

Durness Community Council

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

Monday 7pm 8th April 2024

In the Village Hall

Minutes

1. Attendance

Chair Donald Campbell (DC)

Vice-Chair Scott Mc Pherson (SM)

Treasurer Kristine Coulson (KC)

Barbara Sutherland (BS)

Ewan Macrae (EM)

Anita Wilson (Minutes) (AW)

Councillor Hugh Morrison Ex-Officio (HM)

Boyd Alexander Repopulation Coordinator for NW Sutherland (BA)

Robbie Mackay (RM)

2. Apologies

Ron Tucker (Secretary)

Major Curtis (MoD)

Fiona Saywell (Geopark)

3. Minutes of the last meeting 5th February 2024

Amended under Matters Arising 4(1) number of proposed houses to be built at Drumblah is 7 not 6

Proposed by BS

Seconded by EM

4. Matters Arising

- 1. Smoo Cave and Road.** Car and bus parking is still under negotiation. It was noted that other sites for a carpark (towards the tip) are impractical (HM) Discussion and action to remain ongoing, especially as the season progresses with an increase in bus tours

Action HM to take forward

It was agreed that there needs to be a longer term plan. The attraction of Smoo cave is not going to decrease and neither is the increased levels of visitors, levels of traffic, and the urgent need to protect and address the safety of pedestrians and road users.

Plans for 7 houses at Drumblahr is still going ahead (see point 13 below)

2. Fire Hydrants

HM has spoken to Scottish Water. Water pressure is still low and a decision needs to be made as to who is responsible for the cost of upgrades and when this will be carried out. Item to remain on the Agenda.

3. Defibrillators

We now have 3 with weather-proof boxes. 1 at the golf course, 1 at Balnakeil Craft Village and 1 in Durness village centre. The electrician is hoping to complete the installation this week.

4. Notice board

A new noticeboard has been Ordered (HM) EM to fit it

Action EM

5. Local Place Plan

Drawing up the plan must be a joint enterprise with the Durness Community Group. The question was raised as to whether the landlord/common grazings should be included in the discussions

Action DC to take this forward

Offers of help were also given by BA who agreed to circulate the 2010 plan for reference

Action BA

5. Bridge over burn at clearance village

DCG, DC, and Matt Dent are organising getting a new bridge

DC will update the Geopark in order to tidy up the interpretation board there with a view to include QR codes

Action DC

6. Road on the Capeside

More road has been washed away. Meetings have been held with the ferryman to action some repairs

7. MOD

Nothing additional to discuss. There may be a joint warrior exercise in the 2nd week in October 2024. Major Curtis hopes to be at the next meeting

8. N.H.S.

The next meeting with NHS Highland Health and Social Care Partnership to discuss the new community hub will take place at Durness (possibly 30th May)

Action DC to follow up

There are still some issues with communication for appointments. Eye clinic appointments at KLB were misdirected to Scourie which resulted in appointments being missed. There is no eye clinic scheduled for Durness. Covid booster appointments in Durness are restricted to one day only .

Patient transport is now in operation

9. Police Matters (Police Constable Allan Cameron N0784)

Nothing to report

10. Reports

1. Durness Community Group

Agreement with the council is nearing completion for the playground DCG is to facilitate applications for various grants if applicants require support.

2. Geopark

Pilgrims trail – which includes Ceannabeinne, Keodale and Rob Donne area at Loch Hope – is intended as a way of generating local interest and connection.

A podcast is to be made available in English and Gaelic

DC will forward a copy of Fiona's report

Action DC

Facilities at the Rockstop have re-opened

There is space available on the Geopod at Keodale for anyone wishing to share relevant information

3. Treasurer

£2000 has been paid out for defibrillators (monies to be set aside for an additional one as required) With £510 to pay on the new notice board , the current balance including Dec 2023 wind farm payment is £6869.99

4. Northwest2045

Nothing to report at present

5. N & W Sutherland trust

Nothing to report at present

6. Windfarms

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

7. Christmas lights

AW circulated 3 posters with a suggestion to also ask school to design a poster **AW to action**

Suggestion was made to have a 'Christmas Lights' collection tin in the shop.

Robbie agreed and DC to ask DCG to approve

Action DC

Support to put lights up offered by EM and SM.

A line item will be created in the account for all related monies **Action KC**

11. Highland Council

Naturescot have pulled the funding for Rangers but Coastal Communities have agreed to provide money for 4 Rangers for the summer months

A new bin system will be put in place in the autumn with 2 recycling bins and a smaller general waste bin.

BT want to do pilot for ultrafast broadband- more info to follow

12. Planning

We agree to support a planning application for the Durness Bus

Action **SM to write a letter of support**

BA gave a detailed overview of the housing situation in NW Sutherland and details of the proposed affordable housing development at Drumblair comprising of 7 three-bedroomed houses to be rented out. The scheme is dependant upon funding being made available by the Scottish Government

Action **BA to circulate information to HM**

13. Any other business

KC asks when are signs going up re dog mess on school road. Also it was noted that visitors are exercising their dogs on the playpark.

Signs are to be put in place

Action **HM and SM to action**

RM highlighted the problems of a concentration of motorhomes on the Council carpark at Sango, noting that their close proximity to one another is dangerous, there is a campsite within 100 yards, they are within the 30 mph speed limit and that any money generated does not come back to the community.

Action **DC to send letter from Community Council**

Robbie asks what can we do to retain visitors rather than them being in the village for a short amount of time. Suggestions are to upgrade the footpath network using wind-farm money, and to re-invigorate the fishing on the lochs.

Action **DC to email Matt Dent** asking him to look at state of the footpaths

Action **BS to ask the grazing committee** if they are in agreement to upgrading the paths

On the Agenda for the next meeting

Some yellow salt bins are being filled with rubbish

Action **SM** to lock them down

New gates are in place at the cemetery

14. Date of next meeting 7.00 pm - 13th May – Village Hall