

**25/10/2012**

## **MOUNT STUART TRUST TO APPOINT NEW DIRECTORS**

**(Issued on behalf of Mount Stuart Trust)**

25/10/2012

**MOUNT STUART TRUST TO APPOINT NEW DIRECTORS**  
(Issued on behalf of Mount Stuart Trust)

The Mount Stuart Trust (Scottish Registered Charity, No. SC009584) is very pleased to announce it will be appointing additional directors, who will become members of the Trust, in keeping with its long-term strategy of introducing a pertinent range of skills and interests to the Trust.

It is intended that five new appointments to the board of directors will be made in mid-December, including a number from the island's community.

These appointments will help the Trust fulfil its primary objectives in the furtherance of the arts, culture, heritage and science and will emphasise the close links between the Trust and the wider Bute community.

The over-riding purpose of the Trust is the preservation of Mount Stuart, a unique and immensely important part of Scotland's heritage, a major employer and visitor draw for the island of Bute, for the public benefit.

Connie Lovel, chief executive of the Mount Stuart Trust, said: "The Trust is primarily in existence to ensure that Mount Stuart, one of the world's great houses, is preserved for public benefit and everything we do is geared towards delivering that public benefit.

"In line with our long-standing strategy we will be appointing new members to the board of directors who will reflect the additional skills we believe will assist the Trust in achieving its objectives. We welcome representation on the board from those living or working on Bute and who will take on the responsibility of being charity trustees.

"In response to recent requests for membership, application forms have been sent out and will be considered carefully by the board of directors of the Trust.

"It has been disappointing recently to see people confusing the role of the Trust and trying to use it in pursuit of another agenda.

"The directors of the Trust are conscious of the requirement to balance the interests of those who live and work on Trust property and the fulfilling of the wider objectives of the Trust. Striking this balance is important and we are receptive to enhancing the range of

skills at the Trust's disposal. However, the Trust was not established as a large-scale membership organisation which would not be appropriate in these circumstances.

"The Mount Stuart Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee whose governance and operations have to satisfy the charity regulator. The Trust has already advised the regulatory body for charities in Scotland that it has taken steps to update its constitution whilst at the same time widening the membership of the board of directors to include representation of the wider community interest on Bute as well as those who will bring new skills to the organisation. We are firmly of the view that the steps we are taking will be of enduring benefit to Bute and the wider community."

-ENDS-

Further information: Ramsay Smith, Media House 0141 220 6040/07788 414 856.  
Email: [ramsay@mediahouse.co.uk](mailto:ramsay@mediahouse.co.uk)

NOTES TO EDITORS:-

## The MOUNT STUART TRUST – BACKGROUND

### Mount Stuart

The Mount Stuart Trust was created by the 6th Marquess of Bute in 1989 with the purpose of entrusting the historic Mount Stuart, together with the lands and resources comprising the Bute Estate, to a company limited by guarantee to be run for charitable purposes.

Mount Stuart, Britain's most spectacular Victorian Gothic mansion house, is the architectural fantasy of the 3rd Marquess of Bute and his architect, Sir Robert Rowand Anderson. The stunning interiors of Mount Stuart reflect the creator's passion for art, heraldry, astrology, mythology and religion. Mount Stuart sits in a landscape of 300 acres of gardens and woodlands, recognised as amongst the finest in Europe, originally created in the 1700s and preserved in the present day for future generations by the Trust.

### The Mount Stuart Trust/Bute family members

The Trust is predominantly self-funding, at virtually no cost to the public purse. Bute family members make significant contributions to the overall achievements of the Trust.

### Charitable aims

The purpose of the charity is to promote interest in the appreciation of Art, Music, Literature, Nature, Natural History and Architecture primarily, but not exclusively, in the West of Scotland so that the public may increase their understanding of these topics.

Mount Stuart regularly receives in excess of 30,000 visitors per annum and since it has been open to the public over 500,000 visitors have been recorded. Each visitor to Mount Stuart also contributes considerably to the tourism economy of the Isle of Bute.

## SUPPORTING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

### Employer on Bute

The Trust is a major employer on Bute and the number of people employed has risen from 45 in 2006 to 57 full time employees in 2012. Additionally, during the spring to autumn

season when Mount Stuart is open to the public, a further 40+ temporary/seasonal staff are employed. The annual payroll is in excess of £1.3 million.

#### Visual Arts Programme

The visual arts programme, under the direction of and curated by Sophie Crichton-Stuart, aims to promote and facilitate interest in the contemporary visual arts and bring exhibitions of an international standard to Bute and Argyll. It works with universities, colleges and schools and young people from the local community.

#### Ranger service

The Trust makes a significant contribution to the Bute Ranger service which provides outreach to the community and visitors to Bute on a wide range of access, environmental and natural history issues.

