

Durness Community Council

Durness Village Hall, Durness, Sutherland, IV27 4QA

Monday 21st June 2021 at 7pm On Zoom

Minutes - Draft

1. **Present**
 - Don Campbell (DC) - Chair
 - Scott Macpherson (SM) – Vice Chair
 - Ron Tucker (RT) – Secretary
 - Sarah Fuller (SF) - Treasurer
 - Anita Wilson (AW)
 - Barbara Sutherland (BS)
 - Cllr Hugh Morrison (HM) - Ex-officio
 - Steve Woodruff (SW) – Associate
 - Non-Council Members**
 - Linda Turtle (LT) – Resident
 - Merlin Hendy – Smoo Lodge
 - Kyunghee Hendy-Cho - Smoo Lodge
 - Fiona Mackay - Spar
 - Robbie Mackay - Spar
 - Kristina Coulton - Resident
 - Joanna Tucker - Resident
 - Paul Sinnott (PS) – Laid Common Grazing & Community Committee
 - Dr. Laura Hamlet (LH) – Northwest Highlands Geopark Manager
2. **Apologies** PC Mitchell, Maj. Philip Curtis, Ewen MacRae (EM), Janet Hollands JH)
3. **Minutes of the last meeting (3rd May 2021)**

Proposed by SM; seconded by AW. Agreed and passed.
4. **Matters Arising**
 1. Sallachy Wind Farm

This application is still going through planning.
 2. Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund

Ongoing.
 3. Beach fencing and notice boards

RT stated that new locks are required on the Sango Beach noticeboard. DC said he will help sort this problem.

Re fencing: SF met Jonny Charlton, the new Highland Council ranger; he suggested that he tours the sites concerned with interested persons from Durness. To help facilitate this, Neil Fuller has offered a bus for transport. *(This has now been arranged for 9th July at 8am)*. Jonny Charlton also had ideas about using the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and ways of dealing with social media; a meeting has been arranged to view all the site problems. SF to email date and time.

Action: RT, HM, DC, SM, SF
 4. Community Composter

Don reported that this will be in place by the end of June.

Action: DC

5. NC500/Tourism

Dr Laura Hamlet informed the meeting that the new ranger is in post, but he has a large area to cover.

Funding has been granted for another ranger and they are in the process of recruiting. A job specification is being advertised. It is, however, a short contract, only until October.

The bins are being emptied satisfactorily in Durness but not in Balnakiel Craft Village: there is a problem with Cocoa Mountain's bin overflowing.

There is also a problem with large vehicles using the Caa as a short cut. More signage is needed to prevent this.

Action: DC and HM

6. Website

There have been a few more photo contributions. It was pointed out that James Mather holds the archive photos.

Action: SW

7. Local Government Boundary Commission

HM stated that Sutherland is losing one Councillor.

8. Draft Sutherland Tourism Infrastructure Plan

Nothing new to report.

9. Beach Award

RT reported that the award has been granted and the certificates have been posted on the noticeboard at Sango.

10. Road by hostel/Speed limits in Durness and Laid

The current 20mph designated areas do not include Durness; it is possible that we may be included in the second phase at the end of the summer. The criteria for 20mph designation can be viewed in the Highland Council's 'Economy and Infrastructure' document.

SM stated that more signs should be erected around the Smoo Cave area.

Janet Holland asked for speed radars to be considered.

Joan D'Arcy asked for speed humps in Durine to be considered.

Merlin Hendy raised the traffic problems arising around the entrance to Druim Bhlair.

DC stated that speeding was an issue for the police to deal with.

See Item 12 re the Druim Bhlair issues.

Action: HM

5. Tesco deliveries

Robbie and Fiona Mackay raised this issue. They are concerned that if Tesco deliveries are taken up by the village, this will impinge on the profit margins of the Spar. This is especially a problem during the winter. If the Spar were to close, entirely or only during the winter, the Post Office and the fuel station would both close permanently.

