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Registered Charity SC040407

EGM & Public General Meeting
Saturday 14 November 2026 at 2:15 p.m.
at Rousay Community School

Draft Minutes/Transcript of Meeting

Present at the meeting: - Nicky Jacques, Rachel MacGill, Eric Shortland, Carey Mainland, Muriel & Alistair Marwick, Julia Peace, Andrew Hind, Fiona & Richard Tipper, Janet & Bobby Friel, Vivian Bailey, Clare Daintith, Stuart & Sarah Sailor, Mary MacAskill, Kira Hoffman, Carolyne Tunbridge, Jack Woodford, Kirsty Tunbridge, Charlotte Henderson, Rebecca Walker, Allan Alexander, Laverne & John Walkey, Hannah Cook, Lee Mason, George Muirhead, Claire Pegrum, Annette and Ian Robinson, Diana Compton, Gary & Christine Briggs, Alice Mainland, Callum Potter, Carol Rae, Alice Foulds, Courtney McCheyne-Robb, Clea Paine, Andy Tunbridge, Trish Prater, Ellie Straghan, Tom Mainland, Lisa Croft, Grant Mainland, Julie Gibson, Mark Hull, Martin Douglas, Kayleigh Tipper, Alison Mainland, Callum Flaws, Hannah Shell & Helen Castle. Laura French, Jess Tunbridge, James SkTaversoeer & Duncan Stevenson via TEAMS.

Fiona Smith – Facilitator.

Apologies were received from: - Chris Jacques, Julia Cussans, Anthony Mustchin, Angela Ferguson, Ben Pentreath, Charlie McCormick, Catherine Kriisa, Joy Henderson, Frances Roebuck.

1. Welcome -

Lisa thanked everybody for showing up today and said that we really appreciate this amazing turnout. Lisa started out by saying that the REW DT acknowledge this has been a really difficult and challenging time for the community. And this is the place where we're going to start to recover trust and build and heal. Lisa added that those present were going to be hearing from all the directors today and that Lisa was really grateful for that.

Grant explained that the REW DT hopes that everything that comes out of this meeting today will help us move forward constructively. It is our

REWDT Directors: Lisa Croft (Chair), Grant Mainland (Vice-Chair), Alison Mainland (Treasurer), Callum Flaws, Carole Maguire, Kayleigh Tipper, Julie Gibson, Martin Douglas, Joy Henderson & Mark Hull (Co-opted Director).

hope and goal for this meeting that we want people to leave feeling that their concerns have been heard with a clear understanding of the circumstances surrounding the Taversoe and what happens next.
The board is committed to sharing all the information that we currently can with you today.
The first part will focus on the four issues raised in the request for the EGM. Because an EGM has been officially requested citing the Companies Act 2006, most of this bit has to be quite formal with regard to what can and should be covered as part of the official EGM request. However, despite there being other reasons that restrict what can be discussed just now, the board is also keen to share and discuss what it can on the status of the Taversoe more generally. The Board will set out the information it is able to share, and members will have the opportunity to raise questions and concerns for the Board to consider and respond to subsequently, where possible.

The second part will look forward, outlining the options for the Taversoe and explaining the next steps in considering its future.

Grant stated that the board won't be answering any potential questions today. This is because of the legal complexities and the importance of ensuring any answers given don't inadvertently compromise ongoing proceedings or obligations. However, people will have the opportunity to raise their questions and concerns, which will be recorded.

The board will then seek advice and will then be providing as much information as possible afterwards. It's important that people understand that their questions are welcome, even though answers, cannot be given immediately.

The board is working within constraints because of the ongoing police investigation and employment matters. There are genuine legal requirements around what the board can share. This isn't about being evasive or unwilling to answer questions, but about respecting those legal obligations.

