

Tarland Development Group - Trustee Meeting Minutes

Date: 13 May 2026 Time: 7.15pm Venue: MacRobert Hall, Upper Meeting Room

Present: Simon (Chair), Chris, Sandra, Ken, Dave H, Jonquil, Debbie, Beth.

Apologies: Frank and Dave Muirhead.

1. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Proposed: Ken. Seconded: Jonquil

3. Matters Arising

Any matters arising were addressed under the relevant project updates.

4. Development Officers – Introduction and Priorities

Trustees welcomed Debbie and Beth following the signing of their contracts.

Discussion took place regarding preferred working arrangements and diary management, attendance at trustee meetings, project familiarisation and visits to project sites, recording and reporting arrangements, governance and communications priorities, and support required from trustees during the induction period.

Agreed:

- Development Officers should maintain a simple record of time allocation during the initial months.
- Development Officers should attend trustee meetings wherever possible.
- Trustee meeting dates should be planned further in advance.
- Development Officers should meet project steering groups and gain a fuller understanding of project activity across TDG.

Action: Development Officers to prepare draft work plans and priorities for consideration by trustees.

5. Governance and Organisational Development

Membership

Trustees agreed that membership growth and engagement should be a priority. Discussion included reviewing current membership arrangements, improving engagement with project participants, possible introduction of additional membership categories, balancing local representation with wider participation in TDG projects, and Development Trust best practice.

Governance Review

Trustees identified the following areas for review:

- Steering group structures.
- Delegated authority arrangements.
- Trustee recruitment.

- Policy review programme.
- Financial procedures.
- Ethics and governance policies.
- Disclosure/PVG requirements where appropriate.

Communications

Trustees agreed that communications require strengthening. Discussion included website development, newsletters and regular project updates, improved social media activity, consistent branding, and development of a single source of information for community communications.

Community Relations

Trustees discussed relationships with Cromar Community Council.

6. Project Updates

Written reports were received for all projects. (Attached as appendix)

Apiary

Trustees approved the appointment of a contractor for grounds maintenance following an unsuccessful recruitment exercise.

Composting

SEPA authorisation had been successfully secured. Trustees recorded thanks to Denise for supporting the application process.

Community Garden

Trustees noted completion of replacement raised beds and tunnel cover works and discussed joint management of village hanging baskets.

Food and Music Festival

Trustees received an update on festival preparations. Discussion focused on volunteer recruitment, administrative support requirements, sustainability, funding arrangements and future business planning.

Trustees agreed that support from the Development Officers for the 2026 event was appropriate within the wider resilience objectives of the DTAS funding.

Cromar Foods

Trustees discussed food insecurity, food waste reduction, operation of the new school pantry, partnership opportunities and wider strategic food initiatives.

Lego Club

Trustees noted continued strong participation and plans for a Lego Trail during the Food and Music Festival.

Paths

Trustees noted progress with waymarker replacement, volunteer work parties, bridge inspections and leaflet reprinting requirements.

Pavilion

Trustees noted ongoing uncertainty regarding transfer arrangements between Aberdeenshire Council and MacRobert Trust.

Trails

Trustees considered proposals relating to the North Pittenderich development work.

Decision:

Trustees approved expenditure of £1,999 for exploratory dig pits to inform future route design and planning considerations.

7. Financial and Sustainability Discussions

Trustees discussed future financial sustainability including:

- Greater cost recovery across projects.
- Contributions towards shared organisational costs.
- Insurance and website costs.
- Development of a fair allocation model.
- Future funding opportunities.
- Building reserves to sustain Development Officer posts beyond the current funding period.

Action:

Finance and governance arrangements to be reviewed as part of the Development Officer work programme.

8. Trustee and Steering Group Structure

Trustees discussed:

- Improving consistency across steering groups.
- Clarifying committee and steering group roles.
- Maintaining proportionate governance arrangements.
- Increasing trustee numbers.
- Encouraging wider participation in governance activities.

9. Any Other Business

Action for Simon: Speak to DTAS regarding funding use for TF&M administrator.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Wed 24th June, 7pm

Actions Summary:

1. Development Officers to prepare draft work plans and priorities.
2. Development Officers to maintain initial workload/time records.
3. Development Officers to engage with project steering groups and visit project sites.
4. Governance review to consider membership, policies, delegated authority and steering group structures.
5. Finance review to consider cost recovery and shared organisational costs.
6. Progress approved Apiary contractor appointment.
7. Progress £1,999 Trails exploratory works approval.
8. Simon speak to DTAS.

