

Minutes of the Durness Community Council

Durness Village Hall, Durness, Sutherland, IV27 4QA

Monday 23rd November 2020

7pm On ZOOM

- 1. Present:** Don Campbell (DC) - Chair
Scott Macpherson (SM) – Vice Chair
Ron Tucker (RT) - Secretary
Barbara Sutherland (BS)
Anita Wilson (AW)
Ewen MacRae (EM)
Cllr Hugh Morrison (HM) – Ex-officio
Laura Hamlet – Geopark co-ordinator

2. Apologies

Sarah Fuller (SF) – Treasurer, Janet Hollands (JH), PC Mitchell, Maj. Philip Curtis

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Proposed by BS and AW. Agreed and passed.

4. Matters Arising

Skips

We now have skips twice a week and the recycling skip is permanent.

Matter is now closed.

Signage

Signs all erected and looking good. AW stated she has been informed by some of her customers that they were appreciated and helpful.

Matter closed.

BIDs

Money has been allocated as agreed in last meeting. In addition, Zoom Pro was purchased for the use of the whole of Durness. There are still some £50 allocations available.

Sallachy Wind Farm

This is now with the Highland Council for planning consent.

Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

RT is still trying to obtain a response from Ian Wilson regarding permission to build possible car parking on Estate land.

HM stated that this fund is for projects that are ready to go, i.e. 'shovel ready'. He suggested that another source of funding could be through the Coastal Community fund. This could be applied for re chemical toilet disposal facilities.

Laura Hamlet stated the Smoo area is now a UNESCO site which should help with any application.

Action: RT

Children's Play Area

HM confirmed this site is owned by the Highland Council who will progress the improvements.

Action: Highland Council

Beach fencing and notice boards

SM pointed out that the beach areas of Sango and Ceannabienne both have damaged or rotted wooden fencing and steps. He suggested using metal structures as replacement materials.

It was agreed that Matt Dent, the Council Officer responsible for this type of problem, should be invited to attend the areas for consultation.

Action: RT

Road by the Hostel

No update due to the pandemic.

A meeting is still required with the engineer responsible for this area.

SM will ask for the possibility of installing railings.

Action: HM and SM

New Noticeboards

No further updates.

Community Composter

Apparently, this is another item where the Grazing Committee needs to be consulted.

Action: DC

Cemetery Extension

HM reported that, trial holes having been dug, it is estimated that there are 40 layers available. Plans required for further burials.

This item will now be held in abeyance.

NC500/Tourism

HM referred to the Sutherland Tourism Infrastructure Plan; this is a consultation document and gives a good guide as to what is needed in Sutherland to assist with coping with and helping tourism.

It raises issues for Durness re lack of sufficient parking, electrical vehicle charging point and chemical toilet disposal.

Website

This still needs to be promoted more. It was suggested and agreed by all that Stephen Woodruff be invited to join the Community Council as an associate member.

Action: RT

5. M.O.D

Maj. Curtis sent an email to RT which was read out to the meeting, as follows:

Ex JOINT WARRIOR (JW)20/2 was a successful exercise and concluded quite a busy period, as it followed on from the sea trials of HMS Queen Elizabeth (HMS QNLZ) and saw US and UK F35 Lightnings operating from the ship at Cape Wrath, although activity was much less than expected.

Ex JW 21/1 will follow much the same format, with the certification exercise for HMS QNLZ running from 1-7 May and then JW running from 10-21 May.

JW 21/2 is scheduled for 27 Sep – 8 Oct 21.

There is live bombing planned for the week of 9 Nov, with the week of 16 booked as a back-up; this is for jets from Lossiemouth to conduct live bombing as they prepare for an overseas deployment. They have 8 bombs to drop and will, as ever, try to get them done as quickly as possible if the weather is kind to them.

