

## DRAFT MINUTES OF MORVERN COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

### MONDAY 2 OCTOBER 2017 AT LOCHALINE VILLAGE HALL

**Present** : Jim Bolton, Susan Taylor, Martin Sampson, Alasdair Firth, Teresa Bolton, Andrew Baxter (Highland Councillor), Robin Dixon (KG Timber representing Carnachailliche) and 18 members of the public

**Apologies** : Lesley Smart, Angie Campbell (Police), John Hodgson (Phone Boxes)

#### **1. Election of Office Bearers**

- This is the first meeting of the Council since May, when MCC went into abeyance due to the number of elected Councillors falling below the number required under the regulations. Since then two new Councillors have been “elected” – Martin Sampson and Alasdair Firth.
- Nominations for Office Bearers :  
Chair – Jim Bolton, proposed Susan Taylor, seconded Martin Sampson  
Vice Chair – Susan Taylor, proposed Jim Bolton, seconded Alasdair Firth  
Secretary – Teresa Bolton, proposed Susan Taylor, seconded Martin Sampson  
Treasurer – Martin Sampson, proposed Jim Bolton, seconded Susan Taylor  
Minutes Secretary – Lesley Smart is happy to continue in this role.
- There are still 2 vacancies for co-opted members – anyone interested (need to be on the electoral roll) should contact the Council.

Prior to the start of business, Jim expressed the Council’s condolences to the family and friends of Jimmy Byrne, who passed away a few months ago. He had lived in Morvern for many years, serving as a Community Councillor during this time, and he will be missed by many.

Social Media – Whilst the MCC recognise the usefulness of social media for keeping the public informed, it is not acceptable for this to be an excuse for posting unpleasant and potentially libellous personal comments. Jim asked that if anyone is unhappy at the work the Community Council does, they should attend Community Council meetings, speak personally to a Councillor or Email the council at [Morvern.cc@btinternet.com](mailto:Morvern.cc@btinternet.com).

#### **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Proposed as an accurate record by Teresa, seconded by Susan.

#### **3. Matters Arising**

- **Phone Boxes** – Drimnin community pressing ahead with plans, Larach Beag box has been taken on by Morvern Heritage Society but as far as we know, in absence of John Hodgson, nothing planned for one outside Lochaline Stores.
- **Roads** – A long stretch of the A884 at Uillean has been recently resurfaced. Although this caused unavoidable hold ups, it was worth it & Jim thanked the council workers for their work.

- **Boardwalk** – Agreed with Kirsty Mann, FC, for a site visit to look at this and other forestry areas which need opening up again for public use. It was reported that work has been done at Barr by the FC and a local working group to clear and improve access to forestry tracks. Teresa will organise a date with Kirsty & invite anyone interested to come along.
- **River bank** at Acharn – this is now in a worse state – agreed to write to Hugh Raven to see when remedial work will start.
- **Village Maintenance** – Ally Nudds has done several cuts over the summer. Payment made on the authority of Dot Ferguson as this was agreed prior to MCC being in abeyance.
- **Skip Collection** – Ivan Woolley did another run to Duiskey at the end of July. Further one planned for end of year. As this doesn't extend to Drimnin, agreed MCC would pay for a skip in Drimnin – once arranged Alasdair will notify Drimnin residents by Email.

#### 4. Finance

- Over the summer monies have been paid for previously agreed village maintenance work and one skip run.
- HC grant received for £803-84
- Latest statement balance stands at £10792-07
- Payments agreed for Poppy Wreathes £54-00, Erskine Hospital donation £100-00, Village Hall rent £48-00, £200 donation to CLAM (see item 9 below)

#### 5. Over 60s Christmas Lunch

- After a very successful and well-attended lunch last year, it was agreed MCC would organise one again on the same lines. Saturday 9 December agreed subject to the hall being available – Linda Martin will check & confirm. Susan agreed to do the main organising of food, decorations etc. Some members of the public felt that music should go on once the lunch was finished so people could dance. Agreed that Jim will approach a friend who performs at parties and functions in Aberdeenshire to see if he was available.
- Susan will ask if Burach will be happy to help serve food as last year.
- Teresa will write to the Trust to ask if they will split the costs as last year.

#### 6. Drimnin Timber Transport Road

- Martin Gale, Drimnin resident, has been asked by members of the Drimnin Community to represent their views on this. He made the following points :
  - A significant majority of the Drimnin community consider Highland Council's decision to 'Exclude' timber transport on the B849 to be a sound decision.
  - 62 people who live west of Fuinary Campsite, equating to 86% of the total catchment population support this view; 7 do not wish to express an opinion (10%) and 3 (4%) do not support it. These numbers are based on people who live in Drimnin for all or most of the year.

