

## DRAFT MINUTES OF MORVERN COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING AT LOCHALINE VILLAGE HALL

MONDAY 5 MARCH 2018

**Present** : Susan Taylor, Alasdair Firth, Teresa Bolton, Martin Sampson, David Campbell, Andrew Baxter (HC), and nine members of the public.

**Apologies** : Jim Bolton, police.

1. In Jim's absence Susan chaired the meeting. Lesley Smart has resigned as Minutes Secretary – Susan thanked her for all her hard work on behalf of the councillors and community. Agreed to advertise for a new Minutes Secretary asap.

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

Two minor amendments – Para 4, final bullet point “Trustees” not “Directors”; para 11, final bullet point delete “Trust”. Once amended, proposed by Alasdair, seconded by David.

### **3. Matters Arising**

- **Dail Mhor** – Andrew Baxter updated us. Following cancellation of proposed meeting with local group by NHS Highland, a smaller meeting took place (to which MCC reps were not invited) consisting of 2 NHS, HC engineer, Sunart CC and Acharacle CC reps, facilitated by Andrew Baxter, with Kate Forbes, MSP, VCing at end. It would appear NHS are blaming HC for delays but in a nutshell if building is fit for purpose, which is what the commissioned report says it is, for the next 3-5yrs, then it should re-open to residents until a long term solution is found. (Andrew had to leave after about an hour, so not aware of what happened following his departure). NHS are due to discuss Care Home strategy at the next NHS Highland Board meeting on 27 March.
- **Potential Conflict of Interest** – has been raised with Dot Ferguson, Ward Manager; awaiting response.
- **Beach Clean Ups** – number of groups have shown interest in this. The Sailing Club have done the beach near pontoons and north east towards Ardtornish. (Bags by bins at public toilets; Teresa will contact HC to collect). Ardtornish, Drimnin and Nursery will also take part; still to hear from primary school and Woodland Group. Waiting for equipment; will contact groups once this is available in Lochaline
- **Roads** – potholes outside shop have been hot tarred and fixed properly as have some others but Drimnin Road, road down to Ardtornish and upper Torr Na Faire still bad as is the Loch Sunart side road. Andrew told the meeting that 2018/19 programme of capital spending (which includes resurfacing but not potholes) included this part of the A884, hopefully in April. Several people were concerned about the state of the Drimnin Road at the site of last month's accident. Andrew said the various inspection/accident reports had been submitted – can't comment any further on this. Inspections can be asked for if road of particular concern – has been done for Kingairloch Road; also phone number for reporting potholes on Facebook.

### **4. Finance**

No activity this month

## 5. Highland Councillor Report

Andrew outlined the main HC Budget points :

- HC budget made up of 75% from Scottish Government and 25% Council Tax income. Position not as bad as initially thought following deal between SNP and Green Party on funding but still a gap which requires cuts. Still arguing for a 3yr settlement rather than a yearly one – only found out settlement figure from Scottish Govn. one week before HC announcement.
- **3% increase in council Tax** (capped by Scottish Govn.)
- Roads and certain parts of education budgets protected, such as teaching numbers.
- **Corran Ferry fares static.** Options Appraisal for Fixed Link/Ferries has been commissioned and will report back to HC this autumn. Andrew still intends to issue questionnaire for opinions on this through De Tha Dol? but not until June.
- **Car parking fees** – Fort William is one of only four towns in HC region who levy car parking charges, money which does not automatically come back to the area where it is collected but goes to HC. Various options being put forward but Andrew will not agree to anything until everyone throughout Highland are contributing.
- **Community Council funding** – being cut by 50%. Andrew supports this – apparently a number of Community Councils are sitting on balances of £50,000. He accepted that MCC does use its grant to provide services/amenities to the community not otherwise available, such as village maintenance & skip hire. Teresa told the meeting that we would receive about £400 in future – once we paid the minute secretary (£25/meeting honorium of £250/yr; Teresa does not claim money in role of Secretary) and rent there would be about £50 left for the whole year. Andrew said that it has been agreed that if councils can provide evidence they have spent the full grant in furthering community empowerment then the existing full grant would be paid. Further information would be received within the next week or so – this was reassuring.
- **Eden Court Theatre funding** reduced but exact nature of this still being discussed.
- David questioned whether the Community Council had a financial strategy with regard spending, and if not perhaps we should. This links in to a letter received from Morvern Community Trust so agreed to raise later.
- HC's Capital programme for next 10yrs of over £1billion is unaffordable according to the Finance Officer and needs to be reduced by half. The City Region deal, which is very Inverness centric, cannot now be changed because it is Scottish Government money not HC and if pull out of projects now we would lose all the money.

