

FOCHABERS VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

A SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING

THE FOCHABERS INSTITUTE, 8 NOVEMBER 2012



A DEVELOPMENT TRUST FOR FOCHABERS

1. Context

The Fochabers Village Association called a special public meeting for residents to consider the merits of adopting the approach of a development trust for its projects and initiatives into the future.

Development trusts are community organisations which:

- are owned and managed by the local community
- aim to achieve the sustainable regeneration of a community or address a range of economic, social, environmental and cultural issues within a community
- are independent but seek to work in partnership with other private, public and third sector organisations
- aim to reduce dependency on grant support by generating income through enterprise and the ownership of assets. All trading surpluses are principally reinvested in the organisation or the community.

In September 2012, the Moray Council invited the Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) and a number of Fochabers community organisations to a meeting to investigate whether a development trust approach might appeal to the wider village community. During that meeting, a number of possible projects that encompassed economic, social and environmental aspects were briefly workshopped.

The Fochabers Village Association convened a wider public meeting, which was held on 8 November 2012 at the Fochabers Institute.

2. Record of the meeting on 8 November 2012

Sixty two members of the Fochabers community attended the meeting, including representatives of local community organisations and schools, residents and councillors. A number of apologies were received from organisations that were unable to attend. Reporters from the regional press covered the meeting. Mr Rory Dutton from DTAS repeated a presentation that he had made at September in Fochabers. Mrs Elizabeth Rennie chaired the meeting and moderated the discussions.

- Attendance: 62 community members, plus 2 reporters. Three apologies were received. All signing the attendance register showed that they were representing the interests of a village community organisation;
- Fifty six community groups were invited, and 40 were represented;
- Response sheets returned: 24. Twenty three of these indicated agreement that a development trust could be useful for Fochabers.

a. Introduction

Liz Rennie provided the historical background to this meeting, and pointed out that the previous meeting held in September 2012 had 'made us think' - in the village people are very conscious of current projects such as developments in the Fochabers village square and ongoing discussions about the future of the Fochabers Institute. There is a general common concern over communication issues, so the Village Association decided to hold this open meeting and throw it as wide open as possible by inviting all village societies, clubs, groups and associations, as well as the general public.

b. DTAS Presentation

Rory Dutton from DTAS made a presentation via PowerPoint.

The presentation is available on the DTAS website at [What Is A Development Trust?](#)

Rory mentioned that there are just under 200 development trusts in Scotland, including those that have been operating for a number of years as well as some that are at preliminary or initial stages of formation. Development trusts are created and run by voluntary groups that constitute the membership of DTAS. Trusts are funded from a variety of sources that provide grants, including The National Lottery and the Scottish Government. Funds are sought to cover running costs including salaries if necessary, and other expenses such as materials for projects and transfer of assets to communities. The roles that DTAS undertakes include training, networking and supporting the establishment of new development trusts.

Development trusts are created by people in order to improve quality of life. The 190 development trusts in Scotland focus on a wide variety of projects but all are based on a proven model that depends on shared learning between members of DTAS. The key criterion is that trusts are community-based and community-owned, and are not driven by public agencies. They depend on innovation and entrepreneurship. They are not created to focus on one particular issue or project, but rather are designed as bodies with a wider, more holistic outlook. They have no shareholders, and monies raised are all spent on the growth of their impact on the quality of life in their communities.

Generally trusts are modestly resourced by grants, and should not seek to remain grant-dependent. They create social enterprises; they focus on trading and income generation, and they do this by making sure that they have the right skills and support as well as good succession planning.

Often trusts seek to address potential market failure scenarios (e.g. rescuing failing shops), and they often develop income-generating opportunities through reusing / redeploying infrastructure.

c. Open Discussion

Responses to the presentation were solicited by the Chair.

- The video was excellent. Fochabers is not starting from scratch, it has been self-sustaining for decades. This is about doing what we do much, much more effectively. Projects and activities such as Speyfest will continue to happen nonetheless, so it's a no-lose option.
- Where do we get more information on things happening nearby, such as the Elgin Youth Cafe and The Loft in Keith?.
- We already have a community trust - 5 years ago we looked at expanding the Burn o' Fochabers Woodland Trust, but nothing came of that. How would a new organisation relate to the trust that we already have? Would woodland fall under the new development trust? Is another organisation effectively a redundancy?
 - **Reply from Rory:** New and existing organisations can work together extremely well in aligning and coordinating their interests within or alongside a development trust. Local people would be best suited to sort out what's best for Fochabers. When necessary, a legal structure may be useful, and legal arrangements can be very flexible. All options are available.
- A development trust would form the overall view for Fochabers for the next 30 years, but other groups will continue to exist and will help put together the longer-term vision for the village.
- Will existing organisations compete with the development trust for funds?
 - **Reply from Rory:** All organisations should ensure that they work together to achieve alignment rather than competition.
- Organisational membership of or participation in a development trust isn't mandatory at all times. A development trust doesn't supersede other organisations.
 - **Reply from Rory:** Not all projects will be run by the development trust. Working groups could involve the trust but not be led by it. New organisations can emerge, existing organisations can change their form if desired. There will always have to be decisions over who leads on particular projects.
 - **Reply from Rory:** Most members of DTAS are companies limited by guarantee – the term 'trust' doesn't stipulate that any particular legal structure has to be adopted.
- It is good to have one umbrella body to communicate and coordinate, especially for the Fochabers Institute, for example. ,
 - **Reply from Rory:** This umbrella function can also help trust members to monitor meeting their mandates and reporting.