Project	Chair/ input by?	Progress (Try to keep to < 100 words?)	Any action/ note/ highlight
Apiary	Dave M/Jonq uil	Bees are busy! With all the ors in the fields despite the cold weather. There is an article in the Scottish BeeKeeper about a visit to Aboyne Academy by the Tarland Bee group. The primary school in Crathie is also doing a project on bees and the Bee group is assisting there. There was a garden work party last Sunday to tidy up and do general maintenance - much was achieved despite angry bees.	
Apple	Dave H	Nothing to report. Bit worried about the recent frost.	
Cinema	Dave H	Next film is That Sinking Feeling on Friday 15th at 7pm.	
Compost ing	Dave H	We have succeeded in getting SEPA authorisation which is a new requirement and needed considerably more information and form filling than the old scheme. Thanks to Denise for helping with this. The good news is that we never have to do it again, from now on we only need to file an annual return (previously we had to reapply every year).	
Garden	Jonquil	The community garden is up and running again - new cover on the tunnel and all the new raised beds. The growing season is here - shame about the cold weather! The hanging baskets for the village have been filled with compost and we are looking to have a group who will work together to plant, water and store the baskets - a combined CCC & TDG working party.	
Food and Music	Dave H	All bands booked and advertised in the Aboyne and Deeside Festival programme. 34 tickets sold already. We have a new scheme for sponsorship at different levels with different benefits which has just been launched.	
Food	Frank	During the Month of May the Co-op had no waste food available, but a total of 140 items were received from the Aboyne depot. This and existing stocks, including donations of frozen venison mince, were sufficient for the monthly Pop-up. Attendance at the pavilion Pop-Up event has continued to increase. A total of around 50 individuals was recorded and donations received amounted to £75. These increases were likely influenced	

		by the provision of a tool sharpening service. The initiative of making fruit available to child attendees proved successful. Cromar Parish Church made use of surplus bread for the 'Soup Dragon' event. The 'Open Pantry' shed was assembled and sited at Tarland School. Aberdeen for a Fairer World conducted a workshop with selected primary classes. The Pantry will be stocked and open to all after the Fairer World report is received. The Cromar Foods presentation at the Marr Area Partnership Fuel and Futures Event was well received and resulted in highly informative interaction between groups. Networking with the organisers of the Logie Coldstone Open Pantry is in progress.	
Lego	Jonquil	The club continues to be well supported, though the demographic has become slightly younger. All the young are still very excited about Lego. Nothing else to report. There is a plan to do a Lego trail for the food and music festival.	
Paths	Ken + Chris	Waymarker posts on the changed blue and red route up towards Pittenderich and the new addition as you approach Pittenderich have been erected with the help of Mark Ritchie (TT staff). Plan to have a volunteer working party on the first Saturday of each month. Hence, on May 2nd fallen waymarker post as you leave Tomnaverie Car Park replaced as well as one on the brown route up to Tomnaverie from Drummie Woods with the help of path volunteers, Mark Richardson and Roger Duridge. We have nearly run out of Tarland Paths leaflets. Have repeatedly tried to contact Walking Scotland for an application form for grant funding to no avail. Jamie (Dounside House) has suggested we pass on to them an electronic version that they may print for guests, and suggested we add the new version on our website. Have tried to set up an account for paths in Just Giving, but cannot because TDG already has an account. Need to find way round this obstacle. Bridge Survey on Tarland Way complete. DH, Ken and Chris trained to inspect. No major issues. Ken to action general maintenance? Chris to action new boards x6? Report shared to	

		MRT for bridge 1&2. No progress on lease for new Tarland Way section. Fencing and gates costs received from the landlord's agent.	
Pavillion	Frank	There has been no update received on the negotiations regarding the transfer from Aberdeenshire Council to the MacRobert Trust (MRT). Informal verbal reports indicate the Council has decided to relinquish ownership to MRT. but the £15k MRT refurbishment grant remains unspent until the transfer is finalised. Informal reports indicate the Council Works department has withdrawn from the planned £10k maintenance schedule. The implication is there will be no need for closure over the estimated 2 months for works. Use of the building has increased and voluntary maintenance is ongoing. There are concerns regarding the Condition Report's estimated costs, but recent voluntary repairs suggest these figures are overly cautious and do not account for the building's low complexity, with most "defects" being superficial rather than structural. Actual pledged use and current income already exceed the Business Plan's conservative estimates.	
Seed Swap & Potato	Jonquil	All dormant until next year!	
Trails	Chris	Bike wash complete. TCOYT campaign- 10 digs for 10'years plus one corporate dig. Quote for dig pits for potential North Pittenderich - £1999. Dig pits to ascertain quotes for provisional plan. Once pits are dug and report/costs received then this determines the plan/route for a potential planning app. Decision needed at that point to proceed (or not). Additional days work to dig out space for a tool store on Pittenderich land and access track repair/drainage works. Club Support Programme - Facilities Manager application - discussions ongoing.	Forthcoming meeting with McR and CCC- on agenda £1999 spending agreement.