

Largo Communities Together

LCT is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Charity No. SC048447

Largo Communities Together (LCT) draft

Minutes of LCT (29) Monday 9 August 2021

Present: Nora Conlin, Stan Green, Irene Kay, Emily Macdonald, Jill Miller, Louise Robb (Chair), Barbara Simpson, James Simpson

In attendance: Ronnie Graham, Alexandra Crichton (AC), David Crichton (DC)

Apologies: Jan Kerr, Dougi McMillan, Beau Russell, Andrew Stenson

1. Welcome, apologies, thanks and introductions

LR welcomed all in attendance to the meeting, and introduced Alexandra and David Crichton, Largo Estate who attended the first section of the meeting.

2. Minutes of 6 July 2021 and matters arising

Board minutes of 6 July proposed by BS and seconded by JM. Matters arising would be covered in the agenda.

3. Largo Estate Update and Statement from Alexandra Crichton and David Crichton

There had been recent email communication between The Crichtons and LCT. AC and DC were of the view that statements in previous LCT minutes pertaining to Largo Estate were negative in tone, specifically a statement in the minute of 1 June 2021. AC and DC wished the minute to be amended. It was explained that due process had to be followed re the amending of a minute previously agreed by the LCT Board. There would be discussion of the request later in the meeting. The LCT office bearers themselves could not agree to any amendments without the agreement of the LCT Board.

LR invited AC and DC to present a statement they had previously prepared to the LCT Board. This statement is attached to these minutes in full for reference. (At the bottom of this minute)

The information offered on the plans for Largo Estate was welcomed. However, the Crichtons did not demonstrate engagement with the needs expressed by members of the local community during LCT's extensive community consultation of 2018/2019. Noted during the meeting that AC referred to some of the community consultation ideas as 'pie in the sky'.

With reference to the Memo of Understanding (MoU), it was noted that LCT had not asked for this document to be signed as it does not exist. The intention was that drawing up an MoU could be a process engaged in by Largo Estate owners and LCT together, to create a mutually agreed document setting out the basis for communication and engagement between us going forward.

Noted from the email of 30 July 2021 from LR as Chair of LCT to AC:

*Further to the process, are you open to entering a conversation with LCT with a view to forming a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) about both parties' **needs and offers** in the situation we currently find ourselves? In that agreement, there is space for us to all find a way forward that has, for both Largo Estate and its people, and LCT and its members, a place in the future of your plans from now on. We know that this conversation and the subsequent document would not be legally binding, but it would set clear intent for things deemed important to us all, especially around how we communicate together. It need not be an onerous or time-consuming task.*

Largo Communities Together

LCT is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Charity No. SC048447

AC and DC wished to be considered as friends. The Estate site had to be made safe and planning details were taking considerable time to come through prior to any action. They were moving forward as quickly as they could whilst being mindful of their employees. Concern was expressed by AC that LCT was planning to force them to sell the land. LCT noted that this was not the intention.

Noted a positive statement in Largo Links re Largo Estate.

LR applauded the work being taken forward to date. There has been communication, but further engagement needs to be developed. It was suggested that a meeting be set up to discuss the aforementioned MoU.

At this point LR thanked AC and DC for their statement and input. They were requested to leave the meeting. A wish was expressed that they remain to hear the input on the Pier developments. LR suggested that they would be able to read this in the published minutes following their approval by LCT Board. The Crichtons were thanked for their input and left the meeting.

Noted that LCT were still to hear if the funding application for the development officer(s) post(s) had been successful. If it were so, the officer(s), when appointed, would be given the task of developing asset planning/ needs and offers as part of the remit.

Discussion then continued re Largo Estate. It was felt there were different perceptions of communication vs engagement in emails between Mr and Mrs Crichton and LCT.

Positive comments had been made in emails, and in the recent edition of Largo Links. Whilst there was communication with the Estate owners, real engagement was not yet developed. It was agreed by the Board that the minutes of 1 June 2021 should not be amended. The statement read by the Crichtons as noted earlier, as agreed, to be included in full appendix to the minutes. Noted that AC stated she would escalate the issue re the minutes if not amended. LCT would continue to engage with the Crichtons.

Offers of support had been and would continue to be made, e.g funding suggestions, experience, local knowledge. Previously noted that AC had referred to some of the community ideas as being 'pie in the sky'. This comment was not felt to be helpful by LCT. Paths and access were very important to the community, as noted in the community consultation of 2018/19. The opening up of Largo Estate paths would support links between the three villages. If an MoU could be developed with input from LCT and Largo Estate, this would be a positive way forward. This course of action re MoU had been advised by DTAS.

SG, RG, Steve Wood (SW) and Raymond Muszynski (RM) had attended a meeting with local Cllrs, David Alexander and Alistair Suttie to outline developments re Largo Estate. The Cllrs were supportive and would bring matters to the attention of relevant Fife Council officers, otherwise there was little they could do. Contact had also been made with Wendy Chamberlain, MP. She had been updated re the Estate situation. Noted that the Estate Sub Group were working to put forward what was considered to be important for the community. There had been a request for more members to come forward for the Estate Sub Group in Largo Links latest edition. Perhaps those with an interest in environmental or historical aspects would join the group. In the meantime, the Estate Sub Group would reiterate their offer of support to the owners.

4. Pier update

Largo Communities Together

LCT is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Charity No. SC048447

JS provided an update on progress:

- Meeting with the Bucknalls still to take place but this would be soon. They had been very busy with the opening of the Crusoe.
- Digital survey had been taken forward. RM would now develop this work into a set of drawings. An account for payment for this work to be sent to EM.
- Meeting in place to take forward Pier Partnership Trust and FCCT
- Zoom meeting set up for 24 August with our DTAS DO and their Ownership and Shares Team
- Raffle for the painting held during LAW drew in £310. Grateful thanks extended
- Garden sale by one of the Angel Share team – funds of £640 donated to the Pier fund. Once more, thanks expressed.

