

SGOIL AN IOCHDAIR AGUS A CHOIMHEARSNACHD

This is the fourth AGM of Sgoil an Iochdair agus a'Choimhearsnachd. During the year we have successfully applied for funding to purchase the footpath plot. We are now awaiting news about our funding applications for our most ambitious project to date, the upgrade of the school playing fields.

Just to recap, the association exists

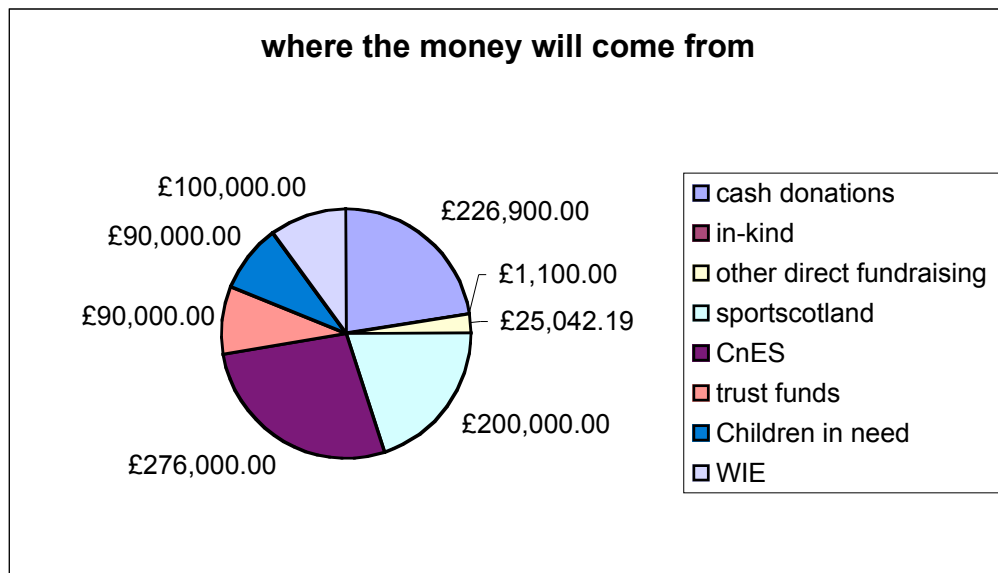
1. To promote interest and participation in sport, and related recreation in the Iochdar area, especially in the interests of education, social welfare and health.
2. To assist in the coordination of various sports clubs and recreational organisations operating in the Iochdar area, both generally and in relation to specific projects.
3. To examine the available sports and recreation facilities in the Iochdar area as against current and anticipated need and to make applications to the local council, local enterprise company and any other appropriate body in this connection.
4. To liaise with the councils sports development staff in furtherance of these objects.
5. To raise funds for such charitable purposes as the association may deem appropriate.

The school playing fields project

A full application for the upgrade to the school playing fields has been submitted to SportScotland. This involved creating a comprehensive business plan, which was circulated in draft form to committee members in June. It is regularly updated to take new developments into account.

The council's legal department is still preparing a lease agreement for the site. The delay has been with the District Valuer's office in Inverness. At present, the site has still not been valued.

The total funds required are shown in the pie chart below. We agreed that we would aim to raise £25,000 directly from the community. We need to raise £250,000 locally.



Developing facilities

From the feasibility study, commissioned in 2000, we had already identified several smaller elements within the feasibility study that were amenable to being undertaken as mini-projects. Since the last AGM, the following projects have been completed

1. Tree planting and seating area at Rubha Chlachain (ACE challenge fund & WIE) **Project completed Easter 2003**. This included a very wet and happy collaboration with the junior youth club, and local volunteers, who planted the trees. A millennium Earthwatch volunteer, Barbara MacAulay, assisted with the costs of running the tree planting.
2. Drystone wall at Rubha Chlachain (Lottery Action Grant) **Project completed Easter 2003**
3. Upgrade to changing rooms at Iochdar School, in partnership with the School board (New Opportunities Fund) Successful application, project will take place as phase 2 of the Council's New Opportunities Fund program.

Purchase of the 'footpath' plot

We have successfully applied for funding for the purchase of the footpath plot, and an offer of £8,000 has been submitted to the vendor's solicitors. There are several opportunities to develop this plot for the benefit of the community. Further action on this will take second place to the playing fields applications.

Company limited by guarantee

During the year we discussed becoming a company limited by guarantee in order to protect individual committee members from liability. An alternative would be to take out indemnity insurance. We are now covered by indemnity insurance, and are still looking at becoming a company limited by guarantee.

Forming and supporting clubs

Clubs with whom we have maintained links during the year include the junior athletics club, junior youth club, the croileagan, the senior youth club, the junior football clubs, Bowling Club, the Rugby Club and the North End Football Club.

We have also kept the New Community Schools project in the picture concerning our developments, as well as the school, the PE department and the Sports Development Council.

Fundraising

Apart from the funds raised through grant applications, we have been raising money through the local community.

1. Sales of local telephone directory
2. Sales of gardening book

This has not been high profile fundraising.

The year ahead

How do we keep user groups involved in the development of the school project?
Potential user groups currently include the junior football club, the junior youth club, the athletics club, the croileagan, the rugby club (for a junior section) and the school. Should we develop a website?

Our main priority in 2003-2004 will be to raise the funds for the playing fields project. This is a daunting task, and the fundraising will need to be extremely high profile.

After the playing fields fund raising, we have a number of projects to consider, most of which have already been agreed in the feasibility study and in the land purchase applications. This is set out in our 'future projects' document.

We also need to support any clubs in our area; we have made a start in this area, but there is scope for being more focussed, and more proactive. One way forward would be for us to have a sports development strategy to focus our ideas.

We will continue to look at becoming a company limited by guarantee.

Conclusion

Through the year we have completed the business plan that will underpin our application for funds for the playing fields project. Applications have already been submitted, and we await news.

We have been successful with our applications through the New Opportunities Fund for the changing rooms upgrade. We have also successfully applied for funds to purchase the 'footpath' plot for further development.

With physical evidence of our success, and with future plans and projects clearly outlined, we are now on the way to achieving our objectives. In the year ahead, we need to complete the process of securing the funding for the playing fields at the school, and to consider which other projects could be initiated.

In particular, we need to consider how to raise funds locally, with a high-profile event to highlight our aims and fundraising target. We also need to continue to engage with local clubs, responding to their needs. Developing our sports development strategy will give us a blueprint for work in this area.

In order to protect individual committee members, and to provide cover for the committee, we now have indemnity insurance, and are looking at becoming a company limited by guarantee.

As the committee expands and becomes more complex, the use of small subgroups will become more important to our success.