Grant introduced Fiona Smith who was here to help facilitate the EGM, ensuring that people have an opportunity to contribute, that the

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questions and concerns are probably heard and recorded, and that we make the best possible use of our time together.
Fiona introduced herself by saying that she lives in the West Mainland and the board had invited her over to just help everyone have a good conversation at the EGM. Fiona continued to share that she has worked with the board over the last couple of weeks and has found that everybody in the community wants the best thing for the community and wants the best thing for the Taversoe.

Fiona reminded all that the first part is a formal extra general meeting of the Development Trust, that's been called because a number of members asked for an extra general meeting and they raised 4 issues and the board is now obliged to address those four issues and wants to address those four issues.
So the first part of the meeting will be about addressing those issues. We then have a cup of tea and a piece of cake or biscuit. And we're going to come back and then we're going to look at your options as a community for the Taversoe and how do we move that forward.

Fiona shared that she would run through all four of the issues that have been raised. A different director will share what information the REW DT can, and when we've run through all four of them, there'll then be the opportunity to raise questions. Grant said that the board is in a tricky situation due to having clear advice about what they can and cannot say when there is a dispute and when investigations are ongoing. The REW DT will take the questions away and answer what we can as soon as we can.

The REW DT answered the four points chronologically how things happened. Fiona shared that the meeting today was to be recorded on Teams for those who could not make it. Helen is also taking a full note of the meeting as well because it is a formal meeting.
Fiona asked all present to be respectful and kind.

The first issue that was raised in the EGM request was: -

1. The Sudden Shutting of the Taversoe Taversoe: To receive an immediate, transparent report on the operational status of the

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Taversoe, the abrupt removal of its workforce, and the exact steps being taken to reverse this closure.

Grant responded by saying that the Taversoe Taversoe temporarily closed on July 30, 2026, due to the immediate dismissal of two Trust employees. This dismissal was based on legal advice received. The Taversoe was closed due to the lack of staff and the commencement of an ongoing police investigation. A clean-up effort in the Taversoe was required before being able to accept guests again. Once cleared for operation and meeting all health and safety requirements existing bookings were honoured through October 4. The decision was made by the Board to close the Taversoe for the winter season to allow outstanding work to take place. That decision is recorded in the Board meeting minutes dated 5 September 2026. Those minutes also record the Board's decision to consult the community on the future of the Taversoe and to prepare an options paper for discussion with the community.

Regarding the removal of the workforce, the Trust's interactions with its workforce are a private matter, the police are currently investigating past events concerning the Taversoe, and it would not be appropriate to comment further.

2. A Complete Breach of Community Trust: To address the total communication blackout enforced by the Board, which has actively kept members in the dark, severed the vital link between the Trust and the islanders, and directly violated REWDT's core mandate to keep all major developments 'very well communicated with the community'.

Martin responded by saying that the board shared what it could since the dismissal of the two employees within the constraints of the employment law and the police investigation. We are as frustrated as the community is and that we can share more and that we hope you understand this.

We acknowledge this is a very difficult situation, but we had to follow the clear legal advice we've received, which greatly limited what we could share and do at the time. We believe this meeting is the first

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step in rebuilding our relationship with the members of the community who clearly feel that this breach has happened.
We are working to regain your trust and know that this will take time.

3. Mismanagement of the Community Mandate: To answer how the Board justifies locking the doors of the island's primary social hub – an asset bought with public money via the Scottish Land fund to actively fight rural isolation – leaving the community entirely without its central asset.

Alison responded by saying given the circumstances and the concerns raised in this EGM request, the current board and the funders involved are keen to make sure things are done thoroughly and properly at this point. And unfortunately, that does require time.

The Taversoe Inn is now closed for the season and steps are currently being taken to open the Taversoe once the community consultation on its future has taken place.
That consultation is beginning today and will be followed by a community-wide vote.
Meanwhile, many thanks go to the volunteer Pier Working Group who have stepped in to try to ensure there are occasional facilities for folk whilst this process and community consultation takes place.