- Ownership of a venue would reduce dependence on other venues run by other bodies – e.g. school halls - and hence availability of spaces would improve; the advantage of the Fochabers Institute is that it is large enough to accommodate a variety of events and needs.
 - **Reply from Rory:** A project such as the Institute would be a big initiative, possibly even the main focus of a trust for the first few years of its development. Planning how to run it would be extremely important.

d. End of Meeting

Liz Rennie asked all to record their attendance on the sheets provided, and asked that response forms be returned to the Village Association by the end of November, so that responses can be collated and analysed.

The Village Association holds its Annual General Meeting on 16 January 2013. That may be an opportune time to discuss projects and people / organisations to be involved in them.

The Fochabers Institute Group is meeting at 8pm on Tuesday 13 November; all interested parties are welcome to attend.

Liz thanked Rory Dutton for his presentation and time, and closed the meeting at 9pm.

Press Coverage of the meeting

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Fochabers clubs back 'umbrella' organisation

By Joe Millican



Securing the future of the Fochabers Institute could be one of the priorities of a proposed new development trust.

COMMUNITY groups in a Moray village are looking to join forces in a bid to drive forward initiatives and improve facilities in the area.

More than 60 people attended a meeting in Fochabers last week, to look at creating a development trust for the village, which would become an umbrella group to oversee an array of projects.

Liz Rennie, the chair of the Fochabers Village Association, said she was very encouraged by the response.

She also pointed out that the vast majority of people who attended the meeting, and who completed a survey form, believed the formation of a development trust in Fochabers was a good idea.

"One of the issues which has arisen through recent meetings and consultations has been over communication with villagers about what is happening – when and where," Mrs Rennie said.

"When the village association decided to call the meeting, one of the key priorities was to compile a list of all groups and organisations operating within the village.

"Over 50 letters were sent out and 40 groups were represented at the meeting, which was encouraging. It is now up to these representatives to feed back and talk about the current village projects and priorities."

Mrs Rennie said a development trust would look to improve the amenities in Fochabers, promote and safeguard the interests of the village, stimulate civic interest, and help to further cultural and recreational life.

"In effect, we would become an umbrella group which would hopefully provide focus and drive to many projects, whilst at the same time encouraging local groups and organisations to remain operating independently as they do at present," Mrs Rennie said.

"If anything, it will promote stronger shared working allowing us to build upon the many strengths which exist at present."

Securing the future of the Fochabers Institute is just one of the projects she said could be tackled by a new development trust, and she said many of the people who attended the meeting mentioned their support for that project.

For more on this story, see this week's 'Northern Scot'

A Development Trust for Fochabers - 8 November 2012

Contact List for Meeting on 8th November 2012

Name	Group
Alan Brown	Fochabers Institute Group
Alison Clark	Fochabers MIA
Angus Robertson	MP
Bill Royan	Milnescroft Residents
Bruce Fettes	Burn O' Fochabers Woodland Trust
Carol Stuart	Milne's High School
Clair Tombe	Fochabers Autumn Club
Colin Scott	Fochabers Badminton Group
	Community Integrated Care
	Cornerstone Community Care
Craig Lambourne	Speyfest
Daffyd Lewis	Milne's Rugby Club
Donald Gibson	Fochabers Rockets Football Club
Duty Officer	Grampian Police, Fochabers Police Office
Elsbeth Fordyce	WRVS Lunch Club
Father Tad Turski	St Mary's Church
Fiona McLean	Lennox Community Council
	Fochabers Nursery and 2-3 Group
Frances Duncan	Fochabers Institute Hall Committee
Gavin Hillson	Fochabers Petanque Club
George Young	Spey Runners
Gordon Inglis	Bridge Club
Gordon Young	Fochabers Angling Club
James Alexander	Fochabers Fiddlers
Jamie Kayley	Fochabers Toddler Group
Jeremy Evans	Fochabers Business Association
Jim Kilpatrick	Fochabers Fire Service
Jim Nicol	Moray Firth Amateur Radio Society
John Wiles	Fochabers Indoor Bowling Club
Juli Harris	Milne's Primary Nursery
Juli Harris	Milne's Primary School
Kay Griffin	Fochabers Allotment Association
Kay Jackson	Friends of Bellie Churchyard
Kevin Black	Fochabers Explorer Scouts
Les Tombe	Fochabers Scouts
Lynn Ross	Fochabers Medical Centre
Marjorie Adams	Fochabers in Bloom
Members Support	Ward Councillors
Mike Fox	Fochabers Cricket Club
	Milne's Learning Centre
Pat Jenkins	Fochabers Childminding Group
Rev Alison Mehigan	Bellie Parish Church
Rev Frances Forshaw	Gordon Chapel
	Revellers Music Playing Group
Richard Lockhead	MSP
Ron Smith	Fochabers Junior Football Club
Ronald Christie	Fochabers Curling Club
Sandy Horne	Rifle Club
Sandy Wyllie	Fochabers Outdoor Bowling Club
Sybil Stuart	SWRI
Una Hamilton	Abbeyfield Society
Vicki Homes	Fochabers Heritage