5. Largo Arts Week update and Largo Arts

Noted that regular updates re LAW were posted on social media. All present deemed LAW a great success for our community.

6. LARCT update

IK provided an update on LACRT activities. Work on projects was quiet over the summer.

- Largo Friends and Neighbours Befriending Service remained on track with their service delivery. Training was due to be completed 12 August. This would include an actual meeting to share experiences, discuss Safeguarding policy and consider next steps. Afternoon tea would be served as a thank you to our volunteers for their thoughtful efforts on behalf of the Service.
- A pilot was ongoing with digital provision for a local resident.
- The Inspire creative/drama workshop to take place in Durham Hall was organised for 11 August for 30 primary stage children in the Largo area.
- LACRT would progress the establishment of a local Resilience Team. Liaison with Fife Council and other agencies was ongoing.
- LR to check in with Phil Light re Community Shed development.
- Very good relationship with Durham Hall and LAW during arts week.
- FOI: restoration work to begin on the Durham Hall in due course.

7. Sustainable Development update

If successful re DO funding, JM would liaise with them re workshop on community assets. Discussion followed re traffic and parking. This might be an issue for further investigation in liaison with LACC. LCT would be reviewing our vision and strategy – **review, refresh, revision.**

This would be a major piece of work and would be taken forward following the AGM.

LR, EM, JM had been involved in the Beach Designation Workshop led by Matt Allan of LACC and involving interested community members. LR and EM to carry out a cost benefit analysis for the project.

8. Treasurer's report

EM updated the meeting.

Noted:

- Largo Links was bringing in advertising income and a donation, approximately £526
- Noted previously, funds to the Pier account: raffle £310: from LAW £130 (SWAN photography by DM)
- Unrestricted funds in the LCT bank account approximately £1,690

Largo Communities Together

LCT is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Charity No. SC048447

9. Membership update and AGM Planning

AGM planning to be taken forward by Steering Group and IK. Office Bearers to meet soon to begin planning. LR to email date.

Almost all members now on Email database, or will be by the end of September. This would be a significant help for communications re AGM.

10. Communications/Largo Links Magazine

Fourth edition of Largo Links had been delivered across our villages. RG reported that otherwise all was quiet.

11. Discussion and approval of Code of Conduct, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Grievance Issues.

Discussion of other Governance/Policy issues. Process for disseminating to all sub groups

Sustainability and Lone Volunteering policies were accepted by the Board. They would be shared and discussed by Largo friends and Neighbours at their meeting of 12 August 2021.

12. Planning future meetings

Agreed that JM would liaise with Osbert Lancaster, Sustainable Development Consultant for Sustainable Dunbar to speak about his work at our next meeting.

NC to provide link to the Lasting Difference website.

13. Correspondence, AoB, Date of Next Meeting

As previously noted, still awaiting the outcome of the DTAS funding request.

The Board viewed a short video re Levenmouth Rail Campaign - positive development for Levenmouth area.

Note date of next meeting: Monday 13 September 2021 7.00 – 9.00pm on Zoom due to Covid situation.

Appendix 1. Statement from David and Alexandra Crichton- reproduced in full.

As promised, here is our statement.

Kind regards,

Alexandra and David Crichton

We, as the owners of Largo Estate, have always been open and honest about our plans since our first meeting in 2018. We laid out a more detailed plan and approach to Stan and Raymond in Dec 2019.

We have achieved the initial steps laid out in that plan. Our Horticulture Manager took up her post in January this year and has worked incredibly hard at turning the walled garden into a productive site in a very short time and also has recruited two more members of staff. We now have additional people on board to roll out the next stages. In particular, this means setting out a long term building schedule, and getting co-operation from various statutory bodies. At this point we will be able to share more widely, and consider details and aspirations that others may have.

As a reminder, we returned to Scotland in late 2014 to take over the management of the estates and since then

Largo Communities Together

LCT is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Charity No. SC048447

have developed a track record of renovating houses, buildings at risk and setting up successful, award-winning businesses. Our team are our biggest asset and we are proud to be employers that care deeply, paying the real living wage at the very least, and furlough top ups. We offer affordable housing in well appointed properties that are funded by our accommodation business. We work with community groups in ways that we can and have already started the ball rolling in Largo supplying local food banks. Our ultimate goal is to be certified B Corp.

As you know, we are always happy to meet with you, answer your emails within hours, always pick up your phone calls and hop onto Zoom calls when requested. You have now asked us to sign a memorandum, which we find confusing as you know that we are always happy to talk to you. Whilst we answer your questions, you often are unable to answer ours, please refer to recent emails that remain unanswered regarding whether you intend to seek to force a compulsory purchase.

We find some of your correspondence and actions abrasive, confrontational and inaccurate. Whilst we have always been open about our plans, you continue to push your own agenda with the community with little to no mention of what we have discussed, thus causing immense confusion to everyone. You often take weeks to answer our emails, in particular when we invited you to be on the recruitment panel for our first position. Your negativity has made us think twice about asking for your assistance again.

It was refreshing to meet the teams behind Largo Arts Week, who were delighted to put up our stand about the estate and oozed enthusiasm about our progress.

Out and about in Largo this weekend with our family, putting up posters and delivering flyers, it was nice to see so much positivity and well wishes. We're excited to meet more people like this at our open day on Saturday. It's a shame that the local residents are so confused.

We are a couple with a young family, we are not scared to get our hands dirty and you will find us in Largo at least once a week, picking vegetables, making deliveries locally and meeting with our building team.