4. Fiona introduced the final point which was Financial Accountability and risk: To demand full disclosure regarding the financial impact of this shutdown, including whether community assets or public grant funds are being exposed to legal costs, tribunal risks, or settlement payouts due to the Board's unilateral actions.

Fiona invited Kayleigh to answer. Kayleigh said that the Trust sought appropriate legal advice to protect the charity and to ensure the correct processes for following it for all parties. The Trust always incurs many and varied costs and legal advice is just one thing.
As with all specialist advice, there is a cost to this. However, as the investigation is still ongoing, it would be inappropriate for us to comment on the cost to date or speculate on future cost.
When we are able to share, we will do so, including through the usual channels, such as our year-end accounts, which will be uploaded online as well as through our website and Facebook pages.

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Fiona responded by saying she had no doubt people will have questions about what has been said. The questions taken were: -

Alice Foulds - Nothing's been answered, all the answers are the same.

Fiona - Just summarise what it is that you want from the board? They won't be able to respond back today, but what do you want from the board moving forward? And what was missing for you today?

George Muirhead - It's very much the same as Alice, but despite these meetings, if they can't answer any questions, why not agree to do an EGM later.

Lee Mason - OK, the job that they're saying, I'm afraid, is just to get out of the questions. So, when can you actually have a meeting when you can answer the questions?

Lisa replied that the REW DT fully understands the frustration. Unfortunately, we are constrained by the police investigation. We really cannot say anymore. It's as frustrating for us as it is for you.

Mary MacAskill - Why was the meeting called? Why if you didn't have the answer? Lisa responded that the EGM was called because 18 members of the community put in an EGM request, which is requesting answers to the four statements. Lisa explained that the Companies Act 2006 requires us to respond within a certain number of days and have a meeting within a certain number of days from the EGM request for a meeting letter arrived in the office.

Clea Paine - Moving on from the frustration that everybody is expressing, I understand that what you've asked us to do is express our questions and concerns and you will come back to us when you're able with answers. So, I just would like to ask some questions that I think are circulating in the community.
First of all, it's to do with the rumours that Josh and Tanya were never given a formal employment contract or occupancy agreement. And with

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acknowledgement that you can't tell me, I just would like to formally express that as a question.
Second of all, I'd like to ask what their employment status was and what the management and the structure was understood to be because what we've heard is that there may have been a misunderstanding or a miscommunication between the Development Trust and Josh and Tanya at the time of their hiring as to how they were going to be paid for what their status was. You call them employees and it's understood I think that was the Development Trust's belief. And we could establish that by finding out whether you were paying national insurance contributions and or a wage.

In terms of the outstanding work that you mentioned as the reason for the closure of the pub, I'm just wondering whether that outstanding work relates to the issues identified by the catering consultant whose report you published, many of which I've understood. Again, perhaps this is incorrect, were pre-existing issues, which within that report were cast as though they were shortcomings of the pub landlords.

I guess further to that, I'd like to raise the problem within the point about communications blackout, that although there's been no formal communication possible, the Development Trust appears to have felt comfortable with a great deal of insinuation which has been really distressing to see because you all have a formal position within the community and an automatic platform from which to say things which appear therefore plausible and truthful. The Orcadian has published those as though they were truth. And in fact, there's a risk that you are libelling people. They have no right of reply. And the situation is that there's an imbalance of power and
formally, they have no right of appeal, it seems to me, because they never had any legal protection, the legal protection of a contract. And informally, you are able to manipulate public opinion by releasing these tantalising insinuations without ever having to come out and say what's happened. And that's been quite distressing to see and heartbreaking.

