

GBCDT Meeting 17 December 2025

PRESENT: Catherine Muir, Melanie Muir, Anna Macdonald, John Porteous, Helen Strong, Mark Bryant (via videolink)

APOLOGIES: Zoe Paterson Macinnes

POINTS DISCUSSED

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes for October were approved by Catherine and seconded by Mark. The minutes for November were approved by Melanie and seconded by Anna.

2. ACTIONS ARISING

There were no actions arising from the last meeting.

3. ACCOUNTS UPDATE (Melanie)

Balance on 19 Nov: £18,565.14

Incomings: £ 512.93

Outgoings: £ 271.15

Balance on 17 Dec: £18,806.92

4. COMMUNICATION

a) Website – sketch map

It was agreed that in order to expedite the development of the website so that the launch date of 31 March 2026 would be met, work on the sketch map could be given the go ahead now. The Website Focus Group had already discussed the artwork requirements with Enya Marczak, a young local artist, who had confirmed she could have the map completed by 10 January 2026 at a cost of £300. Since putting the work out to tender at this stage would have delayed website development by several weeks, if not months, it was agreed that the Trust would pay the Website Focus Group this amount for website development costs, to be utilised by the Focus Group in whichever way they saw fit. However, it was stressed that, should any work of this nature be required in future, it should be put out to tender in order to give other members of the community the opportunity to apply for it.

b) Admin / Google Drive / Email traffic

- It was agreed that if Board members are sending emails via their personal email addresses, they should always send a cc to trustbernera@hotmail.com to ensure that all relevant email communications are logged in the Trust email account.
- In view of Zoe stepping back from Trust work for the foreseeable future, Helen has offered to help with admin and comms. Helen will take a look at the Drive and the Hotmail account with a view to streamlining communication and administration processes and report back to the Board.

c) Bernera Bulletin updates

It was agreed that regular updates be published in the bulletin. Helen offered to attend Trust meetings and write the updates, with further contributions and approval being given by the Board Members. Catherine will send Helen an update about the workshop that took place on 13 December.

d) Membership audit update

Anna has been working on the membership list and collecting as many email addresses as possible. There are around 160 members on the list but some have moved away and are unreachable (these people would become Associate Members anyway if they no longer live in Bernera/Tir Mor). The Board offered to help with the collecting of email addresses and a target of the end of January was suggested for the work to be completed. **Anna will update the list and report on its status at the next meeting.**

5. ESTATE BUYOUT

a) SKS/HIE Strategy meeting 13 Dec 2025

Catherine reported on the workshop that took place on Saturday 13 December with Kerrie Grant from SKS/HIE. Five key areas were identified for the Trust to focus on: Community & Crofters, Housing, Leisure, Tourism and Land Management. Kerrie is working on the Buyout Business Plan and aims to have that completed by the end of January, at which stage a public consultation will be arranged to inform residents of the contents of the Plan, and to encourage discussion and solicit feedback. The consultation will take place in the Community Hall over two days (including one evening and one Saturday) to allow as many people as possible to attend. Catherine will create some visuals to display in the Hall, and Board members will be available to answer questions.

b) Skills audit

Kerrie's colleague Susan Warren at SKS has sent everyone a skills audit form and has asked **Board members to complete it by 9 January** to identify the skills and experience available to the Trust.

c) Articles of Association

Mark distributed the updated Articles which had been approved by the members at the AGM in July 2025. The Board agreed that they were ready to be sent to Companies House.

d) Charity status

At the Strategy meeting on 13 Dec the point was raised as to why the Trust did not have charity status. It appears other Trusts in the Western Isles do have charity status. **Mark and John will look into this.**

e) Mapping

Ongoing – John is dealing with this.

6. CLOH MEETING 16 DECEMBER

Some of the Board members had an online meeting with Shona Morrison of Community Land Scotland to talk about opportunities for funding and for employing a Development Officer. Shona will keep us updated about this.

7. DUBH THOB

a) Business Plan

Catherine and Mark have started work on a Business Plan to enable the asset transfer of the land at Kirkibost pier from the council to the community. Catherine shared the latest iteration of the Plan and asked for feedback. **The Board will look at the Plan and add any details that may be missing.**

(Note Diane Mackenzie is the new contact person at the council.)

b) Rates and insurance

Once the ownership of the land is transferred to the community we will need to arrange liability insurance. **Catherine and Melanie will start looking for insurance quotes.**

c) Completion of facilities building

There is minor final work that needs to be done in order to get a completion certificate. John and Catherine discussed doing some of this work (the concreting) over the Christmas break. Other work includes installing railings and purchasing a washing machine and tumble dryer. Catherine has asked Callum Macaulay for an update on this but has had no reply yet. **Catherine will chase this up.**

d) Food facilities at Kirkibost pier

We briefly discussed potential food offerings for visitors to the pontoons who may not have transport and can't get to the community cafe/shop in Breaclete. A mobile pop-up was suggested (which could potentially service Bosta beach during the day and the pier in the evenings). This would ideally be a private initiative. The [Small Producers Pilot Fund](#) from HIE is currently offering funding which could potentially pay for a vending machine as long as it's promoting small food producers in remote locations. The deadline for expression of interest is 9 January. **Catherine will look into the application process.**

e) Saltbox Sauna

It was suggested we ask [Saltbox Sauna](#) to come to Bernera.

8. NORTHLANDS WINDFARM

John reported that a deal has been made between Northlands and the West Coast Energy Group so that income generated from the proposed offshore windfarm will be distributed among the communities in the group (including Bernera), should the scheme go ahead. This is regardless of whether the estate buyout has been completed because the agreement is with the community of Bernera, not the landowner.

9. AOB

a) Bernera coastal path

John has been looking into the potential risk of part of the coastal route no longer being available to walkers since the transfer of tenancy of Croft 4 Tobson, which the track goes through. Ongoing.

b) Change of room for Trust meetings

It was agreed that the Small Hall be used for Trust meetings in the future (the rain was so loud on the roof in the office that we had to shout to be heard!).

Next meeting: 21 January 2026, 7.30pm in the Small Hall