

**COLLIESTON & SLAINS COMMUNITY TRUST
USER GROUP MEETING
26 April 2007, 7.30 pm Village Hall**


Purpose of meeting: to provide an update on the status of the CASCT project, to solicit feedback from User Group representatives on how to improve communication, and if possible obtain agreement on the Rivie purchase.

Attendees: Representatives of various potential User Groups were invited to attend

Apologies: Sally Sheehan, Ruth Leuchars

The meeting was facilitated by Mairianne MacDonald. The agenda for the meeting was as follows:

**User Group Meeting 26-4-07
Agenda**



- 1. Introduction** (Mairianne MacDonald)
 - Why are we here?
 - Outline of evening and timings
- 2. Status of the hall project** (Alan White)
- 3. Burning Issues**
- 4. Work Group Sessions**
 - How can communication between CASCT Committee and community at large be improved
 - How can communication with architect best be facilitated
- 5. Feedback** from Work Groups
- 6. Update on the Rivie** (Steve Rainey)
- 7. Work Group Sessions**
 - What is the way forward with the Rivie?
 - Discussion of chosen Burning Issue
- 8. Feedback** from Work Groups
- 9. Wrap up**

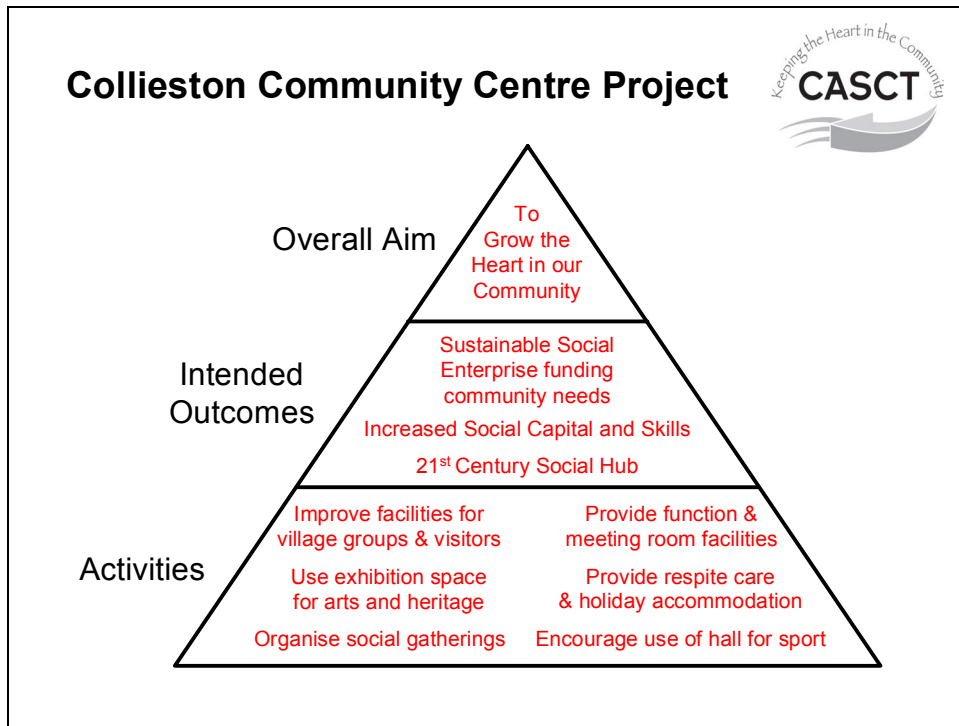
Group discussions facilitated by Lesley Stewart, Shirley Beattie, Peter Robinson and John Hitchcock

Mairianne Macdonald welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced herself and explained how the meeting would run. She invited everyone to jot down any burning issues about the CASCT project on a post-it. We would review and select the most popular one to discuss during the course of the meeting. She informed the meeting that due to urgent matters that required immediate attention, no representatives from the Play Group were able to attend the meeting. However, they had submitted a letter of support beforehand and this is attached as Appendix 1. Apologies were received for Sally Sheehan, who was unable to attend. Sally had outlined her concerns about the project in a note. As most of these were shared by others, they were dealt with during the course of the meeting.