Eric - It's not by all to do with it, because ultimately the answer to these questions is going to come out, right? Have we got to wait? I mean, I didn't know any more about it than you do, but the fact of the matter is

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that when these investigations are concluded, then who cares what public opinion is. The point is, there's going to be an answer. And that whatever that answer is, it will come out. And that answers those questions. The fact of the matter is that we can go around beating about the bush here, but actually, this is all history basically. And if people have been upset about one thing, fine, too bad in away. What we need to do is part 2 and get on with where we're going with this, there were mistakes made, I'm sure there were plenty of mistakes made, and that's quite obvious, but we need to avoid those mistakes next time around. That's the point and get the show up and running. I don't know what the three options are, it could be that you want to set it, forget it, dump the lot. Well, fine, let the island decide. But let's get on as a positive and move forward. That's my view of the whole story.

Fiona added that's very much the second part of the conversation today. And it's a really important conversation. Fiona summarised that we have got a really good question about when can the REW DT actually answer some questions. We have got a question about why did the REW DT call this meeting. We've got a question about what was the employment status of Josh and Tanya? Were they aware of that?
Clea continued that with the issues raised in the consultant report, new issues or longstanding issues, and a comment about the fact that Josh and Tanya who don't have a platform, whereas the board does have a platform for sharing the issues and concerns which I think is a power imbalance between both parties.

George Muirhead - Who was in charge over here and what they were actually doing at the pub.

Tom Mainland - We watch the Trust sort of looking into how vigilant they are in regards to the Restaurant and the other assets. So like, for example, maybe if someone had gone and looked at the restaurant building, there wouldn't have been an oil leak, which I believe ruined your water system, and maybe you know somebody had just gone to have a look at what can be done once a week. You might have been able to see, maybe you can do this better, maybe you can do that better, and it might not snowball into the situation a bit.

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Clea Paine - The consultant's report mentioned that the Pier Restaurant has a Management Group/ Structure over it, some kind of legally separate entity that is set up in anticipation of its eventually becoming a going concern, and that no such structure was set up over the Taversoe, which does create this further issue that all of us, and it seems as a community are exposed to the financial risk in some way. What I'm trying to say constructively is that perhaps if we do move forward and keep the pub going, that it would be good to have some kind of organisational, something separate to the Development Trust because you guys don't want to run a pub, I'm sure, that would be in charge of that side of things and maybe seeing too many issues that are raised by the eventual landlord, promptly,
checking on them or other aspects of the immediate running of the pub that wouldn't fall to people who already have roles that aren't that.

Fiona summarised that there is a frustration or a concern, about if Josh and Tanya were properly managed, properly supervised and properly supported.
And therefore moving forward, how do we ensure that anybody else is probably managed to supervise if they weren't?
And then a broader question about how do we make sure the trust assets, which are the community's assets, are well managed?

Clare Daintith - At the begTaversoeing of the meeting, you mentioned about the board minutes that will be taken to be available for the public. On the REWDT page, the last time the minutes were put on there was the 1st of February 2024. Are we supposed to see the information that's happening at the meeting as if it's not there?
Helen showed the room where the minutes are posted on the website and Martin added that he has had difficulties in the past navigating the website and perhaps it
needs a little better functionality as communication is absolutely key.

Alan Alexander - There are people who worked for the Trust and on the board that are no longer here and possibly made decisions. So, I think from both sides of the community, we need to understand that. And I think exactly as Eric said, it's all about moving forward and much more

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transparency, clearly clearer roles, clearer communication with the community.

Ellie Straughan - I'm just wondering how many agencies are involved in this investigation. What are their roles in the investigation? And has anybody given you an idea how long the investigations are going to take?

Martin answered that as far as the police investigation is concerned, that is utterly independent of the REW DT, and that's entirely for the police to go through. They take as long as they take. We're not even party to the details of their investigation; we give them the information that they request and then they do the policing in the background.
As far as the investigation internally, there's two things. What happened during the period of the employees, and then what's happened as far as going forward. As far as the past section is concerned, clearly things could have been a lot better and we acknowledge that. But it's for us to look at as a board and as a community with the consultation that we're doing now and to look at how can we not repeat those mistakes or those issues or those misunderstandings, once identified. The board are genuinely concerned, as much as any member of the community, in getting to the point of clarity. Alan mentioned about transparency. Absolutely. We need to be better at being seen to be transparent. We need information that's clearly available, as Claire has found out there, our website is difficult. We shouldn't just rely on the website and Facebook. We've got many ways that we can improve going forward. But ultimately, the biggest frustration that we're hearing, and as you alluded to them very clearly, is the whole situation with the employees is just we cannot, as you, if you were our employee, or any one of us as employees, we wouldn't expect our employer to be talking in public or to the press about the details of any situation that's occurred. We're really trying hard to stick to that, but it comes across, I know it's disingenuous, but we are limited.

