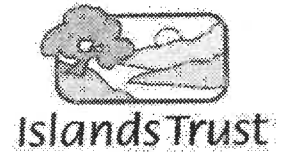


# Trustee Notebook *By Sam Borthwick*



After a relatively quiet month or so over the winter holidays, at least with regards to the direct business of Trust meetings, I am writing you now from nearly the end of a very action-packed week in mid-February, with (for me) four committee meetings, and hundreds of pages in agendas. Whatever dust may have been allowed to gather on the portion of my brain that is increasingly occupied by planning and small government terminology, has been thoroughly shaken off.

First-off though, I would like to thank the 60-or-so community members who were able to join Trustee Graham and I in the Back Hall on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January to discuss the Housing Advisory Planning Committee (HAPC)'s Housing Report, and to Regional Director Daniel Arbour for being available to lend his insight to the discussions therein. It was a robust four-hour, roundtable, discussion, and though I'm sure we haven't yet heard from all voices yet, I was very grateful for the opportunity to get some feedback on the HAPC's recommendations from the wider community, and look forward to hearing more as we begin to weave some new, bespoke-for-Denman legislation.

Of the afore-mentioned meetings, the one most relevant to this article was the February 13<sup>th</sup> Local Trust Committee (LTC) meeting, through which we heard from a number of community members, both in person and in writing, with regards to the long-standing Farm Plan project, which involved amendments to both our Official Community Plan (OCP), and our Land Use Bylaw (LUB), aimed at bringing our bylaws into alignment with recent changes to provincial legislation from the Agricultural Land Commission. My fellow Trustee offered some thoughts on this project in last month's Flagstone, and while I do not wish to exactly retread that ground, I did want to add some of my own perspective, and respond in part to some of the excellent, thoughtful, and passionate feedback about these changes that we received.

Much of the drafting of these bylaws occurred during the tenure of past Trustees Laura Busheikin and David Critchley, and I had the privilege of getting to see them in action as they debated the work. This passing of the torch did mean that I had quite a lot of catching up to do in parsing the changes, and initially I deferred giving these bylaws second and third reading, so as to give myself more time to review them with staff, and engage with people I

knew were in support of the changes, those against, and those whose support or opposition were conditional on further corrective measures.

By far the most consistent note of concern was one of water preservation, and mapping, and I know there will be those among the community who will be disappointed that we chose to go forwards with these amendments, and who will feel we have not included enough protections within these amendments. These concerns did not go unheeded, and have not been forgotten. I gave my vote to these proceedings on the back of extensive reflection and consultation, and am dedicated to making sure we enact informed and effective strategies around the protection of our fresh surface and ground water, the importance of which cannot be overstated. I have been assured that there are more effective ways to incorporate these values than solely within the bylaws that govern Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) properties. I recognise there may be some for whom my say-so alone is going to be insufficient to placate their concerns- I shall hope to earn their trust in deed instead.

That being said- the path to where we stand now has been a long one, and I want to thank past-Trustees Busheikin and Critchley; Trustees Graham and Maude, whose perspectives helped assuage my reservations; and Planners Zupanec and McCargar, who took great pains to help explain a complex and nuanced document to a rank amateur.

When this article arrives in your hands I should be just receiving the agenda for the March Trust Council, which shall see the final adoption of the coming year's budget, as well as a great many other subjects of interest, including some further discussion about the direction of Trust Council on matters such as Bylaw Enforcement, the Strategic Plan, and, hopefully, an update on the Policy Statement.