

Minutes of the Durness Community Council - DRAFT

Durness Village Hall, Durness, Sutherland, IV27 4QA

Monday 3rd May 2021 at 7pm On Zoom

1. Planning: Tim Kirkwood, CEO of Wildland Ltd, joined the meeting.

TK had been invited to clear up the confusion as to which Wildland building projects fall under the Durness CC and which under the Tongue CC.

DC clarified that the border between Tongue and Durness is in the middle of Hope bridge.

TK explained the aims of Wildland: their main aim is conservation and the development of tourism. They restore the natural environment and develop businesses with low environmental impact. TK invited anyone to see their results in the Cairngorms.

Current projects include:

- Hope Lodge, which is being developed as a world class hotel
- Lundies in Tongue
- Strathmore Lodge
- Eriboll Church, which he confirmed is available for community use
- Eriboll Lodge (awaiting development)

He promised that there will be more engagement with the Durness community and that the Wildland Community Engagement Plan will be circulated.

JH asked if they are planning a swimming pool and a pier in Loch Eriboll, e.g. at Port na Con.

TK stated there are no plans for a pool. However, in Loch Eriboll they are trying to develop more access whilst at the same time conserving the environment.

JH then suggested a lifeboat operation.

TK pointed out that Wildland have sponsored an inshore lifeboat which can be trailered to where it is required.

Re Respond Pods.

There was confusion as to whether planning was approved or not.

2. Road by the hostel/speed limits: Paul Sinnott (Laid Common Grazing & Community Committee) joined the meeting.

PS put forward a case for a lower speed limit through Laid: the current limit is 60mph, he is asking for 40mph.

SM stated this would have to go through the Highland Council.

RT suggested using the private green light system that many villages are using.

JH has put in an application to the Durness Active Health/Cape Wrath Challenge's disbursement of funds for money to buy 'Slow Down' signs for the village.

HM suggested adding PS' request to the overall problem of speed limits in Durness for the DCC to progress.

Action: HM

3. M.O.D.: Malcolm Morrison (Ferryman) joined the meeting.

MM presented a list seven queries/points regarding liaison with the MOD:

1. Why is the range live during the lambing and tourist season?
2. Can he have notice of when the range is live (he needs direct notification)?

3. 50 days of the range being open could destroy his business.
4. Are there any more days planned up to 30th September which haven't yet been published?
5. During operations will he be able to work?
6. Is it possible for him to run the ferry at times during the days that have been specified as operational?
7. Why is there bombing during the busiest period of the season?

DC has also not been notified of dates when he is required.

It was agreed to arrange a liaison meeting with the MOD; 27th May was suggested.

Action: RT

(Post meeting note. The MOD cannot meet on 27th May. They will liaise with RT to have a Zoom meeting ASAP)

- 4. Present**
- Don Campbell (DC) - Chair
 - Scott Macpherson (SM) – Vice Chair
 - Ron Tucker (RT) - Secretary
 - Anita Wilson (AW)
 - Ewen MacRae (EM)
 - Barbara Sutherland (BS)
 - Janet Hollands (JH)
 - Cllr Hugh Morrison (HM)
 - Steve Woodruff (SW) – Associate
 - Paul Sinnott (PS) – Laid Common Grazing & Community Committee
 - Tim Kirkwood (TK) – CEO, Wildland Ltd
 - Dr. Laura Hamlet (LH) – Northwest Highlands Geopark Manager
 - Malcolm Morrison (MM) – Cape ferryman

5. Apologies

PC Mitchell, Maj. Philip Curtis, Sarah Fuller

6. Minutes of the last meeting (15th March 2021)

Proposed by SM and AW. Agreed and passed.

7. Matters Arising

1. Sallachy Wind Farm

This application is in planning.

2. Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

Dr. Laura Hamlet has produced a report 'Groundwork for slow tourism project – Final Report'. This is a comprehensive report of the problems and can be viewed online.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C9yqNUoLUskiFqpbC8L1TdhZEbWDPNCYxeU9xiy21aU/edit?usp=sharing>

RT will supply a copy if requested and it will also be on the Durness.scot website.