- It is the contention that timber transport creates an abnormal safety risk and has a significant, detrimental impact on the B849 from areas west of the Wishing Stone, where there is access to Forestry roads to bring timber to the haul road on the outskirts of Lochaline and down to the pier.
  - It has been questioned that the Drimnin views are a disproportionate weighting to the total population of Morvern, hence attending the MCC meeting tonight to seek support of wider Morvern community.
  - The Drimnin group fully support the alternative high level route which is proposed. This road will link the four estates and attract a 50% subsidy from the Strategic Timber Transport Fund (STTF) and is supported by the Forestry Commission, Highland Council and STTF.
  - The Drimnin Community understand that Carnacailliche intend to run a further “trial” on the B849 in the near future – they do not believe this should occur and argue that these timber runs are not trials; they are merely labelled as such as a means to extract and transport the timber on the public road, for which it has been excluded by HC under the Scotland wide exclusion scheme, for which all Councils, Forestry Commission and many large contractors who are members of the Confederation of Forest Industries have signed up to.
  - There are four landowners involved in this but not all wish to participate in establishing this new route at present, reasons for which are not known.
- Jim stated that MCC represents all of Morvern and although this impacts mainly on Drimnin residents, all Morvern residents are affected by it. He opened up the subject to the meeting for questions so far :
    - Clarification that the four estates are Drimnin, Achnasaul, Killundine and Carnacailliche. Of those two are not engaging in the proposed scheme.
    - Emergency access requirements would be needed in parts of Drimnin and Killundine estates; Drimnin Estate has previously confirmed its agreement to emergency access.
    - Clarification that the “Excluded status” is not legally binding and if people chose to transport timber on the public road they could not be prosecuted, although their harvesting contractors would be in breach of the Industry Agreement.
    - Andrew Baxter gave some more background on this subject and that representatives of HC, FC, landowners and their agents (3) held a meeting last week, chaired by Niall McLean, HC representative of Ward 21, to try and move the proposal forward. They are hoping to come to the December Community Council meeting with a range of options. If the high road does not get approval, a £2million upgrade to the B849 would be required, which is not a viable option.
    - Clarification that the excluded status relates purely to round timber and empty lorries, not those carrying chipped timber.
  - Robin Dixon, representing Mr and Mrs Neal, owners of Carnacailliche, stated that :

- In 2005 the Neals were given permission by HC to construct a bell mouth at the B849/access road at Glenmorvern for use in harvesting timber from their estate.
  - In 2014, 2015 and 2016 they ran “trials” of timber extraction using this and the B849.
  - In June the Neals became aware of the excluded route status of the B849 but have never been consulted about this. It has no legal status for the exclusion of timber traffic but is merely a recommendation.
  - The position of Carnacailliche in respect of the relief road is that there needs to be a more equitable split between the four estates of the monies needed for 50% of the road construction costs.
  - Other businesses such as Drimnin distillery use the road for heavy vehicular traffic which will have equally detrimental effect on the wear & tear on the road.
- Jim opened it up to the floor for questions :
    - Comparison with Distillery traffic is not relevant as only occasional; understand timber traffic will be 8 journeys per day, 5 days per week. Mr Dixon said it would be a maximum of 30 journeys per week. He re-iterated that the Neals were not refusing to contribute to a relief road but merely wished for a fair and equitable costing agreement.
    - Belief that calling this large scale timber extraction as a “trial” is totally misleading because they are not trials at all.
    - Safety concerns not been mentioned but B849 single track, twisting road is not designed for these vehicles, which cause damage to the road surface, verges and inadequately sized passing places and it is unsafe. Mr Dixon accepted that the road is not suited to such vehicles but stated he was unaware of any damage that has been caused.
    - Martin Gale said that over the course of the next 10 years, 150,000 tonnes of timber is due for harvesting.
    - One member felt that it is desirable to find a solution for everyone in Morvern and is unfair to single out one estate when many other heavy vehicles are using the road.
  - Jim concluded by thanking Martin Gale and Robin Dixon for their input. He said that the MCC would ask the wider Morvern Community for their views but asked if those present would like MCC to represent them, as observers, at the next Timber Road meeting scheduled for 19 October (although we would not be able to be involved in any sensitive, commercial aspects.) This was overwhelmingly agreed. Jim will contact Neil Mclean and Teresa will put out notices asking residents’ views.

Andrew Baxter leaves meeting to catch last ferry.

## **7. Police Report**

- This was read out – recent thefts across peninsula including Lochaline – any suspicious activity/vehicles should be reported to police; ongoing dialogue with

HC to move 20mph speed signs further west on Drimnin Road in Lochaline; reminder for need for high visibility now autumn in full swing.