Lee Mason - I just wanted to say, need to learn from the past people make mistakes, its human nature, and whatever questions that we have today more important going forward. Is there a way as the residents here, we can, can get involved, what we can do, what Development Trust can do, so that rather than we're having various meetings, can we email questions and get answers at a separate time once all the information is

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available.

Fiona summarised this as what you need to do to help get the Taversoe up and running quickly. And also hearing at some point there'll need to be another feedback of what's happened. These are two separate things. You can you get involved by staying here after the break. That is what the whole second-half of the meeting is about. And we'll be taking names for those who wish to help if residents choose the CBS option and you can email via info@rewdt.org anytime.

Carolyne Tunbridge said that as an employee, she would not expect her boss to walk in and sack her on the spot, and I think what the REW DT did was wrong. You made two people homeless and a dog. Totally, totally wrong

Martin acknowledged Carolyne's feelings. A horrible situation and we do recognise that it was not done on a whim. We had clear legal guidance, and I know it's not a great answer, and it's not going to satisfy you, is it? And it's not meant to, but we can give you the answer that we can, which is clear legal guidance and that we had to act on it. So, what I want to acknowledge there is that regardless of the rights and wrongs, people feel upset about how people are treated. Absolutely.

Mary MacAskill asked a question with regards to employee's employments. I would like to know what policies and what procedures were put in place for four of the board members to go to the Taversoe and evict two people? And see all the policies and procedures in their contract that you can back up by doing what you did.
And the other thing I would like to state was we call an EGM as a community. You say you had to act in days. It's been months since you guys have all been able to have meetings and pre-empt all these questions by basically saying no answers.

Fiona summarised that there were two questions asked. Did the REW DT have the contractual legal rights to do that? And secondly, what are the processes for EGMs in the Trust? What are the timescales about and clarification of those?

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Andy Hind stated that he has worked for one of the biggest employees in the UK and if you've got the right evidence, you can sack someone for gross misconduct on the spot, they have the right to appeal, without debating on whether or not they were formally employed. A resident asked if this included eviction and Andy replied he did not know about that.

Fiona summarised that point one is that an employee can be dismissed one the spot for misconduct. Point two – did Josh & Tanya have contracts? Point three Can the REW DT evict them legally?

Tom Mainland added that employment can be formal and quite fluid in the sense that you don't necessarily have to have a contract, but if you receive payment or if your employer pays national insurance contribution, then effectively you have accepted your contract.

Fiona summarised that the question asked is not was there a physical contract of employment in place, but were the individuals treated as if they were employees?

Courtney McCheyne-Robb said that this is really uncomfortable for everybody, including the board. I think. I think it's been really tough on everybody to look at the members of the board. They're really upset by everything as well, and it's not just everyone sitting on this side of the room.
And what I would quite like to see going forward is not just the answers to the questions, there has been some good questions today, just for transparency I'd like to see the answers to the questions and then the lessons learned on the back of it. Showing if there has been anything that we can learn from, or they can learn from, then what's going to happen in the future.

Alice Mainland - It's not a question, but I would like to thank the board very much for their time. They spend hours and hours working in meetings and working on this and they get no thanks for it. And I think there should be a little bit of respect for the board as well.

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Fiona asked if there were any other questions? None came forward.

Lisa shared what we want to cover in the second part of the conversation, and that there would be a break.

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