## 6. Discretionary Budget Suggestions

- **Morvern Community Woodlands** – provide logs/firewood for Pensioners but wood donated by FC. Wood from Achnaha could be used if had funding for extraction – agreed ; Alasdair will submit appl. – Teresa will forward Email link.
- **Village Hall Container** needs new doors – agreed to leave this for the moment
- **Benches/pots for Scout Hut area** – leave at present as MCDC land and waiting to hear from Games Week Committee re. benches.
- **War Memorial** – letter received from Church detailing safety concerns – steps/clearance required. Agreed Teresa would speak to Kate Cruickshank regarding possible funding application.

## 7. Police Report

Police report read out :

- **Drink driving still an issue.** Road policing officers patrol the area and anybody caught has only themselves to blame.
- **Reports of suspicious vans** in the area trying to sell everything. Often items are stolen or unsafe. Only purchase items from legitimate sources. If you are found to be in possession of stolen goods you will have questions to answer. Please report any sightings to 101, with a vehicle registration number if possible.
- **Laminated signs** are available from Strontian Police Office to warn dog walkers, walkers, etc regarding **the use of fields for “young farm animals” and the protective actions of “parent animals”**. If you want any of these, or the traditional signs, pop in to the station or ask for them to be dropped off by Angie/Kevin.

## 8. Planning

- 2 shepherd's huts and composting toilet in grounds of Lochaline House – objections from members of the public have been submitted.
- Erection of machinery store land 50m SE of Highlander Byre, Ardtornish – no comment
- Alasdair gave info. on previous application by Glensanda. SEPA have objected in respect of the amount of peat being extracted; RSPB don't believe enough information has been provided. Agreed we should object on this by supporting SEPA's stance; Alasdair to action.

## 9. Correspondence

- Transport Forum Minutes
- Letter from Highland Council concerning information on grass cutting operations – different designations of grass areas determines how often they are cut and how. Any comments/suggestions contact “service centre” on 01349 886606. Discussion on this, areas cut under MCC's village maintenance programme and lack of verge cutting. Agreed to request an up to date map of the various areas in Morvern.
- Letter received from Peter Boylan, Chair of MCT, was read out in full. In summary the Trust feel the lack of a strategic plan and priorities for the community as a whole is causing possible duplication of funding which is not a good use of limited resources. The Trustees do not believe they should be involved in overall policy so are asking the Community Council to discuss it in the first instance. It is unclear if MCDC have received a similar letter but the council agreed with the letter's premise. Susan said MCDC don't have a strategic plan but react to opportunities that come forward through funding. There is (or was) a village plan but not aware of one recently. Councillors feel the way forward is for a separate meeting/Village planning day for MCC, MCDC, MCT and all community groups. Agreed Teresa will find out if MCDC have a copy of the letter and report back at next meeting.
- The letter also stated that Lochaline Quartz Sand Ltd has undertaken to make an annual contribution to the Trust. This was welcomed by all present.

- Letter re Scottish Government Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund- £6m fund but eligibility criteria still to be determined. Hopefully will be up and running by Spring 2018.
- Letters re cut to Community Council Grant & Ward Discretionary budgets – see para 5 above.
- Letter re. new post for working with migrants (funded by Scottish Govn.)
- Letter from Morvern Parish Church re War Memorial – see para. 6 above.

#### 10. MCDC

- AGM took place on 8 February. Clare Holohan, Chair, and Mike Foulis stepped down. Jenni Hodgson elected Chair, Sarah Jones, Vice Chair. Other directors are Angus Robertson, Treasurer, Susan & Alasdair, MCC reps, Jane Stuart Smith, Nick Tordoff, John Hodgson. Life membership open to all residents for £1
- Main issues are Hydro scheme, housing plots and area for overnight camper vans
- Accounts - £30,000 profits put back in. MCC asked for more simplified accounts as well as standard ones – Trading Company made just under £30,000 profits primarily from pontoons and petrol pumps which were paid to MCDC. Angus will provide a summary for MCC upto 31 March 2017.
- Next public meeting is May.
- Last Newsletter issued in January, should be another soon as there are a number of key decisions to be made in the near future.

#### 11. Items from Councillors

- **Road from Mine to pontoons** is in a terrible state. Not sure who is responsible for this. Possibly the mine but think MCT provided money to MCDC several years ago – Teresa will find out more details.
- MCC have been approached by **Highland Fire & Rescue who wish to attend our next meeting** – OK; should start at 7pm to allow time for this.

#### 12. Items from the Public

- Concern over **big drops at a number of road edges** on Drimnin Road in particular – will ask that these are looked at during next inspection.
- Request for **bus shelter at Achabeag**. Brief history given to those at meeting re. installation and then removal of HC shelter. Jim has written to the Achabeag Community Company (Nick Tordoff); they will discuss at their next meeting at the end of March.
- Reminder that Lochaline Village Hall AGM is on 12 March at 8pm and Drimnin Village Hall AGM is on 30 March at 8pm.

#### 13. Any Other Business – Nil

**Date of Next Meeting – Monday 9 April 2018 at 7pm in Lochaline Village Hall.**

**NOTE EARLY START TIME AND LATER DATE DUE TO EASTER WEEKEND**