EM reported that Martin Mackay, representing the Common Grazing Committee, and Ian Wilson, representing the Durness Estate, are asking a considerable sum for the land we would like for parking.

Dr Laura Hamlet offered to assist in identifying other areas of land.

Action: RT and LH.

3. Beach fencing and notice boards

The Spar have agreed to have a new noticeboard attached to their wall. HM will purchase.

New fencing and boarding is required at Sango and Ceannabienne beaches. We still need to progress the 'Rip Tide' warning signs at both beaches.

Action: RT, HM, DC, SM, and the Coastguard.

4. Community Composter

Don reported that this will be in place by June.

Action: DC

5. NC500/Tourism

Dr. Laura Hamlet stated the Rangers are in place in Strathy and Talmine.

DC asked for signs to prevent tourist traffic using the Caa. A discussion took place with various suggestions made at the end of which DC and HM agreed to come to a decision as to the makeup of the sign. DC is asking for the DCC to pay for these signs and recoup from the Council.

RT asked when the bales will be removed from the Caa. DC stated this is in hand.

Action: DC and HM

6. Website

No change; we still need more photos.

Action: SW

7. Local Government Boundary Commission

DC states all the letters have been sent; we now await the new Government.

8. Draft Sutherland Tourism Infrastructure Plan

Nothing new to report.

9. Beach Award

RT reported that the application has been submitted and awaits confirmation.

8. N.H.S.

HM reported that, with the impending retirement of Dr. Berrie, there will be a restructuring of the way the three surgeries operate.

The Durness surgery has been including a note with prescriptions stating how the system for out of hours will work.

RT will arrange for this to be shown on the website and noticeboard.

Action: RT

9. Police Matters

RT reported that PC Mitchell had sent him the following information on two emails, as follows.

10.04.2021

Police recently received reports about residents in Druim Bhlar letting off fireworks. Police also received a number of reports of possible covid breaches. Police will

continue to monitor this matter and attend all reports where possible. It should be noted that some vehicles are reported as not being recognised from the local area and when officers speak to the occupants, they find they are from within the Highland Region and therefore not in breach of covid rules.

Police are planning extra patrols in the north west this year including patrols by the roads policing unit.

28.04.2021

I am currently investigating an historic assault in the Durness area and I am investigating a communications offence received by someone in the Durness area. We are obviously aware of the locals concerns with regards to anti-social camping and driving and I believe there are extra patrols planned. I hope to be back to fully operational as soon as possible.

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

10. Reports

1.Durness Community Group

RT reports this is ongoing with hopeful results.

2.Geopark

Dr. Laura Hamlet drew attention to the report 'Groundwork for Slow Tourism Project'.

3.Treasurer

The balance as of 12th April 2021 is £2,947.37.

4.Northwest2045

The project is looking to interview residents in the Highland area. This will include persons of all ages. There will be workshops in three areas including Durness in early June. Their draft vision document can be viewed on the website under North West Highlands 2045.

11. Highland Council

HM reported that there is a waste officer based in Tongue and Lochinver. They will be patrolling and emptying full roadside bins in the area as required. They start in the next few weeks. There may be a phone number to call to alert them to the locations of full bins.

There are stones on the Ferry Road causing problems.

White liners are not available at present.

Tarring will take place; there are several areas in Durness that need attention.

RT asked if a 'Residents Only' sign could be erected at the entrance to Hames Place.

HM replied that this is not just tourist parking but that residents contribute to the problem. This will be monitored this season.

JH raised the issue of making the whole village a 30mph speed zone. HM replied that this will be looked at by the road engineer later in June or July. Road speeds are designated at Highland Council level.

12. Any other business

None.

13. Date of next meeting

7pm Monday 21st June 2021

This will be an AGM followed by a normal meeting on Zoom.

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

DRAFT