

# .Morvern Community Council

Minutes of the Council meeting held immediately after the AGM on

Monday November 2nd 2020 at 7pm by Zoom

Councillors Present: Alasdair Firth(AF), Kenny McLaughlin(KM), Annie Tordoff(AT), Angus Roberston(AR) (chair), Martin Sampson(MS)

Apologies: Morvern Gemmell(MG)

Members of the public: Peter Lawson, Sally Semple, Nick Tordoff, Miles Welsh.

## **Morvern Community Council November Meeting Monday 2nd November (following AGM)**

1. Previous meeting minutes (agreed by email) & matters arising
2. AOB- Broadband discussed. AT reported that the latest update from openreach (2nd November) is that the new infrastructure is not expected until Jan-March 2021. AT to go back to Openreach chair and Ian Blackford to see what can be done to improve the situation. A map of the houses in Lochaline that can access fibre has been requested in order that different solutions within different areas of the village can be explored. Discussion was held about MCDC looking at a different solution.
3. Treasurer's report - AR will pay Kirsty's bill for preparing accounts. Remembrance wreaths have been paid for by MCC for the memorials in Drimnin and Lochaline but there will be no ceremony due to COVID.
4. Resilience Update - KM/AT- noted that resilience monies until March 2021 had been secured and a spending plan is in place. Helpline remains in place 9-1pm, 7 days per week.
5. Christmas arrangements. There will be a delivery of 'christmas boxes' this year instead of the Christmas lunch in the village hall. Ardtornish will be organising Christmas coffee/tea for small numbers over the weeks leading up to Christmas and will be transporting people to the big house. In addition there will be a 'drive through' Santa's grotto. It is hoped to also have an outdoor film screening at Drimnin Village Hall.
6. Planning applications
  - a. **Ref Number** 20/03973/OHL **SSE** Upgradegrid connection to Barr River Hydro Scheme, - NO OBJECTIONS NOTED
  - b. Ref Number 20/04043/PNO. Scottish Sea Farms Replacement of automated fish barge at Fuinary - NO OBJECTIONS NOTED
  - c. **Ref Number** 20/04084/PNO **Application Type** Prior Notifications - Drimnin Estate - Formation of forestry private way.185M SW Of The Cottage, Drimnin, NO OBJECTIONS NOTED. Also Noted that this is a prior notification. The proposal is separate from the Mungosdail graveyard access.
  - d. Green Seas solution discussed and Coalas have organised a dive survey which has been completed . AR has received the report and AF will circulate. The report concluded that there is nothing likely to be endangered if the project is well managed. It is hoped that a regular annual or biannual check of the sea bed can be arranged. It was proposed to write to Marine Scotland to thank them for facilitating an extension and to encourage the developer to

work with Coalas and ensure that if the scheme was not to be successful that all residue is removed. **ACTION AR** Discussion held around any revenue from crown estate should come into the Morvern Community.

7. Community Plan- AR has sent an Initial application to Foundation Scotland to fund the work. AT submitted an application to the Highland Council discretionary fund. It was thought that a scoping exercise to carefully understand how people wish to be consulted would be helpful in the first instance prior to developing a full plan. NG discussed that the planned creation of a new website by MCDC might benefit from the scoping exercise to understand how the community communicates with each other. Learning from the Killundine project all agreed that it would be helpful to understand how developing projects can consult and communicate in the future. AR stated that a good website requires it to be adaptable to meet the communities' needs.

8. Village tidy- No update for this meeting.

9. Killundine Update - AF summarised the process and outcome of the Killundine Project

Morvern Community Woodlands along with other members of the community and independent advisors had worked to develop a viable plan that delivered benefits to the community. These objectives had been identified in the consultation meetings and earlier community meetings about land management in Morvern. With the support of other members of the community and people elsewhere in Scotland MCW had raised the £2.5M to buy the estate and negotiated an approach that would have delivered the estate into community ownership by March 2021. Further fundraising was in process, which would have brought in sufficient funding to initiate redevelopment of the estate, releasing the capital in the forestry plantations and providing direct employment as well as housing and environmental restoration. A plan to regenerate the farm and hill ground in partnership with charitable partners was in development.

