

Durness Community Council

Durness Village Hall, Durness, Sutherland, IV27 4QA

Monday 7th November 2022 in the Village Hall

Minutes – Draft

- 1. Present**
 - Don Campbell (DC) - Chair
 - Scott Macpherson (SM) – Vice Chair
 - Ron Tucker (RT) – Secretary
 - Ewen MacRae (EM)
 - Anita Wilson (AW)
 - Barbara Sutherland (BS)
 - Janet Hollands (JH)
 - Cllr Marianne Hutchison (MH) – Ex-Officio

Non-Council members

 - Paul Sinnot (PS) Laid Grazing & Community Committee.
- 2. Apologies** Dr. Laura Hamlet (LH), Sarah Fuller (SF), PC Cameron, Maj. Philip Curtis, Paul Sinnott (PS), Steve Woodruff (SW), Cllr Hugh Morrison
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting**
 - 6th June 2022
 - Proposed by BS; seconded by SM. Agreed and passed.
 - 8th August 2022
 - Proposed by AW; seconded by SM. Agreed and passed.
- 4. Matters Arising**
 - 1. Sallachy Wind Farm**

DC reported this has now passed planning following a meeting in Lairg. It is anticipated the farm will be connected in 4-5 years.
 - 2. Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund**

DC stated this item will be covered under the NW Sutherland Trust group.
 - 3. Beach fencing and notice boards**

We are still awaiting the Highland Council to work on the fencing and steps to Sango. There was a discussion as to who would be liable for any injuries on the new steps. DC suggested that there is no need for steps at all.
 - 4. NC500/Tourism**

Two wardens have been patrolling the area but have pointed out that they have no powers and their role is purely advisory. One warden is continuing over the winter. Not too much wild camping has been going on. It was agreed that they have done a good job.
 - 5. Website**

All now resolved; this item can be removed.
 - 6. Road by hostel/Speed limits in Durness and Laid**

We are still waiting for the road engineer's report. It has been noted that there have been speed /activity monitors in several places. These were put

in late in the season and in the wrong places, e.g. near the Spar where traffic is nearly always slow due to the parking and the nearby campsite.

Traffic should be analysed at the Smoo Cave.

Action: DC

7. Cape Wrath Road

DC reported this road is getting very bad, as is the Ferry/Keoldale road.

MH will request that the Executive Chief Officer of Roads to visit Durness. DC stated he will meet the person.

Action: MH

5. **Beach Award**

This was awarded again this year. The feedback on the beach was that a notice be displayed to show the water is not tested.

6. **Residents Only signs**

These have been installed; matter now closed.

7. **Locked gates on public roads**

Some members thought that the locked gate on the road at Portnancon had been de adopted.

The locked gate at Ard Neakie is definitely blocking a public road and actually caused problems for the Coastguard when dealing with a problem there; there should not even be a gate.

MH said she will investigate.

Action: MH

8. **M.O.D.**

Maj. Philip Curtis sent an email the content of which is shown in blue below.

First an apology to the community for the damage to the football pitch. The site is clearly unsuitable for the use it was planned for but for the tanker to have driven where it was, was both avoidable and inexcusable. Clearly an inexperienced operator but the incident showed a lack of forethought and testing by the driver in this instance. I understand that the claims process is in hand and hopefully we will be able to go to some means to repairing, or paying for repairs, to the pitch.

Exercise activity. Both of the JOINT WARRIOR exercises have been much smaller in scope than in recent years, although the deployment of artillery in October made up for deficiencies in other areas. It is my understanding that Ex JOINT WARRIOR will not take place at Cape Wrath in the spring. Bombing from RAF jets has been at normal levels and I expect will continue at a similar level next year. I have noticed a significant rise in the number of Army units wanting to use Cape Wrath next year for low level exercises, and possibly some live firing. The impact on the community will be minimal but I will need to liaise closely with the community with regards when and if access to the Cape will be reduced, I am hoping that the impact will be low and mostly contained to the early part of the year. Finally Naval Gunfire, which has been almost completely absent from the major exercises, seems to be becoming a 'thing' again, and I have a number of bookings, or potential bookings for 1 day exercises from NATO warships. I will continue to pass on the information as I get it.

Conservation. Our deer managers have managed to fit in some successful trips to the cape in between firings, and have largely completed their cull targets, which continue to be set in concert with the NWSDMG. The annual bird observation activities reported a healthy population of birds across the range, particularly the divers, but also the White Tailed Eagle.

The MoD has let a contract out to start scoping areas for peatland restoration. Initially this is to determine what areas would benefit from help, with the intention of restoring back to peatland the areas on the cape that have the worst erosion.

And finally, I have managed several coastline clear-up walks this year, focussing on the head of the Kyle around Grudie collecting plastic waste, particularly from parachutes, and will continue to do so next year. As the advert says, every little helps.

9. NHS

The vaccination procedure that took place in the Village Hall prompted a long discussion. There were a lot of complaints about the poor booking arrangements and the lack of privacy.

There were a lot of concerns about the way the ambulance service is being run in our area. Vehicles were notably understaffed - no paramedic on board.

It was agreed that AW would write two letters expressing our concerns about these issues. These letters to be forwarded to RT for sending on, on behalf of this Council.

