

Plockton & District Community Trust - Members' Meeting – 24 Nov 2022

Chair: Mary Jane Campbell

Presenters: Sandra Holmes, Alaisdair Mackenzie, Alexander Mackenzie

This members' meeting was held in Plockton Village Hall to update members on the work of Plockton and District Community Trust (the Trust) and seek views on the establishment of a Short Term Letting Control Area. It was very well attended with 25 members present.

Old Post Office

Update from Sandra Holmes

Sandra gave an overview of the plan to purchase the old post office from the National Trust to retain use as a community asset. Olli Blair Architects have produced costed options, with £6k raised from 2 separate funds to pay for this work, together with a valuation and help with a business plan. It was noted that any work will be costly and the options ranged from £20k - £181k. The preferred option at £100k is to insulate the original building and to build a small extension to the rear which will house a toilet and teapoint. Further funding applications are now in process to secure funding for the purchase of the building.

Members were supportive of the purchase of the Old Post Office to make sure it can be retained for community use. The plan would be for continued use to sell papers and by the knitters but it was also agreed that we would seek other ideas for community use of the building. Full plans and info available at <https://plockton.com/old-post-office/>

Paddock

Update from Alexander Mackenzie

The paddock has been purchased by the Thomas family with the intention to lease it back to the community at a nominal charge. The Trust is currently in the process of finalising a lease for the paddock and there is then potential for it to be used by the community for a whole range of activities - ideas will be welcome. Currently the primary school is a regular user of the paddock and this would continue unchanged. It was also noted that Michael Hay has maintained the paddock - cutting the grass etc for a number of years which is very welcome. Agreed that Trust would discuss any changes to maintenance etc with Michael but nothing is planned at the moment.

Members welcomed the retention of the paddock for community use through the lease arrangement. Agreed that Trust would update in due course once lease is finalised.

Short Term Let Control Areas

Update on Short Term Letting Control Areas from Sandra Holmes and Alasdair Mackenzie

Sandra introduced this item and noted that this should not be confused with licensing of short term lets which is coming in April 2023 and that we would welcome views on the establishment of Plockton and District as a Short Term letting Control Area given the huge housing pressures faced by young people and others looking to live and work in the area.

Alasdair set out what a Control Area would mean in principle for short term lets - namely that short term lets would require planning permission in a Control Area. Therefore if someone built a new property for short term let or wanted to turn an existing residential property to a short term let then they would need specific planning permission to do this. This would then give the planners and by extension the community a say on housing being turned into short term lets. Alasdair pointed members to more detailed guidance available on the Scottish Government website - [Short-term lets: regulation information - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/publications/short-term-lets-regulation-information/)

All members recognised the acute housing need in the area. The rise of short term lets has meant commercial letting businesses are now purchasing houses as they come on the market meaning they are not available for local people to purchase, as they are outbid, nor are they available for long term let.

It was also noted in discussion that Highland Council have asked the Scottish Government to make Badenoch and Strathspey a Control Area and it has been suggested that Highland Council use this as a pilot before making Control Orders for other areas. The strong view among members was that this would not be acceptable given the time it would take and the need for action now - as every year goes by more houses are being lost to short term letting.

All members present supported Plockton and District becoming a Short Term Letting Control Area. This issue has also recently been discussed at the Pockkton and District Community Council and they are also supportive.

Attendees:

Sandra Holmes, Alasdair Mackenzie, Alexander Mackenzie, David Skilling, Bill Taylor, John Maclean, Mary Jane Campbell, Douglas Hamilton, Donald Mackenzie, Michael Hay, Ian Taylor, Lenice Townend, Anne James, Rhona Sharp, Sheila Harvey, Ian James, Louise Allan, Jane Mackenzie, Calum Mackenzie, Sam Bilner, Maggie Byrne, Johnnda Byrne, Morven Mackay, Brian Harvey, Colin Baillie