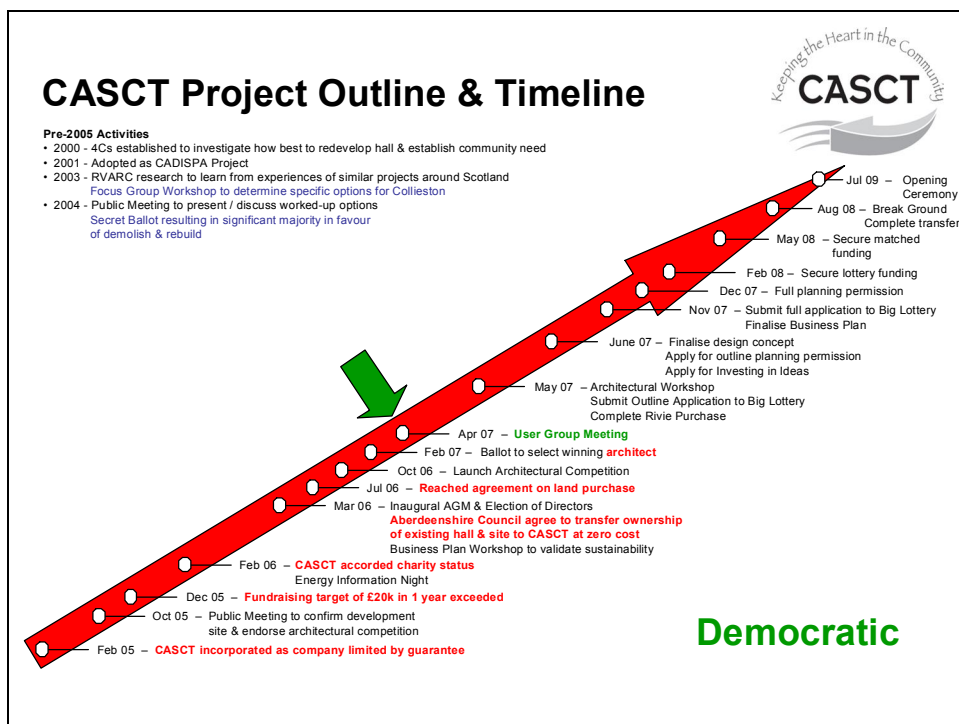
Mairianne then invited Alan White to provide an update on the CASCT project to date.

Project Status

Alan distributed a handout with 3 slides which he then talked through. The first slide illustrates the overall aim of the project, the outcomes we intend to achieve and the activities that would be needed to do so.



Alan then illustrated how far the project had come and how much further we still had to go by use of the project outline and timeline, shown in the following slide:



Finally, Alan reminded attendees about the main components of the Architectural Brief and the main planks of the Business Plan in terms of achieving sustainability. These are summarised in the following slide:

Architectural Brief

- 21st Century building that relates to scale and character of village
- Financial self-sufficiency
- Multi-functionality and flexibility
- Energy efficient
- Robust to budget constraints – scaleable
- Budget: ≤ £1.0 million



Business Plan - Sustainability

- Rental of accommodation (suitable for respite)
- Rental of meeting room
- Rental of main hall for functions

At this stage, the meeting was then split into 4 groups to discuss communication between the CASCT Committee and the community, and between the community and the architect. Initially, there was some resistance to splitting into groups, but it was eventually agreed that this process was actually the best way of facilitating open conversations and allowing all to express an opinion.

