

## COMMUNITY PROJECT UPDATE

Since May this year, when we got back the results of the survey, we have made quite a lot of progress! We now have three groups of people involved in getting the project off the ground:-

- a Working Group of 7 people who are prepared to be actively involved and some of whom are prepared to take on formal responsibilities in a community organisation to take things forward and apply for funding,
- A Steering Group of a further 8 people, who are directly involved in some meetings and strategic decisions, and who are happy to read and comment on documents as and when required,
- And a “Keep Informed” group of another 20+ who have asked to be kept directly informed of what is going on with the project.

We now have two preferred sites for the proposed building – the current broch car park area, and another area on the other side of the road, between the school and the broch itself. We are currently in the process of identifying the ownership of these two sites. We have also asked the Grazings Committee for their views on the proposed project, as both these sites fall within the Common Grazings area, and anticipate a response soon.

We have an agreed Project Definition document which sets out what we are going to try to do and why. In summary the aim of the project will be :-

- To commission and develop a multipurpose community building which will provide products and services of a type and within a pricing structure that is inclusive of all members of the community, including elderly, low income, young people and children. This will include a community space (hall), toilets, café/bar/restaurant, retail space, treatment/office space.
- That will provide, wherever possible, opportunities for employment, work experience and skills development for local people.
- Provide key minimum services to support visitors to the broch, e.g. parking and toilet facilities, as well as enabling the community to benefit from the significant level of tourism which currently exists, and by providing additional visitor services in terms of catering, retail space and possibly also gallery and/or museum space.

We have an agreed Draft Constitution for what we have decided to call the Struan Community Development Group. This is an unincorporated body, but has been defined in such a way that we can develop further group(s) of different structure (e.g. a Community Benefits Society, etc.) as and when we need them. It has also been defined in a general way, so that it can be involved in other activities within the Struan community, not just the current major project.

We have contacted the Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) and they have been very supportive in providing information, guidance and contacts.

We have started to look for potential sources of funding for a thorough feasibility study and initial design, (known as Stage 1 funding).

The next stage will be to organise a public meeting, to which all members of the community will be invited, in order to establish the Development Group, appoint office bearers and basically get the support of the community to take the project to the next stage.

**THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2018, AT THE SCHOOL IN STRUAN.**

## **Why do we need a new Development Group?**

Struan is very fortunate in having a full and active Community Council, as well as Struan Community Trust. The Community Council members are generally working age people who have full time jobs, as well as spending a considerable amount of their own time on activities for the Council and it is already fully committed to its own duties and undertakings. They are very supportive of this initiative.

The Community Trust primarily meets five times per year, and is responsible for managing and dispensing the funds which are paid in annually by Vattenfall as part of their obligations to the community under the agreements with regard to the existing wind farm.

In order to take this proposed project forward, we need to have an active group of people, who can respond on a day to day basis to requests for information, action, and ultimately funding. We need to run a set of accounts which will enable us to manage any funds we may be able to obtain from what will be a number of different sources, with different reporting requirements. We will need to engage engineers, architects, builders, etc. and manage these on a day to day basis, potentially through a paid Development Office/Project Manager. At the moment, neither of the existing community organisations are in a position to take on this workload, hence the need for a new one.

The Development Group may also be in a position to help facilitate and/or obtain funding for other community projects within Struan, for example tree planting, and any other activities that the community is keen to see happen.

## **Where will the money for this project come from?**

Once the Development Group has been established and we have office bearers elected and in place, we will get a bank account opened, and start applying to various places for funding. These are likely to include the Scottish Land fund, the Big Lottery Fund, the Robertson Trust, the Heritage Lottery fund and anywhere else we can meet the criteria for an application. Initially this will be for Stage 1 Funding. This is money to cover the costs of a full feasibility study, engineering surveys, architect's drawings, and ultimately evaluating tenders to build and equip the facility, so that we know exactly how much we need to raise in order to achieve the final objective.

When we have arrived at a final figure – which could potentially take a year or more – we will then have to try and secure funding for the main part of the project. Sources for this will probably include those above, together with any others that we have managed to identify in the meantime.

## **What will happen at the meeting in January?**

We would like as many local residents as possible to come to the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> January. Although we can demonstrate that we already have a significant number of local residents in support of the project, we will ask for a show of hands from all people eligible to vote – people aged 16 or over whose principal place of residence is in Struan – to support the establishment of the Development Group.

We will ask everyone present at the meeting to become members of the Group. This will not cost anything, but will give anyone who signs up the right to vote at any subsequent meeting of the Group when voting may be required. We will then ask for nominations for Office Bearers – Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary - and ask people to vote for these. We will also ask you to agree to the other members of the Working Group becoming members of the formal committee of the Development Group!