



Tomintoul & Glenlivet Development Trust

Annual Report 2015 – 16

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1. Chairman's Report

By any measure 2016 has been an incredible year for Tomintoul & Glenlivet Development Trust and the board and I are extremely proud to be presenting such a positive annual report to our members.

After the last AGM the Directors elected me as Chair and we saw further changes to the membership of the Board. Mary Williams Edgar became Company Secretary and Jennifer Stewart joined the board with a wealth of experience as the previous head of Heritage Lottery Fund in Wales. On a somewhat sadder note John Osbourne and Mike Terry who were appointed to the board last year both passed away and our thoughts are with their family and friends. We have also seen changes in our staff team, Eilidh Hamilton our Graduate Business Development Manager moved on to an exciting post in Edinburgh and Justin Livesey joined us in May as Business Development Manager. We also welcomed new faces to the Smugglers Hostel and Museum teams.

As we promised last year our focus this year has been firmly on supporting the landscape partnership in securing £3.6million investment in the area and I'm pleased to say this has been achieved. This is a massive credit to our communities and the many hours of volunteer time that went into developing and supporting the bid. The project was undoubtedly strengthened by the trusts year one Discovery Centre

project which we secured planning permission, building warrants and LEADER match funding for in advance of our final submission to HLF.

In addition, we planned to complete the asset transfer of the hostel and museum and in August Moray Council formally agreed the request to a nil value transfer to TGDT. This decision gives us the authority to make major improvements to both buildings and secures the long-term community ownership and management of these two vital resources in our area. Our energy efficiency project at the Smugglers Hostel is nearing completion with the installation of new double glazed windows and Crown Estate staff have donated time to create the link between the hostel and adjacent garden. This will give us new opportunities at the hostel next season.

Our events programme continues to grow and we've added a quiz night and dark skies event to our existing successful Rock & Road event, nature festival and Skerryvore gig.

Over the next year we have ambitious plans to re develop the Museum into a Discovery Centre. This is the first project in the landscape partnership and is scheduled to re open its doors next summer. It's an incredibly exciting project and with a budget of £445k is the most ambitious the trust has undertaken. We are grateful for all the support we've received from volunteers and the community at consultation events and are confident

that we can deliver a first-class facility fit for visitor and community use alike.

The development trust is leading on the Landscape Partnership Community History project which has gone from strength to strength this year. Successful memory days have been held at Glenlivet Hall, Tomnabat Court and the Breas Hall with many fascinating images and stories being shared. Behind the scenes much thought and effort is going into how to present these images and stories so they are accessible and represent the diversity of our community's past.

I'm pleased to report that we have continued to hold our "drop in" meetings to allow the community to hold face to face discussions with Directors and staff members about the work of the Trust. We have also held regular meetings between Board members and the two Community Associations to inform and support each other in our common goals.

In closing I would like to thank all those who have served as Directors and Staff members of the Trust for helping us achieve so much this year. On behalf of the Trust, its Directors and its staff members I would like to thank all our funders for their financial and professional support through their respective organisations.

Mark Finnie, Chair – November 2016

2. Project updates

a. Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership

It's been an incredible year on the HLF Landscape Partnership project. The project team, led by Marion McDonald worked relentlessly to prepare project plans, budgets and other documents required by HLF and submitted the £3.6million bid on time in May this year. Having secured £160k of match funding, planning permission and building warrants for the discovery centre the work didn't stop there for the development trust. The discovery centre and landscape partnership office space in Tomintoul Museum will kick the project off this year and we were tasked with preparing and issuing tender documents for the building contract that will see some significant changes to the layout of the museum. In September, we received the news we'd all been waiting for, that HLF loved our project and our bid was successful! We now await official permission to start and look forward to working on this exciting project over the next four years.



The trust are a key partner in the delivery of this ambitious, Landscape scale project being co-ordinated by the Cairngorms National Park Authority. We're leading on the VIC and Museum refurbishment, the Community History project and developing a series of community events to highlight and celebrate Tomintoul & Glenlivet's Hidden Heritage.

