

Durness Community Council

Durness Village Hall, Smoo, Durness, Sutherland, IV27 4QA

Monday 7pm 4th March 2024

If you have a question for the Council, please send it to Ron Tucker (Secretary) by email to rontucker19@btinternet.com and it will be raised at this meeting. You can also attend the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Attendance

Chair Donald Campbell (DC)

Secretary Ron Tucker (RT)

Treasurer Kristine Coulson (KC) co-opted and appointed during the meeting

Barbara Sutherland (BS)

Ewan Macrae EM)

Anita Wilson (AW) (Minutes Secretary)

Fiona Saywell (FS) (Geopark)

Hugh Morrison (HM) Ex-Officio

PC Allan Cameron (AC)

2. Apologies

Scott Macpherson

Major Philip Curtis

3. Minutes of the last meeting 5th February 2024

Proposed by BS

Seconded by RT

Passed

4. Matters Arising

Discussion on post of Treasurer. Kristine Coulson joined the meeting and offered her services as Treasurer, taking over from Sarah Fuller.

Proposed by BS

Seconded by RT

The committee unanimously agreed to co-opt her

1. Smoo Cave and Road

HC had spoken to David Boyd who had, in turn spoken to the landowner regarding parking for buses at Smoo Cave. However, there still seems to be a stalemate between DB and the Council. It was suggested that a lease agreement might be an option.

ACTION HM will continue to take this forward

HM reports that the road to Smoo cave has had a visit from engineers. No further action as yet.

Plans for 6 houses at Drumblair still going ahead

2. Fire Hydrants

Hydrants are being tested again tonight. Water pressure is still low. HM has spoken to Scottish Water and we are awaiting further updates.

3. Defibrillators

DC reports that 2 are on their way purchased through St John's Ambulance. The CC has donated £2,000 (£1,000 per defib) One to be positioned in the village and one at Balnakeil Craft Village. They should arrive within the next 14 days.

A third will be installed later at the golf course.

A suggestion was made that it would be beneficial for each defib to have additional cover protection to combat adverse weather conditions.

4. Notice board

RT reported that it had been difficult to source new notice boards that would stand up to the weather. He offered 2 options. We unanimously agreed to spend £510 on the one that seemed most appropriate

ACTION RT to take this forward.

5. Local Place Plan

LPP is to be done in conjunction with the DCG. As it involved a considerable amount of work including public consultation we have offers of help from Boyd Alexander and Fiona Richardson with an additional offer of help from Louise Senior.

5. Bridge over the burn at clearance village

Work needs to be undertaken on the bridge leading to the Secret Beach which is showing signs of deterioration.

ACTION EC and Matt Dent to take forward (MD is supplying a new plastic bridge shortly)

6. MOD

Major Curtis was unwell and unable to attend the meeting.

Main points from his report *'We have 3 days of bombing in the week prior to Easter and 2 days towards the of May. Due to the issue raised last year relating to nesting sea birds on Garvie Island, we will not be seeing bombing in June and then the range closes until Sept. Currently I have a potential booking in September for helicopter gunnery, and then again, potentially Ex JOINT WARRIOR in October. In terms of the future looking forward, Ex JOINT WARRIOR is not planning on returning to Scotland in either 25 or 26.'*

A request has been made by the MoD to resume bombing during the last 2 weeks in August. After some discussion about the impact this might have on the ferry service we agreed in principle that the range should be made available during this time.

7.N.H.S.

The Surgery is functioning well. The issue of patient transport is still ongoing. There is no-one in place yet.

8. Police Matters (Police Constable Allan Cameron N0784)

There have been very few reported incidents. AC expressed concern that he may have more to report during the coming season with the lack of rangers. AC also noted that it is unlikely, due to pressure of work, that he will be able to attend future CC meetings.

He wished to stress that all matters of concern should be reported to the police

9. Reports

1. Durness Community Group

Completion of the Playpark is now well underway.

Discussions on extending the car park at the Clearance Village is ongoing.

2. Geopark

The Geopark is keen to support the Save our Schools campaign and has signed the petition.

Work is ongoing with Scourie community group about a centre for the area focussing on landscape

The Geopark is in the process of recruiting an education engagement officer. Kyle of Tongue Geopod is to be put in place. The Geopod at Richonich is in need of some repair.

Work on the Pilgrims trail is ongoing

The CC has been asked to contribute to the new NW Touring Map leaflet, We agreed to contribute £200 towards the cost of printing.

3. Treasurer

The balance brought forward is £9827.79 with expenditure for Insurance, poppy wreaths and poppy light leaving a balance of 8869.99 (minus £2000 for defibrillators)

4. Northwest2045

Nothing to report at present

5. N & W Sutherland trust

DC has produced a document showing how to apply for funds from the Trust which will be circulated within the community, in the Minutes, and on the website. There will also be a helpful list of FAQs

A short meeting is to be convened to discuss the content and format of the various forms

ACTION DC to organise

We agreed for discussion to take place between KLB, Scourie and Durness re the appointment of a Development officer and that each CC should make a financial contribution

6. Windfarms

Nothing to report in addition to information shared at the last meeting.

7. Christmas lights

A Price List of individual lights was provided by HM

ACTION Everyone is encouraged to find some sponsors. We need to circulate that fact that people can sponsor a light.

ACTION Anita to circulate on Facebook

10. Highland Council

Highland Council CEO is to come up for meetings with all local councils to discuss all on going issues

The gullies at the Village Square need clearing and many areas around the village need attention after all the rain

Road barriers are being repaired and replaced ad hoc

A sign needs to be erected on School Road after complaints about the amount of dog mess that has appeared.

ACTION HM to take this forward

On the Capeside roads are still in bad repair, often on parts that have been recently repaired. Some work needs to be done immediately

11. Planning

No current plans

12. Any other business

A new person will be taking over the liaison with community councils (no longer Phil Tomalin)

It was noted that there is a great deal of rubbish at the junction to Caberfeidh causing vehicles to run over it spreading it into the road

13. Date of next meeting 7.00 pm

8th April (to avoid Easter)

Note: Minutes of these meetings can be viewed on the durness.com web site