

Tomintoul and Glenlivet Regeneration Project

Looking at Setting up a Development Trust for Tomintoul & Glenlivet - Note of Meeting

Date: 20 February 2012

Time: 7pm

Venue: Richmond Memorial Hall, Tomintoul

Background

This meeting followed on from a [public meeting](#) held on the 7th of November 2011 in Tomintoul which looked at the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Regeneration Project [Opportunities Paper](#). The community were asked to prioritise which actions they felt should be addressed most urgently. One of the key actions was to look at the possibility of setting up a Development Trust to enable the community to take a leading role in delivering actions key to the future economic viability of the area (with the support of a variety of key partners including the National Park Authority, Highland and Islands Enterprise, the Moray Council, the Crown Estate etc).

Note of Speakers

Welcome: Eleanor Mackintosh (chair)

Eleanor thanked people for attending the meeting and introduced the various agencies in attendance: CNPA, The Moray Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. She also introduced the three speakers who would explain in more detail the benefits and pitfalls of setting up a Development Trust.

Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS): Rory Dutton

[DTAS](#) is a national organisation that supports Development Trusts in Scotland with a membership of 180 from Shetland to Galloway. Development Trusts are a kind of community company they involve no regulatory or legal framework. Most register as a company limited by guarantee with charitable aims, some have trading subsidiaries.

Development Trusts are based on four main principles:

- They are community owned and led and are membership based
- They are not a single issue group and should largely reflect the breadth of the community
- They are not for private gain
- Partnership is at the core of how they operate

Other things to take into consideration are that they are run by people elected from the membership and are entirely independent (the agenda should be set by the community), grassroots approach. They can also have:

- Legal structures for the trustees (company limited by guarantee) to limit liability
- Charitable status (regulated by OSCR), so they can access a wider range of funding,
- Sub-groups that work on a variety of projects at the same time.

Huntly Development Trust: Donald Boyd

Donald talked about the [Huntly Development Trust](#) experience. He encouraged anyone thinking of starting up a Development Trust to use the services of DTAS especially as it was free for the first couple of years! He gave some background to the Huntly project that came out of the Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership project. Like Tomintoul and Glenlivet there had been some extensive consultation in the community to identify the priorities and this was distilled down to the following themes:

- Developing Infrastructure
- Developing Economy
- Developing Society
- Culture and Heritage
- Environment
- Sport

The initial funding they drew down was from Aberdeenshire Council, LEADER, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Forestry Commission. They are a Company Limited by Guarantee and currently applying for charitable status. They are on route to becoming fully sustainable estimating that that would take them another 18 months to achieve. They are hoping to achieve this by going down the renewable energy route: wind, hydro, bio-mass and anabolic digestion. Donald outlined the positives of the Development Trust which he felt had been hugely beneficial to the community. They are:

- People really get to know their community
- The trust galvanises people
- Access to funds that other bodies can't
- It's a great way to get things done (big things, things that have not been addressed for years)
- It's fun and a very interesting experience
- It's a national movement so there is a lot of support around to do it

Donald also outlined the challenges of a Development Trust:

- Takes time, longer than you think
- Some tensions between the Development Trust and existing community groups as it is not a single issue group
- Generating income is not always easy

His conclusion was that it is hard work but well worth it in the end.

Ballater Royal Deeside Development Trust (BRD): Nick Mardall

[Ballater Royal Deeside Development Trust](#) is a charitable Trust and a Company Limited by Guarantee. Like Huntly they have a themed work plan that covers a wider range of community activities. They have 12 directors that work well as a team a good mix of people with a range of skills to bring to the table.

BRD projects include: a community bus scheme, the Deeside Donside Development Project, a walking festival, community led caravan site etc. They are also involved in looking at affordable housing solutions for local people. Like Huntly, they conducted a Community Action Plan led by the community that led to the recruitment of a development worker. Future income may come from a variety of sources: renewables (like Huntly) and the community led caravan site.

Questions and Answers from the floor

Q: A community Trust would be open to anyone within a defined postcode area. There are approx 1200 people in the Tomintoul/Glenlivet area. How many directors should we have?

A: Good number is one that can work effectively together. 8-10 is good with a good range of complementary skills and personalities between them. They all need to be elected and on a fixed term (staggered). Huntly did a skills audit and struggled initially to find people with financial and legal skills in the beginning. Also do not set the quorum for the group too high so that the group can be functional, particularly through the winter months.

Q: How did you attract people in the first place?

A: Number of different ways to get people involved. Keep a high, positive profile, involve all the other community groups in the area: Community Council/Association, business, tourism groups. Huntly spent time on developing a leaflet/sign up form. Got people to sign up on the spot (£1 for membership). Leaflet was a good starting point but needs to be funded.

Q: How do you include all the satellite villages in the group so that they also have a profile?

A: Need to ensure that the small villages are represented on the DT Board.

Q: There are 180 DTAs in Scotland, how are they doing?

A: They generally do better in smaller more remote areas where there is often a very high membership. Larger towns can struggle a bit as they often have a smaller membership percentage and can struggle a bit to make so much impact.

Q: I worry about the DT taking away volunteers from existing community activity there is a limit to how much people can get involved in the community

A: Yes - people need to see delivery on the ground fairly quickly so they begin to build up confidence in the DT and trust that it can work. People really need to commit to the

process. Important to co-opt advisory/support bodies on to the Board. There is a lot of help out there, you do not need to do it on your own.

Q: What is the age split of the membership in Huntly?

We have three categories the first is 12-17s but we only have 3 members in it...more in the 18-25s but most of the membership is older which reflects the ageing community.

Next Steps

The discussion opened out into what the next steps might be for Tomintoul and Glenlivet

There was a suggestion to collect the names of interested people in the short term for a next meeting looking at the mechanics of setting up a trust. Some people felt that this was too quick and that the attendance for the meeting (particularly from Tomintoul) was low and that there may be people interested (and with valuable skills) that needed to know more. People felt that it was a big undertaking so they needed to take their time; others were keener to get going.

Proposed next steps

To hold a follow up meeting “Creating the Development trust for Tomintoul and Glenlivet”, publicise the event widely so as wide a representation of the communities as possible could be present.

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On behalf of: Kirkmichael and Tomintoul Community Association, Glenlivet & Inveravon Community Association, Tomintoul & Glenlivet Highland Holidays, The Crown Estate, The Moray Council, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Visit Scotland and Cairngorms National Park Authority