Group Feedback (from flip charts)

Communication between CASCT Committee and the wider community

- Two-way oral/written communication required
- Any communication needs to be totally transparent
- Public Meetings (formal and informal e.g. clinics) appear to work well
- CASCT should make use of User Group representatives to help with communication
- Could Slains School help (perhaps by means of a school project)?
- Need to take stock to ensure there is consensus on a way forward
- Better communication would increase confidence in CASCT

- Need an accurate list of people in Slains parish
- People outside the village tend to miss out on local chat
- There is a perception that information is only available on the web
- Slains folk do not generally visit the shop to see information posted there
- Consider using Slains School as a means of communicating with Slains folk
- Why not post Minutes on the Notice Boards
- Keep producing the 'CASCT Updates'
- More public/open meetings
- Face to face informal meetings
- CASCT needs to be aware of all communication – tone, language and style
- Are anonymous comments/questions being addressed – there's a perception that some legitimate ones are not

Communication between the community and the architect

- Basically, happy with architect, especially as they have offered to go back to a clean sheet of paper with regard to the design concept
- Need to ensure we have a multi-purpose hall
- We want a village hall first, not a conference centre
- Community feedback to architect could be via a CASCT sub-committee
- Will need regular public meetings with the architect
- Is an independent survey of the Rivie needed to give confidence in the project?
- Provide 'Comments' boxes
- If you establish yet another group to liaise with the architect, you'll run out of people
- Hold a workshop to:
 - Understand what we can/can't achieve
 - Ensure the architect understands what our requirements are
- Need to revisit the brief
- Need more open meetings
- Need to 2 or 3 design concepts to be presented at next workshop to increase the chances of their being one we like!
- Need a work group (not just of CASCT) to work the details with the architect

Mairianne led a discussion on the above feedback and agreed the following actions to be taken:

- Minutes and brief summary of key points from any public meetings to be published
 - Consider posting in variety of places (Hall, School, Village notice boards, post office, web)
- Convene regular Public Meetings covering key topics such as design concept etc.
- Introduce informal clinics to allow two-way face to face communication

Update on the Rivie Purchase


After a break for refreshments (tea/coffee and biscuits), Marianne reconvened the meeting. She noted that many of the post-its on 'Burning Issues' (see Appendix 2) referred to the Rivie purchase. Consequently, she suggested we might spend more than the allocated time on this issue AND as a compromise on splitting into work groups, we might have this discussion as one large group. This was agreed. Accordingly, she invited Steve Rainey to provide an update on the Rivie purchase. It came as a surprise to some to learn that we had not actually completed the purchase. There were significant contractual legal and title issues to be resolved before a purchase could go ahead. Steve reminded the meeting attendees about the terms that had been verbally agreed with Slains Estate for purchasing the Rivie. They are summarised in the following slide:

Rivie Purchase - Terms

The logo for CASCT (Community Action Support Team) features the text "Keeping the Heart in the Community" in a circular arrangement above the acronym "CASCT". Below the acronym is a stylized graphic of three curved lines, resembling a heart or a flame.

- £5000 plus legal fees
- Offer is all Rivie or nothing
- Slains Estate to preserve development rights via development security (100% clawback in perpetuity) i.e. any profit from further development goes to them
- Terms are not negotiable unless we wish to offer more for the Rivie


There was a good deal of discussion about the development security (3rd bullet point). The profit referred to is that resulting from the future sale of any part of the Rivie, it does not involve any profit that the new community centre might make. Steve then discussed a number of advantages (Pros) and disadvantages (Cons) of purchasing the Rivie, as summarised in the next slide:



Rivie Purchase – Pros & Cons

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New building optimally sited • Allows part or all of existing building to be preserved → safety net for project and allows community use during build • Provides car parking at hall • Prevents future development of Rivie by 3rd party • Opens Rivie for community use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposes CASCT to potential liabilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – coastal path erosion – landslides – maintenance

The potential liabilities resulting from purchasing the Rivie were common concerns to many. This led to a more detailed discussion of risks and how they might be mitigated, as summarised in the next slide:



