

Monday 7-30pm 04 September 2023

In the Village Hall

Minutes

1. Attendance

Chair Don Campbell (DC)
Vice-Chair Scott MacPherson (SM),
Treasurer Sarah Fuller (SC),
Anita Wilson (AW), Minutes taker
Barbara Sutherland (BS),
Fiona Saywell (Geopark),
Hugh Morrison (Councillor) Ex-Officio

2. Apologies

Major Phil Curtis (MoD), Allan Cameron Police), Janet Hollands, Ewan MacRae

3. Minutes of the last meeting June 2023

Proposed by BS, Seconded AW Agreed and Passed

4. Matters Arising

No matters from the last minutes

5. Smoo cave road and car park

The roads Engineer came in July, to take note of the issues on the road between Smoo Cave, Caberfeidh and the adjoining car park. He suggests putting a pavement to the right-hand side of the road on way down to the cave but this will need the good will of land owner.

Action - To be followed up by HM and DC who will contact Alastair Stewart for up date on issues with the cave and car park

It was suggested that a collaborative letter written by the CC and the Geopark would add weight to the concerns of public safety.

It had been noted by Fraser (Smoo Cave Tours) that the Ranger is not picking up the rubbish although it is part of his job. We will review this issue during the winter.

Concerns have been noted about the erratic and sometime confrontational nature of Rebecca (who lives at the dump) The matter is now serious enough to warrant a letter to the police

Action DC Letter to be sent to PC Cameron on behalf of the CC

6. Position of secretary

This is to be put to one side until after the CC elections

7. Request for community work from probation service

No word from Probation – we need more information as to the current situation

Action – DC to follow up

8. Fire Hydrants

During a recent fire-related incident, there were difficulties accessing water from a nearby fire hydrant. Currently no water pressure in the vicinity.

Action DC and HM to invite someone from Scottish Water to attend next meeting (October) We need a contact name to take this forward

9. MOD

Bombing. Bombing was cancelled today due to high winds but is expected to take place this week Tue-Thu. Next week has been planned as a back up but is not expected to be used. That is the last booking that I currently have for bombing this year.

Exercises. Troops are training at Faraid head for the next 10 days although they are not live firing.

Ex JOINT WARRIOR is planned for 23 Oct for 2 weeks. I currently have no details on the exercise scale, but the focus of the exercise is on submarine activity, so it may be a very small effort at Cape Wrath. When I have some details I will forward them on. JOINT WARRIOR 24/1 is currently booked for 24-29 Feb 24, which seems both very early and very short.

Garvie Island sea birds. You will be aware that the planned bombing on Garvie Island in Jun was cancelled due to the presence of several sea bird colonies. This followed a visual inspection by myself and our in-house ecologists. It had been hoped that a location to bomb could be identified which would not disturb the colonies but in the event, they were too close to

any potential target. I suspect that this will be an ongoing issue every June, and we are investigating alternative solutions.

10.N.H.S.

There continue to be ongoing concerns with provision such as
No letters have been received up to now about covid/flu
No local facilities for childrens' immunisation or for routine injections such as tetanus etc .People who need attention currently have to go further down the road to KLB/Alness/Inverness
No appointment of driver for medical/hospital car as yet
No children allowed in pre-natal ultra sound at Raigmore !

11.Police Matters (Police Constable Allan Cameron N0784)

No report

12. Progress of repairs to Cape Wrath Road and roads in general

CWR programme of repairs has now finished with the exception of the bridge which is waiting for more timber
Blacktop completed down to the Cape Wrath ferry

13.Reports

1. Durness Community Group

No update yet on situation re matched funding for playpark.

2. Geopark

The Committee welcomed Fiona Saywell who gave a report on Geopark current activities such as the Pilgrim's Trail, research into Marine Heritage, developing a week long Geotour for the Northern area, and a guidebook of pathways around the area
The Geopark is currently awaiting decision on UNESCO revalidation

FS noted that the 2045 group have a useful contact for NHS
The Geopark is seeking funding for reprinting of leaflets detailing the area and what is on offer. The CC agreed that they would consider making a contribution as the leaflets are very popular.

3. Treasurer

The current balance £5,231.53

The positioning, maintenance and funding of defibrillators was discussed, An Invoice to be sent to Treasurer with any shortfall to be made up by the Durness Community Group
Purchase of further defibrillators is ongoing with a suggestion that they should be placed 1 craft village, 1 at the shop , 1 at the village hall

4. Wind farms

a) Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund and funding in general.

Email received by DC to say we will be receiving money from the “Creag Riabhach” wind farm by the end of the year.

The first **£5000** to the 5 CC’s to be managed by them. Further monies to be managed by the North and West Sutherland Trust(SCO 46029), (overseeing the rest of the community benefits)

Sallachy wind farm were hoping to get an early connection date but this has been put back to 2028. Working group to be formed to oversee improvement of roads and infrastructure. The community benefit will be managed by the new **SCIO being formed between Durness , KLB and Scourie to be called the” North West Sutherland Alliance”**

Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund can be approached for matched funding once we receive money from various windfarm monies

14.Highland Council

There is a move to increase social housing at Drum Blahr and a scoping study is underway.

Gates for the cemetery are still in production at Dornoch

There is a move to install Christmas Lights in the village . The Council will have to be consulted first. HM suggests that a sub-group from the CC be formed to oversee expense and installation. This is to be discussed at the next meeting.

Suggestions for raising funds for the lights included a football club bonus ball and an invitation for people to sponsor a light (estimated at around £300 - £400 per light)

15.Planning

A planning application for additional catering facilities at Smoo cave car park was discussed at length with a unanimous decision made not to support the proposal.

Action SM to compose, circulate and submit a letter of objection to the council

16.Community Council elections

Details of the time table for submission of interest have been circulated to the CC. Applications can be made online and only require the electoral roll number, name and email.

Nominations must be submitted by 4th October. Details are on the CC website

Sadly, the Treasurer (SF) is standing down at the end of the year

Any other business - None

17.Date of next meeting

Next meeting 3rd October 7.00 pm