Action: AW & RT

10. Police

PC Alan Cameron sent a full report to RT covering the police matters between 16th June and 3rd November 2022.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FORM

Command Area	N Division	Community Group	Durness Community Council
Station	Rhiconich	Officer	N0784
Date of Meeting	07/11/2022	Location	Village Hall
Meeting Attended	No		

Meeting Preparation

Ward and Local Policing Plan Priorities.	Activities conducted over the reporting period to support those priorities.
1. Public protection 2. Road safety	

3. Alcohol abuse

The following offences were reported between 16/06/2022 and 03/11/2022 in the Durness Community Council area

Public protection

1x Vandalism – Solved

1x Sexual Assault – under investigation

1x Dog dangerously out of control – under investigation.

1x Theft – unsolved

Road Safety

Road Traffic Offences

1x No MOT - Solved

1x Speeding – Solved

Under investigation

1x Fail to report accident

Alcohol abuse

As the 'new' officer at Rhiconich, I have endeavoured to meet as many locals as I can between moving to the post on 16th July and this date, and have made a point of carrying out licenced premises checks whenever possible and being visible in the community.

I have had the pleasure to meet some of the members of the community council already, and look forward to meeting the rest of you in the future.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank the community of Durness for their assistance in the enquiry into the high risk missing person Humza Khan.

Any matters arising /issues don't hesitate to contact me via email and I will do my best to answer any queries.

Allan.

Update on Previously Agreed Actions – See previous OP 55/8 & Relevant Reference on the Area Command Action Tracking Table	
n/a	
Update on any local community safety issues / trends within the community and any assistance / information requested from the community. Review IMPACT / intelligence etc	
<p>For the second time in as many months, an incident of sheep being attacked by dogs has been reported to Police in the fields between Balnakeil Craft Village and Elliot Houses, the latest occurring on 29th October.</p> <p>Three ewes were injured in this latest incident. One seriously, causing pain and suffering to the animals and financial costs to the owner.</p> <p>Any persons with information on the latest attack are encouraged to contact Police.</p>	
Any local / Area Command / Divisional / Police Scotland updates / key message	

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

11. Reports

1. Durness Community Group

RT said the DCG is working hard on fundraising for a new children's play park. A Just Giving site has been set up and he encouraged members to pass it on the details and to donate.

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/durnessplaypark>

The senior citizens' – 'Golden Oldies' - meal and dance will be held at the Smoo Cave Hotel on 19th December 2022 at 6pm for 6.30pm. There is no take out alternative planned at this time.

2. Geopark

DC circulated copies of the biweekly update from Geopark.

3. Treasurer

The current account was submitted by email from SF. The balance is £2,960.53 this included the Highland Council grant.

3. Northwest2045

DC reported they are still working away with the long term issues.

4. NW Sutherland Trust (Altnaharra – Creag Riabhach) Wind Farm

DC reiterated that this is coming online very soon and will benefit Durness by £5,000 per year; there is an additional sum that can be applied for when needed for large projects.

DC stated that this group comprises Bettyhill, Tongue, Scourie, Kinlochbervie, Altnaharra and Durness.

A short discussion took place regarding the NW Sutherland SCIO, there is some confusion regarding the name and the commitment. This group is for the Sallachy Wind farm income and includes Scourie, Kinlochbervie and Durness.

12. Highland Council

MH reported the ambulance concerns raised by other Community Councils regarding single-manning of ambulances when on-call at weekends.

She also mentioned that some people experienced the same problems over the vaccination procedures, although others reported that the process had run smoothly. Some Ward 1 residents have struggled to have the latest vaccination due to transport issues, i.e. the mobile unit operating in a village but those residents from outlying locations, and without their own transport, being unable to attend. Often, people in this situation are also those who cannot easily find information/communicate online.

The Southern Community Partnership were struggling with staffing issues. – I'm not sure about this, I know of the Sutherland Community Partnership but, not Southern – and I don't think they were mentioned in terms of employment. The employment challenges I mentioned were on behalf of NHS Social Care, HC roads teams and hospitality providers throughout Sutherland.

A repopulation survey has been carried out in Durness. I asked about need for homes/housing – Don said that this had all been covered by a survey but, I'm not sure if the Repopulation Co-ordinator carried it out or what the title was.

A patient transport meeting has been held re the unsatisfactory provision in the NW – this is being reviewed by SAS as part of a whole-service review. The Sutherland Community Planning Partnership Transport Group is working on all aspects of community transport, including patient transport.

Cost of living grants of up to £10,000 are available to community groups who have plans/projects to provide Cost of Living support within their area. This funding can be applied for via the HC Ward Manager or by using this link

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/costoflivinggrant>

There is also HC Cost of Living support/advice available to individuals

https://www.highland.gov.uk/.../help_with_the_cost_of_living

or through the Sutherland Community Partnership, NW Citizens Advice Bureau etc.

13. Planning

Gualin have applied for temporary buildings which will be out of sight from the road. There were no objections.

The planning in the Balnakeil Craft village has been re submitted with amendments. There were no objections.

14. Any other business

- BS raised the subject of the caravan in the Square being parked there all the time. Apparently, this is on private land.
- BS also mentioned the skip lorry has been parking in the Square. MH said she would have a word in the appropriate place.
- **DC said the Remembrance Service in the Square will go ahead on Friday 11th November 2022. The service starts at 10.45am.**
- SM stated the fireworks were a big success and thanked the Fire Brigade personnel.
- Another thanks was given to the Haunted House event which went very well.

15. Date of next meeting

Monday 9th January 2023 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

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

DRAFT