

## Durness Community Group

Charity registration number: SC032179

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

### Minutes of the Meeting (Draft)

Meeting at the Village Hall 7pm, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024

- 1. Present:** Neil Fuller (NF) - Chair  
Yvonne MacRae - Vice Chair (YM)  
Sheila Frazer - Treasurer (SF)  
Alistair Morrison (AM)  
Martina Macleod (MM1)  
Ron Tucker (RT)  
Joanna Tucker (JT)  
Donald Campbell (DC)  
Kathy Parker (KP)

**In attendance:** Boyd Alexander (BA), Repopulation Coordinator North West Sutherland

- 2. Apologies:** Stephen Woodruff (SW)

**3. Local Place Plan – BA**

Background: The Highland Council has invited communities to submit ideas and proposals for their area by means of a Local Place Plan (LPP). Communities should express their aspirations and priorities for the future of their place through proposals for the development or use of land and buildings. The Highland Council are currently gathering evidence for a new Local Development Plan, and have therefore set a date of 27/09/2024 for Local Place Plans to be registered. Once registered, Local Place Plans will be taken into account as evidence for the new Local Development Plan and can also be a material consideration when planning applications are being considered by the Planning Authority.

BA is formally helping Kinlochbervie Community Council with their LPP. BA explained a bit more about the process and what he plans to do in order to create the LPP for Kinlochbervie. The main tasks involve community consultation, mapping potential sites and linking them to proposed development. This could be for housing or business. It could include potential areas suitable for car parks, facilities or even flood protection as relevant. Walking access and development of a harbour / slipway could also be considered.

Durness is currently categorised as a “growing settlement” and therefore at present has no boundary. BA shared draft plans from the Highland Council for seven new houses at Druim Bhlar, which has already been identified as a site for potential housing development.

A general discussion around LPPs followed.

DC expressed concern over how a LPP would fit with a crofting community such as Durness.

BA added that the Crofting Commission are supportive of development of crofts for more varied use than traditional crofting such as keeping livestock.

It was agreed that a subcommittee should be formed to pursue development of a Durness Parish LPP. Representatives from the Durness Community Group, Durness Community Council and members of the community with knowledge of the local geography will be invited to form a subcommittee.

YM suggested Louise Senior might also be able to assist as she has experience of public consultation.

DC expressed that it is essential to have someone with knowledge of common grazing areas etc. This was also agreed.

YM to submit Notification of Intent to the Highland Council on behalf of the Durness Community Group. **(Action)**

DC to discuss LPP at next Community Council (CC) meeting at the beginning of March and feedback their response at the next DCG meeting. **(Action)**

BA will share his experience of creating a LPP in Kinlochbervie and will assist Durness with LPP mapping if he has the time to do so. The Durness CC may have funds to pay people to support development of the LPP if necessary.

*BA left the meeting, approximately 8pm.*

#### **4. Minutes of the last meeting**

7<sup>th</sup> November 2023, proposed as accurate by NF; seconded by YM.

#### **5. Matters arising from previous minutes not on the agenda**

Nil

#### **6. Reports**

- **Financial – SF**

SF has requested transfer of £49k from the high interest savings account to current account in anticipation of purchasing the new equipment for the playpark. The high interest bank account requires 32 day notice to avoid paying a withdrawal fine. The money is expected to be in the current account on 02/03/2024.

SF purchased a laptop for £375 and Microsoft Office at a recurring cost of £59/ year.

- **Durness Community Council (CC) – DC**

The Durness CC treasurer position is currently vacant.

There has been a survey of the road between the hall and Smoo Cave.

Highland Council will produce three options of how best to improve the road.

DC expressed concern about the lack of suitable parking around Smoo Cave for coaches. Suggestion that village hall car park may be suitable.

There was also discussion around the deterioration and general condition of the road on the Capeside.

- **NW Sutherland Trust – DC**

The CC is now in receipt of £5k annually from NWST and £41,200 as their share from the main pot. This money will be open to community funding applications but they are as yet to decide the exact process, such as how often to consider applications etc.

- **NW Sutherland Communities Alliance**

NF has signed paperwork on behalf of the DCG to move forward with our involvement with the new SCIO.

DC updated that Salachy Windfarm has now been approved with expected income to be split between local community councils. Durness will get an agreed annual percentage share tbc. Predicted connection date 2028. DC updated that the extension to Bettyhill windfarm has also been approved which also has a predicted connection date of 2028.

NF thanked DC for all his work over the years representing Durness on the many wind farm groups to ensure Durness was included. Durness will benefit financially for many years to come as a result of his hard work.

## **7. Children's Playpark – YM**

Following our successful application to the Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) for £56,899.01 we have now reached our target total of £114,355.60.

John Mackay, Amenities Services Manager, wants to clarify a couple of points on the Memorandum Of Understanding that we have been asked to sign by the CRF in order to progress with the purchase and installation of the playpark equipment. YM will update the group when this has been clarified.

YM met with Lynn MacGillivray, Highland Play Strategy Coordinator, who has to assess and approve the suitability and "play value" of the equipment we plan to purchase. Overall, she was happy with our plan but recommended some minor changes.

YM asked Russel Play for an updated plan based on Lynn's recommendations. This has now been received and sent on to Lynn, John Mackay and Evan Sinclair (Amenities Services) for further comment.

The updated quote is through Wicksteed rather than Russel Play as it is a parent company and is on the list of Highland Council approved suppliers.

JT to update the Just Giving Page with progress update and target reached. **(Action)** Request for SW to update the website with a progress update too. **(Action)**

NF thanked YM and presented her with a bunch of flowers for her work on the playpark project.

## **8. The Golden Oldies Christmas Party**

NF updated that the Golden Oldies Christmas party was a great success and was well attended this year. It cost around £1400.

NF suggested a Secret Santa may add to the fun for next year. RT and KP were unsure how that would work in practice so it was agreed to keep the same format next year.

*Special thanks to NF for organising the night and also for providing The Durness Bus service without charge. Lots of time, effort and goodwill from NF. Also thanks for his awesome washing up skills! Thanks to the other volunteers for their time also. (Post meeting addition)*

## **9. 1 Bard Terrace**

NF updated the group that there is a banging noise from the cold water pipes in the bathroom and leaking windows in the porch.

DC kindly offered to have a look before getting tradespeople in.

## **10. Any other business**

Ceannabeine bridge and footpath was discussed. The bridge needs to be replaced. NF to contact Matt Dent regarding potential funding for the bridge. **(Action)**

DC and Fiona Saywell (Geopark) are looking at Ceannabeine Township as signage and parking are required.

**11. Date of next meeting:**

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March, 7pm at the Village Hall. (YM to book hall.)

These Minutes approved at the Meeting .....

DRAFT