In addition, we're supporting the Landscape Partnership board with directors from the trust and hosting two of the five Landscape Partnership programme staff in our organisation. The opportunities for our communities presented by the Landscape Partnership are endless and in such a diverse programme there's something for everyone. We'd urge you to get involved and make a contribution no matter how small.

b. Tomintoul Museum & Visitor Information Centre

This year has seen visitor numbers at the museum rise again with a total of 8,173 people coming through our doors. This represents a 16% increase on the previous year and gave us a spend per head in the Museum of £0.85. Our visitors have come from all over the world with a wide range of interests and enquiries.

Top 5 countries	Germany, France, USA, Netherlands and Australia
Top 5 interests	Whisky, Walking, Museum/Heritage, Cycling, Wildlife and Fishing.

Our staff and volunteers have pulled together as a team and given these visitors a true highland welcome. With their enthusiasm and passion for the area we have encouraged many of them to stay locally and visit our fantastic attractions, shops, businesses, walks and wildlife. We also anticipate they will spread the word about this area exponentially increasing our visitor numbers over the coming years.



We have increased the range of items for sale in the information centre with arts & crafts from local suppliers. These have proved to be popular with walking sticks and whisky related prints being stand out popular items. We also introduced the sale of coffee & biscuits which alongside the free Wi-Fi encouraged visitors to increase their dwell time in our facilities and giving us the opportunity to understand their needs.

Tomintoul VIC was used for a number of events throughout the year. These included Ian Logan, the Glenlivet International Brand Ambassador, hosting an evening nosing and tasting to a packed house and Wildbird holding a drop in session on their 'Hidden House' project in the Braes of Glenlivet. In May the VIC became a hub for visitors during the Cairngorms Nature Festival. Thanks to the support from the Cairngorms National Park Authority and everyone else who got involved in this event, including local farmer Tilly Smith, the Crown Estate, local volunteers and David Newlands from Easter Corrie.

c. The Smugglers Hostel

The Smugglers Hostel has had a very busy season with the number of bed nights up to 1786 which is 14% higher than the previous year. We also achieved our target of a 25% increase in income enabling us to continue subsidising a high level of service in the Museum. Without the income from the hostel the facilities and resources available at the museum would be scaled back.

The hostel has retained its 4 star rating from Visit Scotland and our certificate of excellence from Tripadvisor. The Guardian Newspapers travel guide described it as *'one of the top 10 community-run hostels in the UK'*. Visit Scotland has promoted the Smugglers as one of the 11 scenic Scottish hostels that will take your breath away.



Joining the Smugglers Hostel as Wardens for the season where Jocelyn and Phil. Jocelyn is a Canadian with dual British / Canadian nationality as her father's Scottish. Jocelyn originally applied as a volunteer but we were so impressed with her CV and personality that we encouraged her to apply for a job with us. Phil who lives locally joined us following a season at the Lecht. He

has a strong background in logistics and experience of food preparation. They both worked hard, delivered excellent customer service and worked as a team helping us through some very busy days, thank you Jocelyn and Phil!

The Trust would like to thank the community for their ongoing support and help with the Smugglers Hostel. The Hostel attracts visitors to Tomintoul from all over the world. Just over half our guests come from the UK, many also come from Europe with Germany, France and the Netherlands being key markets, not to mention those that come from further afield including the USA, Canada and Australia. The Smugglers Hostel is set in a great location for outdoor enthusiasts, back packers and it also plays host to many return customers who come back each season for events such as the Tomintoul Motorcycle Gathering, Rock & Road cycling festival and the Tomintoul Highland Games.

During this month we will be making some up-grades to the Hostel with all the windows being replaced courtesy of a grant from Cairngorms National Park Authority. This should greatly increase the thermal efficiency of the building as well as help ensure the long term maintenance of the facilities. We are having a working party as well from the 23rd – 28th of November so please come along and help. Any assistance would be appreciated no matter how small.

d. Broadband

Access to reliable and fast broadband services continues to be a significant issue in our communities and across rural Scotland. In February 2016 TGDT were invited to represent our community on a steering group investigating the viability of an aggregated broadband scheme in the Cairngorms National Park. Facilitated by CNPA and Community Broadband Scotland (CBS) the steering group have been successful in forming a new company to receive CBS funding and contract with a firm to design, build and operate a broadband scheme in the national park. The group have also been successful in establishing the white postcodes in the national park that won't benefit from the BT main fibre roll out. This is a major achievement and the list of postcodes was published in a State Aid Public Consultation (SAPC) in October 2016. The result of the SAPC will indicate where CBS funding can be used to provide a new service. Detailed timescales for the next steps which will be to prepare and publish the tender documents and are currently being reviewed. Tomintoul & Glenlivet will continue to support the Cairngorm Community Broadband project and feedback progress to members and the wider community. Cairngorm Community Broadband will be arranging public meetings and attending Community Councils over the coming months to give more details and encourage individuals to express an interest in the proposed service.