There is also talk of a ground exercise taking place 1-31 Mar, although I have not seen any planning for this yet. The initial idea is for a substantial exercise, but I

suspect that once the ground has been 'walked' by the planners, the reality of Cape Wrath may change things. I will keep you updated as and when I hear anything. Other matters.

We were able to complete the first of the deer culls successfully last month, hopefully the second will go as well.

EE completed the construction of the phone mast near the lighthouse. They have not confirmed when it will be active, but I understand it takes some time for it to come on stream, but certainly should be running by the end of the year.

Jamie Stone MP has been in contact with the MoD with regards the road and is planning a meeting with a Defence Minister. I have no further news on this and am not sure what line the MoD will be taking, but I do know that the Army (who ultimately hold my organisations budget) does not have funds to carry out repairs of the magnitude needed but I am sure this will continue to run.

Happy to take any queries.

DC raised the issue that originally the MOD promised to avoid the lambing season normally 18th April to 18th May; however, this promise has been 'slipping'. It should also be noted that these dates will affect tourism and particularly bus transport on the cape run to the lighthouse.

DC proposed sending a letter which was agreed.

Action: DC

6. N.H.S.

No updates.

7. Police Matters

PC Mitchell emailed RT stating there were no incidents to report.

He has now been selected to be trained in Taser so that he can defend himself while waiting for assistance.

HM stated he had met the Superintendent responsible for this area saying we require more officers, and they need to be Taser trained.

It was stressed that ALL non active crime must be reported to the police on the 101 number.

8. Reports

Durness Development Group

RT reported that the SCIO application had passed the initial stage of the process.

Geopark

Laura Hamlet the Geopark co-ordinator stated that the Geopark is sponsored by Telecom and that they are producing online workshops to develop field work and guidebook projects. The South end of the Geopark is busy.

UNESCO recommended redefining the boundary of the park. Currently it is defined by geological means whereas it should now be along administration lines which will enlarge the area.

They are working on the viability of interpretation guides. Laura is working with DC to increase local liaison.

The John Muir Trust funded a review of how the communities can work together.

Action: DC

Treasurer

Reported by email. The balance as of 2nd November is £4,181.79

9. Planning

There is outstanding work at Gualin House.

10. Highland Council

HM reported that the waste bins have been reduced to one at each layby.

11. Highland Hospice

RT asked that the Community Council pay for the hire of the hall for this event, the main service being in the car park.

HM suggested that this should come out of the Covid funding. This was agreed.

Action: SF

12. Local Government Boundary Commission

HM explained that the intention is to redesign the boundaries in order to reduce the number of Highland Councillors in Sutherland.

DC stated all the Highland Community Councils are putting together a letter which would then be submitted jointly.

DC suggested that himself, HM and RT get together to assist in this.

Action: DC, HM, RT

13. Draft Sutherland Tourism Infrastructure Plan

It was recommended that all the committee read this document in order for it to be discussed at the next meeting.

Action: ALL

14. First Contact Physiotherapy Service – Durness

RT had circulated the email from Jude Arnaud, the Clinical Lead for First Contact Physiotherapists in General Practice. This is a request asking that this service is advertised locally.

It was agreed that this information should be on the website.

Action: RT and Steve Woodruff.

15. Any Other Business

Buses

HM reported that Neil Fuller has been sorting the new bus timetables.

Highland Coastal Community Fund

HM stated that applications to this fund have to be submitted by 3rd December 2020.

Ideas were sought for projects, the main proposal being that a chemical toilet disposal unit is needed. This will need roughly a three-tank capacity and a parking and litter area. Land adjacent to the Village Hall car park would be a good site.

All members to think of ideas and give them to RT in the next week. RT to send out a reminder email in 7 days.

SM asked if we could look at Lochinver's plans for a disposal site which is under way; Colin Simpson at the Highland Council is the person to ask.

Action: HM

Sanitisers

SM stated that supplies for the sanitisers are required plus a replacement for the stolen one. All agreed this should be paid from the Covid grant.

16. Date of next meeting:

7pm 11th January 2021

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