Rivie Purchase – Risks & Mitigations

- Escalating legal fees
 - Sheila Ritchie to monitor/challenge Slains Estate fees; her fees agreed at ~£450
- Building on the Rivie
 - Structural engineers have confirmed that Rivie is suitable for building
- Liabilities:
 - **Land slides and coastal path erosion** – CASCT has obtained several firm quotations for public liability insurance with premiums of £630-920 / year for cover of £2-5 million. Repair of the coastal path could be included in scope of works for project. Will also investigate funding options to repair path, including Aberdeenshire Council.
 - **Maintenance** – work parties could take on whatever maintenance is desirable (none needed recently but control of ragwort may require grass cutting)
- Uncertain boundaries leading to disputes etc.
 - If Land Register grants title then there is no issue. Common Law states that those lower on a hill must support what's higher up.
- Not buying Rivie
 - Will limit outdoor space (especially car parking) and compromise sustainability – buy the land
 - Slains Estate will offer Rivie for sale on open market, presumably for development - buy the land and prevent future development
 - Existing buildings must be demolished - no hall during demolition/construction, no safety net if project goes bust

As there is no downside, CASCT Committee & Directors strongly recommend purchase

Steve asked if anyone could think of any additional risks that had not been identified so far – there were none. To help illuminate risks and mitigations further, Steve presented a number of 'What if...?' scenarios, as detailed in the following slide:

Rivie Purchase – ‘What if’ scenarios



- **Building activity on the Rivie causes a landslide onto property below**
 - If CASCT shown to have been negligent in allowing building work too close to slopes, insurance kicks in. Restrict building works to safe area. Ensure builder works under JCT/standard building contract.
- **Somebody gets injured on subsiding coastal path**
 - If CASCT posts ‘use at own risk’ signs on path, then CASCT is not liable; if CASCT is shown to have been negligent, insurance kicks in.
- **A landslide on the Rivie envelops a property**
 - If such an ‘act of God’ occurs, then Common Law obtains – those lower on hill must support what is higher up – and CASCT is not liable. We will restrict building works to a safe area.
- **Project isn’t sustainable and it goes bust**
 - If part or all of the existing buildings have been kept, then they could be sold off to reduce debts and keep the project going. If the existing buildings have not been preserved, then the community could be doing a lot of fundraising!

Mairianne then led a discussion on the Rivie, with the following agreed outcomes:

- The Rivie Purchase update slides should be made available to the whole community
- The User Group Meeting was not the appropriate forum to gain approval to proceed with the purchase; rather, the presentation should be repeated at a full public meeting and then a ballot taken of those attending. This could be tied in with the first Architectural Workshop, which should be a public meeting.
- It was recommended that the opinion of an independent structural surveyor be sought on the suitability of the Rivie for building – this was still a concern for many.

Marianne thanked everyone for attending and for their, at times, enthusiastic participation. The meeting was closed at 9.30 pm.

Appendix 1

Email from Play Group

----- Original Message -----

From: [Ruth Leuchars](#)

To: [RACHEL HITCHCOCK](#)

Sent: Wednesday, April 25, 2007 10:32 PM

Subject: Re: User Group Meeting Agenda

John

Unfortunately our playgroup representatives are unable to attend the User Group Meeting because of the meeting we have scheduled at the same time tomorrow evening that we haven't been able to change. Please can you therefore accept our apologies. I believe Jessica spoke to you at the weekend about this to let you know that there are some urgent issues relating to playgroup that need dealt with. I had hoped that someone could have gone along but our representatives are all committee members!

Playgroup held a meeting back in March to discuss our interests in preparation for the CASCT User Group meeting. I have attached the minutes for you to read. We are really keen for this project to move forward - in fact we have maybe jumped the gun and done the preparation for the next CASCT workshop as we didn't have an agenda for the User Group Meeting at that point.

Having read the agenda here are some of my views that I would have liked to put across at the meeting:

I would support CASCT in the purchase of the Rivie and I believe Play Group would be of the same opinion in that it is an obvious requirement for the project to go to the next stage. Let me know if you wish Play Group to issue a statement of support (or otherwise) on this issue.