Despite a couple of minor outages our pilot broadband project in the Braes of Glenlivet public hall has delivered a reliable and quick connection to part of our community where expensive satellite services are the only other viable option. The project has also demonstrated the robustness of the technology and quality of the support provided by Badenoch Broadband. The pilot project is set to continue while there is a need and the line and infrastructure that supports it are available.

e. Events

The Trust has been involved in and supported a number of events throughout the year. These have included the Cairngorm Nature Festival in May which saw a great weekend of events. The Saturday started with a Wild Cat walk looking for signs of the elusive Scottish Wildcat with project officer Emma Rawlings. Later in the morning a wetland plant & wildflower walk was organised with families enjoying the wealth of natural beauty to be found and a wildflower walk with a local expert from the Cairngorms National Park. Other exciting events over the weekend were visits to a local farm where Reindeer and Wild Boar were seen and an off road land rover tour of the Braes of Glenlivet. The finale was a Dark Skies Event at the Braes of Glenlivet Hall. Families came along to

experience some of Scotland's darkest skies allowing them to see the night sky in a new light. Throughout the two days the local community and volunteers supported these events making this another highlight to the local events calendar.



The weekend of the 11th and 12th of June saw the 3rd annual Rock&Road Festival to be held on the Glenlivet Crown Estate, with the Tomintoul square being the central hub. Marquees, tents and a pump track arrived late on Friday afternoon and where set up, the Square was ready for the visitors. This year saw more people coming and joining the race and events with large numbers arriving from 8am to enjoy a weekend of riding and family events. Better weather than last year helped to create a festival feel on the Sunday with everyone enjoying the outdoor spaces and relaxed atmosphere.



This is the second time that the Scottish Enduro Series has visited the area proving The Glenlivet Estate has something to offer every one. Riders were able to enjoy the purpose-built mountain bike trails in the heart of the the Cairngorms National Park, with not only fantastic fun packed, flowing single track trails, but spectacular scenery and stunning views. The Enduro also added a sprinkling of new fresh cut trails to add some spice. With a full entry list, a 40km loop with 6 diverse stages, it proved to be a great weekend of riding.

Tomintoul saw a number of family events organised in parallel with the Enduro by the Tomintoul & Glenlivet Development Trust & Crown Estate over the weekend. These ranged from a Smoothie Bike, Pump track to a Treasure Hunt. The Trust organised a film night in the Richmond Hall with over 30 riders viewing an evening of bike related films. Children enjoyed a weekend of crafts and nature quizzes in the square while our wonderful volunteers provided home bakes & hot beverages which proved to be very

popular. Moray Youth Arts Hub came along as well offering weekend dancing in the streets with Bodysurf Scotland on Saturday and Drumming up a Storm with Carol Scorer on Sunday.

3. Future Plans

Our priorities for the next four years are clear;

Supporting the Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership in delivering the Hidden Heritage projects, the museum refurbishment, community history and celebration projects

Achieving charitable status for the trust giving us access to new funding streams.

Building on the success we've had with the new team by adding new volunteer roles and hosting two Landscape Partnership posts in our organisation.

Maintaining the high standards achieved in the operation of the Smugglers Hostel and Museum & VIC

Developing a respected trust delivering tangible benefits in an engaged community

Our mission is to “Deliver economic and social wellbeing for our community, creating a vibrant destination of choice that attracts people to live, work and visit, whilst preserving our natural heritage and culture”. Our mission is as relevant today as it was when the trust was first established in 2012, but we can only achieve it with the help and

support of others so if you would like to get involved or have an idea for a project we want to hear about it!

4. Acknowledgements

TGDT would like to thank all individuals and organisations who have assisted the Trust in its work throughout the year. In particular

Museum & event volunteers
KATCA
GICA

TGDT would also like to acknowledge the funding and support received from:

Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Moray Council
The Crown Estate
ScotGrad
Heritage Lottery Fund
Cairngorm LEADER
Community Broadband Scotland