillery in proposed location	24 votes
Against a distillery in proposed location	23 votes
Void papers	7 votes

With this result, the Board were not sure that they had the communities backing to go ahead with the distillery development. The Board are to go back to CDS with the vote result and pose that this project could be refused by membership given the small majority at this stage.

MQ: what percentage of members need to vote?

20% members need to vote to pass.

MC: To be strongly considered by the Board: despite employment opportunities, if this business fails as CDS do not have a track record, the ground is lost.

4. Financial update

IGHT loans with Triodos, Nationwide and Bank of Scotland have been fully repaid. The only loan IGHT now has is with Social Investment Scotland for the housing development. GGPL has repaid the Triodos loan and GTL and GREL have repaid their Bank of Scotland Bounce Back Loans. Cash amounts in each company account remains healthy, however some IGHT cash is restricted grant funding for delivering projects.

Debt has been cleared, but IGHT still have many commitments, including septic tanks, hotel etc. IGHT is not in a position to make big financial investments at this time.

5. GTRL

As of 1st April 2024, GTL assets have been moved to GGPL, and GGPL has been renamed to Gigha Trading & Renewables Limited (GTRL). GTL assets include the campsite, moorings, and pontoon. The purpose of the merger is

to ensure financial sustainability for the trading activities.

MQ: Have assets been moved into one of the trading companies? Formally these were held by the Trust. Assets were intended to be rented to the subsidiaries not held by these companies. Assets are supposed to be in the Trust books, so the charity can protect them. If there is professional advice advised to do that, that's fine, but if its accidental, it needs to be corrected.

Campsite, pontoons, moorings in GTL. The assets of the trading companies are leases and those can be transferred, no heritable property is in issue.

6. Housing and Estates

Full electrical checks (EICRs) have now been completed in all properties. Most remedial work has been carried out; however, a couple of properties are required to be rewired. Achavinish house and land is now vacant and will be advertised as a small holding soon. Upgrades to the mobile mast at Drumyeonmore are due to take place in the next month.

7. Renewables

We are still waiting on T2's gearbox to be replaced, due to be next week. T1 will be getting an endoscope the same time as T2 works to find out what the issue is, possibly the main shaft and bearing. We continue to work with consultants on the feasibility of replacing the Dancing Ladies. We now expect the ROCs to expire in 2027, which gives the board a bit more time to consider options for replacing this income. Positive news, IGHT previously thought turbines subsidies were due to expire in December 2024. However, we have another 3 years of subsidies, meaning Dancing Ladies can generate income for the next 3 years.

MQ: if all turbines are operational and at full capacity, are there any restrictions?

No.

MQ: We now have new financial advisers, and there are significant costs incurred by IGHT just now. What information are the Board working from that gives them a forward picture of their financial commitments in order to work on operations? Are we sliding into a cashflow issue situation?

We have an annual projected budget, which works best for the size of our charity/business. We are in a position to handle a worst-case scenario. We still have income from turbines, and are rid of debt, so we are in a good position.

8. Trading Activities

The pontoon is due to be installed soon once weather allows. The campsite has undergone some maintenance and improvements over the winter and is now open and operational for the season.

9. Development

Housing: Continues to progress although behind schedule due to weather and ferry disruptions. Expected completion date is now September 24.

Helipad: Royal Engineers have completed their 3-week deployment and helped to build the concrete pad. Further works are to be completed by local contractors, including building the access track, turning area, drainage, and paint markings. A solar powered windsock and charging cabinet for portable lights has been installed.

MUGA: £100k in funding has been secured, and further funding applications have been submitted. Once full funding and planning permission has been secured, the construction will be tendered.

MC: a hearty congrats to MUGA project leaders and those involved for receiving this funding.

10. Gigha Hotel

Final drawings of the new bar layout will be shared soon. These drawings will be submitted for a building warrant and used to tender the contractor. The Options Appraisal for future management has been completed. The recommendation is to lease the hotel in future but with clearer terms and conditions for community use and aspirations. A letter will be issued to the membership soon regarding this. A new septic tank system has been scheduled to be installed in the summer. We are still seeking quotes for rewiring the building. Quotes are also being sought for insulation, solar panels, and the possibility of a biomass boiler.

MQ: what is the plan for the hotel? Will it be open this year?

The hotel will be open in hope sometime next year. An architect has been employed to sort a bar, £248,000 grant has been awarded to achieve this. The Hotel needs to be completed in sections. We are also waiting for designs from the architect including heating and electrical systems so we can effectively put this out to tender. We are also waiting for a building warrant.

MQ: is the new septic tank shared with new housing?

No. It will be separate. SEPA require separate systems.

MQ: is a new septic tank system included in this funding? If so, it doesn't leave us with much else.

Septic tank system needs to be funded elsewhere. Business Energy Scotland funding has been explored to look at heating system and insulation, and we have assurances of grant funding for this.

MQ: will the caravans be removed?

Yes. But staff accommodation is another future consideration.

MQ: The Winter Bar has been a great success, are we to have this next winter too?

Yes.

11. Achamore Gardens

NTS have provided funding for a design team to look at the feasibility and design of a Plant Propagation Centre within the North Walled Garden. The purpose of the facility is to safeguard the plant collections and provide future plant material for the Garden. The facility will also provide a space to enhance horticultural knowledge and skills through training. The 2 other main areas of importance are the shelter belt and the visitor experience which are also being reviewed.

12. Countryside Ranger

Works are underway on the invasive species removal project, with areas of skunk cabbage, Rhododendron ponticum and Himalayan balsam being treated. Fencing works are due to commence when ground conditions improve, which will then allow hedgerows to be planted. Some of the trees have already started to arrive on island. A quad bike and flail mower has been funded through the project to assist with on-going maintenance of invasive species removal. Final path works at Dun Chibhich and Cuddyport are scheduled for fairly soon, when the ground conditions improve. The Woodland Management Plan consultation process was carried out last month. All feedback has been sent to Tree Story which will inform Scottish Forestry's decision of IGHT obtaining a felling licence for in-house managed woodland areas.

13. Working groups

10 Year Community Action Plan: Consultation is to be issued in the next week by the committee. The group is encouraging all residents to get involved via a questionnaire to be issued to all residents and all ages next week. The group would like to find out what community would like to see to improve the island and lives. Responses will inform a community plan, that will a document used to inform future projects, funding opportunities and Trust decisions. Plan based on Jura community as a template. Thank you to the group members for being active and contributing, doing such good work.

Plots: Action Plan consultation will help direct the next steps of this group, and next meeting needs to be scheduled.

Memo & Arts: Next meeting needs to be scheduled.

MC: It is a brilliant thing to have these discussions, and a huge positive for the island, it's great to have this conversation starter for a unified direction of travel.

14. Broadband

After exploring options, and canvassing MSPs, a new option with "Brdy", government backed at £29.90 per month, 100gig provided, has been trialled by properties on island and seems to be an effective solution.

MQ: the IGHT Board were looking at trialling a new bit of kit (StarLink), is this still a priority, and keeping up-to-date with the developments of the government schemes? The way that the public sector does things means it will take

projects in a different direction, it may be worth keeping an eye between the Trust and community council on how things will develop. It is vitally important to reach a required online capacity. Keeping our options open to factor in level of capacity and expenses. It needs to be stable and resilient.

The previous options being explored are not a possibility for the island, so Trust resources would be wasted looking into this.

Meeting closed at 20:10.