In terms of communication with the community I thought that perhaps CASCT should have a designated notice board in the Community Centre. With 21parents (36 children) using Play Group at the moment from across Slains plus all the other user groups that are in the hall it would be a great way to promote/update everyone with CASCT info / upcoming meetings etc. - there are still quite a few people out there that aren't in the habit of looking at websites! Perhaps you could have the posters with the timeline on. FAQ & answers etc.

Hopefully you will have a successful User Group Meeting tomorrow. Could you give me confirmation of the next workshop so that we can organise representatives and give them the chance to arrange baby sitters etc.

Thanks

Ruth

Minutes for Play Group Meeting on 12 March 2007 Collieston Hall Proposals

Present

Janice, Karen, Helena, Jessica, Sarah G, Ruth, Morag

Apologies

Elaine, Alex, Jen Robson, Sarah Moore, Vicky

Task

To come up with Play Group position regarding the requirements for the new hall.

1. Play group delighted to be given the opportunity to put forward our views and are keen for the project to move forward. We are extremely flexible with the outcome and are looking forward to having a new space for the children.

2. Ideas /preferences for new hall format.

- The possibility of a play group area that can be opened out into the main hall.
- The area needs to be secure from other hall users
- Happy for the space to be used by other user groups
- Cloak room area / push chair parking space
- Direct access to outside play area desirable
- Secure walled play area ideal
- Toilets/baby change area close to playgroup area
- Happy to have one kitchen for the whole hall if it is accessible and close by but if it is going to be at the other end of the building then we would be keen to have a couple of units within the room with a sink.
- If the kitchen area is likely to be part of room, an island to divide it from the rest of the room would be good so that parents can still be seen by children and for safety.
- Storage / walk in cupboard space. We currently have c 36m³ inside plus a shed with indoor equipment kept outside. Ideally we would prefer have more storage space so that play group stuff can be well hidden from other hall users. We could get by with a similar amount of space but would struggle with less.
- Outside storage space for slide / trikes etc
- Childrens sink / wet are within the room for paint/ sand pits / messy activities
- Alternative meeting room
- Outside tap.
- Car parking for 15 – 20 cars near the entrance. Cars are regularly having to park on the road which is not ideal for the safety of small children.

3. Regulations

Playgroup would like to make sure that the finished building meets with all current legislation for childcare. As yet we do not know if there are requirements for toilets but there are space requirements set by Care Commission:-

Children age Under 2 3.7 m²

Children age 2 to 3 2.8m²

Children age 3 and over 2.3 m²

Play group would ideally like space for 30 children but wouldn't grumble if it had to be 25.

4. Nominate representatives for meeting on Thursday

Jessica, Morag, Helena and Ruth all available for meeting but will see if anyone else keen to go.

Appendix 2

'Burning Issues' post-its

Hall to Big.

SIZE Too Big

General feeling of being railroaded regardless of what said by community.

Need a meaningful consultation with whole community.

WHOLE PROJECT IS FAR TOO BIG

Slim down number of committees - how?

Seems to be a "runaway train" getting faster & faster and cannot be slowed down or stopped.

LAST NOTE - WHAT DOESN'T CASCT KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE IN THE "COMMUNITY"?

River - liability

SERIOUS CONCERNS OVER RIVIE

- LIABILITIES
- SUSTAIN BUILDING WORKS
- GEOLOGICAL SUITABILITY
- COASTAL EROSION

CONCERN OVER WREST WORK - VERY LOW %.

PUBLIC HEARING SAID 50-60% REJECT.

WHAT NOT INCLUDE "SAND"

What is CASCT's responsibility on the Rivie - will the council/SNH confirm safety measures?

Do CASCT feel they really have the support of the community at this time?

Is it what the VILLAGE wants?
If yes - how do we know.

Do we have any financial commitment to "Rise & Fall"
If we decide not to go further forward??

CASCT APPEAR TO
HAVE ALREADY MADE
THEIR MIND UP ON THE
PROJECT.

Votes - very poor return -
although does not appear
to be taken into
consideration.

Timescale - too quick
May - Architectural Workshop.
June - Finalise design &
Concept.

Can we go back
to a point where
we can get
concessions on the
way forward.