- Notices available in shop and on ferries to help visitors drive safely and sensibly on single track roads. Important not just for social drivers but also for emergency vehicles and GPs. Flyers available for holiday accommodation – Rhonda Newsham agreed to put these in the Drimnin cottages.

## 8. Planning Items

- Renewal of planning permission for 2 homes, one 60m NE of Schoolhouse, Drimnin and one 30m S of Mill House Drimnin – no comments
- Kinlochtecuis Schoolhouse – conversion of upper area of boathouse to one bedroom apartment with balcony – no comments
- Drimnin Community Broadband CIC - 2m telecoms pole and cabinet land 390m NW Drimnin House – no comments

## 9. Correspondence

- Notification of introduction of **30mph speed restriction on B849** starting 16m south of Drimnin Post Office and ending in a northerly direction to the end of the public road. Due to come into force 23 October – road signage etc should be in place by then
- **Review of Polling Districts & Places** – link on HC website – comments by 31 January 2018. MCC agreed that HC should return Polling Place in Lochaline to the Village Hall – loss of revenue for hall on top of the grant cut and disruption of education due to school's enforced closure. Teresa will submit response on behalf of MCC and Susan encouraged others to submit their views.
- **Request from CLAM for donation** for Bonfire Party in November to help with cost of food - £200 agreed.
- **Lochaber Health & Social Care Redesign** – details Q & A re. new Belford Hospital although somewhat vague – copy to be put in Medical Practice Waiting Room.
- **Lochaber Housing Association Newsletter** – copy available from Teresa and in Surgery Waiting Room.

## 10. MCDC

- Two newsletters since last MCC Meeting. Susan gave brief update –
  - Visit from MSP Rhoda Grant – comments that this was not publicised.
  - Electric Car – residents' views welcomed
  - Scout Hall area – has been strimmed & once the electricity pylon is removed (due imminently) hoping to loan benches from Morvern Games & Gala Week for the space.
- Jim stated he intends to resign as one of MCC's representative on MCDC. Alasdair Firth agreed to replace him but he thinks it would be beneficial if MCC could have three reps.

## **11. Items from Councillors**

- Jim thanked MCDC for “taking up the reins” on behalf of the community for the past four months in the absence of a Community Council.
- Letter received from Iain Thornber regarding the Deer Management Group – next meeting on 1st November and he would like MCC to become involved. He is concerned about huge swathes of land being enclosed and massive amounts of deer culling. The Group’s Agenda has an item for members of the public – Jim agreed that these issues do affect everyone and public should be involved – Alasdair will attend.
- Email sent to Sunart Community Council giving our full support in respect of Dal Mhor and rumours of its closure.
- Jim told the meeting he took the liberty of voting on behalf of MCC for National Tree of the Year – Beaully Sycamore.
- Teresa has been approached by a member of the public regarding the very useful telephone directory for Lochaber produced by The Oban Times. However, Morvern is omitted which is another example of Morvern being subsumed into Ardnamurchan by many public and private organisations. MCC agreed to write to The Oban Times and ask for Morvern’s inclusion in the next issue.

## **12. Items from the Public**

- **Noticeboards** – Linda Martin informed the meeting the two noticeboards, one for MCC and one for Morvern Heritage Society, had been renovated by David Brewis and should now be watertight. They are currently in the Pontoon Office. Meeting agreed these should be put up again in the vicinity of the shop as the current noticeboard is overloaded. Discussion as to best location – once electricity pole is removed from Scout Hut area they could be put there. Linda said if gabions were used no excavation work would be required and they could be easily moved if/when the site is developed. Others felt they would be better placed by the post box – Susan will take this item to the next MCDC meeting.
- **Future Care for Elderly** – Hilary Heasman Norris expressed concern, echoed by all those in attendance, about the prospect of losing the facility at Dal Mhor. Jim reiterated that MCC has offered our full support to Sunart CC and we will help in any way we can.
- **First Responders** – Two defibrillators for public use are now in place outside Lochaline Stores and at the pontoons. Public training sessions to be organised. They have yet to be called out but have 5 fully trained responders, 2 in training and 2 applications being processed. Teresa suggested it would be helpful to have details of the location of defibrillators throughout Morvern which could be put on the Morvern web page – agreed.
- **Coastguard** – Alasdair informed the meeting that the local Coastguard service is back up and running.

## **13. Future Meetings**

- These will be on the first Monday of each month except for April which will be the 9<sup>th</sup> due to Easter.
- There will be no meeting in January or August.
- December and June meetings will be in Drimnin (hall availability permitting)
- List of meeting dates and locations will be put on Morvern website.