

## **Assynt Development Trust**

### ***Background information to the Community Asset Transfer application to acquire the land under and around The Mission building in Lochinver***

#### ***Community Asset Transfer of the land under and around the Mission building***

*The Trust wishes to purchase the freehold title to the land under and around the Mission building through the Community Asset Transfer process. The boundaries are outlined on Registers of Scotland title No STH2846.*

*Assynt Development Trust made an expression of interest for the Community Asset Transfer of the land to The Highland Council on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018. This was encouraged and recommended by our previous Highland Council ward manager Garry Cameron and has been further discussed with the current ward manager Phil Tomalin.*

*The Trust takes seriously its responsibility with regard to the maintenance of the building and in the past year has invested over £8,000 on upgrading the heating system, fire protection and installing new windows. However directors of the trust are seeking to obtain freehold of the land on which the building stands to continue investment in the building and development of the adjacent community assets.*

#### ***Description***

*The Mission building is 34m long and 12-15m wide with an upper floor of smaller area than the ground floor. The ground floor has an entrance lobby and two main public rooms used as café and restaurant together with toilets, kitchen, laundry and storage space. The upper floor is used as a bunkhouse containing bunk-rooms, kitchen, living room, showers and toilets. There are two other rooms used as office space with a further roof space section used for storage.*

#### ***Background***

*The Mission building was built by the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen (RNMDSF) in 1968 on land leased from the estate, Assynt Trading Company Ltd. The building hosted and provided a café, laundry, showers and a local community centre. In November 1987 Highland Regional Council acquired 0.7 ha land around Culag Park from Assynt Trading Company for £20,000 and this included the land under the RNMDSF owned Mission building.*

*After 40 years of service in Lochinver the RNMDSF took the decision to cease operations in 2009 and the building was put up for sale. However the RNMDSF discovered that the land under their building was not theirs but was now leased from Highland Council and with the lease about to expire the building was effectively worthless. In 2010 Highland Council offered Assynt Community Association (ACA) a fifty-year lease which was adequate at the time to allow the*

*Big Lottery Fund, Community Energy Scotland, LEADER and HIE to offer approx. £610,000 towards the acquisition of the building from RNMDSF (for £70,000) and the complete refurbishment of the building into a community hub. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act was subsequently passed in 2015 and today Highland Council might consider selling the site to ACA as opposed to a restrictive lease.*

## **Culag Park**

*In 2010/11 in conjunction with the re-development of the Mission building the ACA acquired the area of ground around the building known as Culag Park (it had leased this land from the local estate for several decades). Acquisition of the land was essential to the project as a small but vital area of the Park was needed as a car park for the Mission. Without the car parking spaces planning permission may never have been granted for the refurbishment.. It is the venue for the Assynt Highland Games, the Lochinver Football Club and as an activity area for Lochinver Primary School. Culag Park and the Mission building are a focus for community activities and the Trust's management of the building has ensured the development of sympathetic uses for both assets. In addition the Trust, as opposed to Highland Council, organises and pays for the maintenance of Culag Park so that our community has use of the only sports field in Assynt.*

## **Timeline - From Amenities Committee to Development Trust**

*ACA was founded in the 1950's as the Assynt Amenities Committee and as ACA, gained charitable status in 1975. ACA became a limited company in 2010 and today with an amended constitution, which is eligible to be considered for Community Asset Transfer, ACA has changed its name to Assynt Development Trust Limited (ADT). ADT leases the land (title STH2846) from Highland Council, but owns and manages the building upon it. Although the Trust owns the building, if the lease were not renewed, ownership of the building would pass to the owners of the freehold title, Highland Council.*

*Assynt Development Trust has been serving the community of Assynt, in one form or another, for over sixty years. As a locally run democratic body the Trust is best placed to serve the local community's interests owning and running the Mission building into the future.*

*Willie Jack Chair ADT  
18<sup>th</sup> February 2020*

**The Mission, Culag Park, Lochinver, IV27 4LE  
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