The decision of the Council is that we cannot direct how villagers should shop.

6. Dr. Berrie collection

A collection is being made at each village.

Dr. Berrie retires on 24th July.

7. MOD

In his absence, the email from Phillip Curtis was read to the meeting and is as follows:

MOD Activity. There is a potential booking for 1-3 Sep for live bombing. This will, as usual for bombing, be for specific limited periods and we will make every effort to ensure that access restrictions are kept to a minimum. However, due to some technical upgrades at Faraid Head, we may not be able to conduct this activity. There will be 'dry' training on the Cape Wrath over the period 5-19 Sep, which will not affect access. Ex JOINT WARRIOR will take place from 20 Sep - 1 Oct. I do not have dates for next year yet.

Matters Arising. I answered the queries raised at the last meeting but did not receive any further response or acknowledgement, which I have taken as confirmation that the questions have been answered sufficiently. I am conscious that I must set a date for a liaison meeting and will do so ASAP but again reiterate that my contact details are widely available and I am more than happy to discuss the MoD activity or include anybody who wants it to our range notices.

MoD Waste. I acknowledge the points raised in the SAS/Plastic@bay report with respect to the impact of MoD paraphernalia. Much is historical and we have reduced significantly the amount of flares being fired on the range. However, I fully accept that we must do more to collect waste and will develop a plan for better waste collection. Better information on where to search is very welcome and will allow me to target my efforts better.

8. NHS

DC asked for a volunteer to attend a liaison meeting on behalf of the DCC. AW volunteered.

Lateral flow tests can be obtained free of charge from the NHS.

9. Police

RT reported that PC Mitchell had emailed the following information:

As for police matters. There was an assault reported in the Durness area the week before last. The Roads Policing Unit have been carrying out numerous patrols in the area and have issued a number of fixed penalty tickets and reported members of the public for traffic offences. Not all of those charged were tourists.

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 progress is being made on the playground. We also have an extra Ranger for Durness.

2.Geopark

Dr. Laura Hamlet stated that they have a new administrator.

They have numerous other projects in hand, e.g. signage, photos, looking at tourist hotspots, Durness Ranger

3.Treasurer

The balance as of today is £2,482.87.

4.Northwest2045

DC reported that interviews with villagers are ongoing. The Steering Group hopes to report by July.

11. Highland Council

HM confirmed that the number of Councillors representing Sutherland Ward 1 will be 2 a reduction of 1.

He stated that the Ranger is working well.

The waste collection is going to plan.

Tarring is ongoing but there is no white lining.

New signage is being arranged for the Smoo Cave area.

A road engineer will be inspecting in July.

The Council will seek permission from the Hostel to trim the shrubs to improve the sight lines on this dangerous section of road.

12. Any other business

SM stated that the stones outside the houses in the square should be removed.

SF reported that the access meeting will be on Friday 9th July at 8am.

RT reported that the Cape Wrath Ultra organisation sent him an email, as follows:

If you would like to mention it during your Community Council meeting next week, the Cape Wrath Ultra will be taking place 1-8th August, and the participants will be arriving at Cape Wrath on Sunday 8th August. We have booked sole use of the ferry and minibuses on that day, and our overnight camp will be in Keodale. Our numbers are down from planned, due to our date change and travel restrictions.

AW pointed out that there had been no planning item. This was discussed.

SM reported that Gualin Lodge want to construct a low impact building. There were no issues with this.

SM also reported that the retail unit at the new car park at Caberfeidh was seeking planning approval. Several issues were raised over safety issues and unsociable behaviour, including the abuse of residents' front gardens and examples of trespass reported by LT. After much discussion it was decided to hold a site meeting.

The site meeting was held on Friday 25th June 2020. Members of the Council present were DC, SM, RT, BS and EM. Issues were discussed and resolved; planning was not opposed.

13. Date of next meeting

7pm Monday 6th September 2021

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