

Minutes of the Durness Community Council - DRAFT

Durness Village Hall, Durness, Sutherland, IV27 4QA

Monday 15th March 2021 7pm On Zoom

1. **Present:**
 - Don Campbell (DC) - Chair
 - Scott Macpherson (SM) – Vice Chair
 - Ron Tucker (RT) - Secretary
 - Sarah Fuller (SF) – Treasurer
 - Anita Wilson (AW)
 - Ewen MacRae (EM)
 - Barbara Sutherland (BS)
 - Cllr Hugh Morrison (HM)
 - Steve Woodruff (SW) – Associate
 - Fraser Eadie (member of the public)
2. **Apologies**

Janet Hollands (JH), PC Mitchell, Maj. Philip Curtis

Note: This meeting was chaired throughout by Scott Macpherson
3. **Minutes of the last meeting (11th January 2021)**

Proposed by SF and AW. Agreed and passed.
4. **Matters Arising**
 1. BIDs

All the money has been spent so this item is closed.
 2. Sallachy Wind Farm

No further updates: planning is due by end of this month.
 3. Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

EM stated that we are still waiting for Ian Wilson’s decision re the acquisition of the land.

Geopark are applying for funding for barriers. They also have an online consultation, plus a survey about the cave. Meeting re Geopark on 16th March link sent by DC.

RT asked about the Ranger: see 4.12.
 4. Children’s Play Area

RT stated this is being picked up by the Durness Community Group. Matter closed.
 5. Beach fencing and notice boards

HM had consulted with the Highland Council regarding the installation of barriers and bollards in the vulnerable areas. RT suggested that the rock samples outside the old Visitor Centre could be moved to the vulnerable areas, but this was deemed impracticable.

There has been some concern regarding ‘rip tides’ at Ceannabienne beach and at East Sango. It was agreed to put up warning signs at the beaches. HM will have another attempt at arranging for the noticeboard at the shop to be replaced.

Action: DC and Coastguard

6. Road by Hostel

HM spoke to a road engineer who will attend in June or July to see the problem.

A discussion took place regarding the speed limits within the village. The 20mph project was discussed at length at the end of which the majority view was for 30 mph in the village with 20 mph at the hotspots.

FE raised the fact that the road narrows sign needs raising as it is too low.

Action: HM

7. New Noticeboards

Matter closed.

8. Community Composter

No update: DC still working on it.

Action: DC

9. NC500/Tourism

SW stated that he had asked about a dozen campervan companies regarding leafleting. To date only four have replied and these are not too keen on the idea. Kinlochbervie have produced a leaflet based on interesting places rather than advice on the country code. He also said that maybe next year we could combine with others in the NW community to produce a leaflet and post it on websites and Facebook. DC to put it on the Northwest Community forum.

FE suggested a Facebook site with information on it.

Action: DC and SW

10. Website

SW waiting for more information and photos. It was also agreed to make advertising free. Historical photos kept by Willie Morrison.

Action: SW

11. Local Government Boundary Commission

HM stated Highland Council have rejected the Commission's suggestion to reduce representation from six to four.

DC stated that, following liaison between the Community Councils, a rejection letter was submitted by each individual Community Council.

12. Draft Sutherland Tourism Infrastructure Plan

HM stated there is £1.5 million available. There are plans for two extra vehicles and two men for waste collection.

The Ranger is furloughed at present.

10 Community Officers to be employed to educate and advise; their hours will be flexible.

£60,000 for toilets in the Comfort Scheme.

Police signs to be revisited.

Money is available for roads to be resurfaced. The road in Struie to be closed for 2 weeks when this is being carried out. The Ferry road and Balnakiel road have been identified as the worst in Durness, plus some parts of Eribol.

AW asked if there are plans for caravan 'Aires'. HM advised that they require planning permission, and nothing is being planned at present.

13. Speed limits

Dealt with under item 4.6

5. **M.O.D.**

RT received the following in an email from Phillip Curtis. DC stressed these dates are a guide and we should wait for the official notices.

A quick run-down on the training events planned for Cape Wrath ranges:

[22-29 Mar](#) Live bombing and potentially strafe. (2nd week is a back up)

[12-30 Apr](#) Range active to allow a trial firing of 3 ejector seats. Whilst the range will be nominally active, only 3 events are planned which are very weather dependant. Once completed, the range will be deactivated.

[8-21 May](#) Ex JOINT WARRIOR. A much scaled down exercise, focussing on air activity as HMS Queen Elizabeth continues her sea trials. The exercise has requested to conduct live bombing [on Sun 9th](#) and to continue bombing [until midnight](#) for the week 10-15th. This request is going to ministers. We do not have the detail on exactly what they want to do, but will pass the information out as soon as we get it. We have requested that any events in the evening/night are INERT.

[19-26 May.](#) Artillery live fire exercise, guns firing from gun positions on the Cape (as opposed to Faraid head.) Outline dates at present.

[1-3 Jun](#) 1015-1115 daily Live bombing

[7-10 Jun.](#) Back up week, Same details as above.

[28 Jun – 16 Jul](#) Live fire onto shoreline from boats. As this falls over our closed period, this will need high level approval, and will need to take into account any effects to tourist activity. The user is keen to be as flexible as possible to minimise the impact on range access. Very early in the planning stage.

Once I get some more detail on some of these exercises, I will pass it on.

6. N.H.S.

EM said that a resident had been refused an ambulance on 999 and advised to call 111 instead. This led to a 40-minute wait, then a further wait for the doctor; the doctor called an ambulance which led to another two hour delay. HM stated that a formal complaint should be made. He will also ask for an ambulance representative to respond.

Action: HM

7. Police Matters

PC Mitchell is currently isolating. DC will send a letter to the Inspector in charge of this area asking what cover is being made.

Action: DC

It is stressed that all non-active crime should be reported to the Police by calling 101.

8. Reports

Durness Community Group

RT reported that the DCG are going to raise the money required to refurbish the play area. It is estimated that £100,000 will be required. The Cape Wrath Challenge is apparently offering to donate some money towards this project. There is also the possibility of a contribution from the Ward discretionary fund.

Geopark

DC will circulate a copy of the email from Geopark which details their intentions towards the Cave.

Treasurer

The balance as of 15th March 2021 is £2,482.87.

9. Maintenance of defibrillators

It was agreed by all that this is a matter for the Durness Community Group.

10. Beach Award

RT asked for a fee £300 + VAT for the application for this year's award. This was agreed. He also stated that the safety equipment on the beach was criticised last year. He had inspected the equipment and found it needed some attention.

Action: SM

11. NorthWest2045

RT reported that this was a new group of representatives of Highland Communities and Geopark formed to plan for the intended aim of the Scottish Government to be carbon neutral by 2045. The information and minutes will be circulated. This should be a fixed agenda item.

12. Planning

Ceannabienne: planning permission has been applied for cabins for use as holiday huts, six overlooking the bay and three on the Rispond side. A discussion took place. It was decided that the members should examine the application and send responses to DC for a decision.

The issue of planning near Hope bridge was raised as there appears to be confusion over jurisdiction in that area. It was decided to invite a representative from Wildlands to clarify. EM agreed to set this up for the next meeting.

Action: DC and EM

13. Any other business

None.

14. Date of next meeting

7pm Monday 12th April 2021 on Zoom.

These Minutes were agreed at the meeting on.....