#### Discover Bute Landscape Partnership Scheme

The Trust has, over the past four years, donated to the Discover Bute Landscape Partnership Scheme (DBLPS) which is committed to preserving and maintaining the archaeological landscape on Bute, a concept fully supported by the Trust and very specifically supported by the Ranger service.

#### Hosting of local events and organisations

Mount Stuart plays host to many local organisations/events, especially for the younger generation – eg the Annual Den Building week-long programme is a popular feature on the calendar. The Trust also liaises with the Rothesay Joint Campus for various activities, including the Forest School Project and their own annual St Andrews dinner, which the youngsters prepare in the Mount Stuart house kitchen.

#### Assisting local concerns develop their potential

The Trust has a history of helping local business and community concerns realise their ambitions. There are numerous examples where the Trust has released land where there are compelling circumstances.

In 2008, the Trust granted the use of land for the Calum's Cabin project - the provision of holiday accommodation for families with children suffering from cancer.

The Trust is currently working with Bute Conservation Trust (BCT) in the hope of establishing a heritage centre on the west coast of the island with land and buildings provided by the Trust.

#### Island Integration

Members of Mount Stuart's management team are involved with groups and organisations across the island, including Visit Bute, Bute Conservation Trust/ DBLPS.

### MANAGEMENT OF BUTE ESTATE – AGRICULTURAL AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY ON BUTE

#### Bute Estate agricultural property

The Trust has continued its policy of re-letting land to support the agricultural industry on Bute and to encourage commercially successful farmers. Since 2009 the Trust has granted 14 new farm leases and 7 existing tenants have gained additional land during that time. Of the 14 new agreements, 3 were 15 year Limited Duration Tenancies (LDTs) – 2 of which were granted to young farmers in their 20s.

Bute Estate managers hold individual annual farm tenant strategy meetings in addition to regular meetings and ongoing communication with individual tenants, as well as interface with local NFUS representatives for Bute.

#### Bute Estate residential property

The Trust owns and manages residential property on the Isle of Bute. The Trust budgets to spend £300,000 per annum on general maintenance and repairs to its residential properties, and a high proportion of this is spent on local contractors and materials.

#### Property refurbishment programme

The Trust is currently undertaking a major programme of refurbishing properties which come back in-hand. In 2010, the Trust set aside a special fund to renovate such properties and as a result 10 properties have undergone extensive refurbishment and improvement at a cost in excess of £600,000. This programme is ongoing.

#### Property diversification

Over the last decade, The Trust has developed a range of self catering holiday accommodation so that visitors to Bute can explore and appreciate the unique tranquillity of the Island in a rural setting, and commercial events at Mount Stuart can have the necessary accommodation. The Trust has spent c£500,000 in renovating traditional long barns in a prominent location on the west of the island into high quality accommodation. The income from holiday accommodation supports the Trust's charitable aims and assists its aims of promoting Mount Stuart as a visitor destination.

#### Developing existing property on Bute – Masterplan

The Trust, in cooperation with the local planning department, has identified a number of opportunities on Bute where it can develop land and buildings to create new residential properties to house local people and provide holiday accommodation to attract more visitors to Mount Stuart and Bute.

In 2011, using sourced finance partners, Phase one of this masterplan was completed, with an investment of £1.7 million. The Trust converted Victorian stables and kennels into four new dwelling units.

In 2013 the Trust intends to implement phase two of its masterplan, to further develop such opportunities on Bute, using outside funding partners and investments to redevelop existing properties. This will instigate capital projects which will benefit the local economy.

#### Sales of plots of land and reinvestment in property refurbishments

The Trust does not have an embargo on selling land, but it must weigh up the benefits and timing of releasing property in order to achieve its wider charitable objectives. The Trust is currently offering plots of land for sale.

The Trust will use the proceeds of these sales to refurbish other properties in need of renovation, some of which are in the public eye.

#### Tourism

As the principal tourist attraction on the island, Mount Stuart Trust invests consistently in promoting Bute to a wide audience for the wider economic benefit of the island. Activities/ investments include significant marketing and promotional activities at regional, national and international level.

## OTHER SUPPORT FROM THE BUTE FAMILY, FOR THE BUTE COMMUNITY

### Assets gifted to The Mount Stuart Trust

The late Marquess of Bute generously endowed the Trust with not just the Bute Estate itself but also other assets which produce income which can only be used for the public benefit. Included in this is an investment fund. The Bute family do not derive personal financial benefit from the income from this fund which is used to provide sufficient resources to enable the Trust to carry out its charitable objectives in preserving Mount Stuart and Bute Estate.

### The Bute Charitable Trust

This charity was also endowed by the Bute family and funds numerous initiatives annually. Applications are received from a wide cross-section of the island's community – perhaps to cover costs of travel for a local sporting organisation for off-island activities, or for uniforms/sports kit. Since 2007, between £13,000 and £18,000 per annum was committed to smaller groups/organisations/individuals to assist with their running costs or specific initiatives.