MCW went through the process to attempt to purchase Killundine following guidance provided by the Scottish Government. Prior to purchase, MCW registered a Community Right to Buy on the land, which was supported by a petition of 10% of local voters. Following this, a consultation exercise led by external consultants was gone through, involving community meetings in Lochaline and Drimnin at the start and at the end, and a submission for funding to the Scottish Land Fund was made. The MCW membership (over 120 people from the local community) was also asked for their opinion. The directors at the time received positive feedback from the vast majority of MCW members. The process of developing an application to Scottish Land Fund (SLF) also identified likely points of contention which were addressed as much as possible in the plan. Normally, a SLF application would have required a ballot before it was awarded funding. In this case, the ballot had been arranged but was cancelled by the electoral office at the start of the Covid outbreak and the Land Fund awarded £1M funding on the basis that sufficient community support had been ascertained through the community consultation carried out by independent consultants.

Following the SLF decision to offer funding, the MCW board took some time to consider whether it would be possible to fundraise the remaining £1.7M in less than 5 months with no funding or staff to do this. After considering the options and getting external advice, the board decided that it was unlikely, but might be possible, and nothing would be lost by attempting to raise the funds. MCW were careful to ensure that this did not put any impact on existing local funders like Morvern Community Trust or local people and concentrated on looking for funding from a benefactor or charitable trust who would bring in funds from outside Morvern. Once the decision to progress with the fundraising had been taken, MCW pursued finding out whether a ballot could be conducted. This was not an easy process, as the electoral office had diminished resources and was at first not in a position to answer the question about if and when a ballot could take place. The Land Fund made it clear that a ballot was not required to access the funding offered but the MCW trustees felt that without a positive ballot result the project could not succeed. After lockdown was eased, it became clear that it would be possible to hold a ballot by using a third party, Civica, and following some fundraising to pay the additional cost for holding the ballot in this way MCW went forward with organising it. The time that had elapsed meant that the ballot could just be squeezed in before the deadline for raising the additional funds 31st October 2020.

Due to Covid restrictions, MCW trustees and members were largely unable to hold consultation events to tie in with the ballot and update local people on the Killundine project. There were 103 votes in favour and 142 against. This was a turnout of 72.5% from an electorate of 338, giving a proportion of 42% in favour and 58% against.

10. Nature Scot invites expressions of interest for purchase of land at Glencripesdale.

Closing date for expressions of interest - April 5th 2021. <https://www.nature.scot/enjoying->

[outdoors/naturescot-nature-reserves/glencripesdale-nature-reserve](https://www.morverncc.co.uk/outdoors/naturescot-nature-reserves/glencripesdale-nature-reserve). MCC are not the right organisation to take on community ownership themselves. MCC will distribute this notice within the community encouraging any group that is interested to take this up within the deadline. MCC are also in regular contact with Sunart CC as required in case a joint approach is beneficial. In the case of potential future ownership by RSPB, MCC will seek to secure maximum community benefit in areas such as local employment opportunities, local/community engagement and involvement in management decisions for the reserve, public access and a commitment from the owners to work with the community, other neighbours and the local DMG.

11. Police Update (subsequently received by email) Covid - Everyone must stick with the guidance being issued by the Scottish Government regarding social distancing, mask wearing etc. We will be doing increased Licensed Premises checks in the coming weeks to ensure the regulations are being adhered to. As it stands they should not be allowing entry to the premises after 2130hrs and must have the doors closed at 2230hrs. Can we remind all to make sure you lock up your sheds, work sites, houses and cars etc lock away bikes and tools and if possible make sure all serial numbers noted and mark your property. There have been a few thefts in Lochaber in recent weeks, nothing here so lets hopefully keep it that way.
12. MCDC Update- AF noted that the last MCDC meeting minutes were not available yet. It was recognised that the timing and process of high level information sharing between MCDC and MCC for the community is not currently satisfactory and has yet to be finalised.
13. SS noted that the charity Urram has been created to provide homecare and further develop the site at Dail Mhor. Consultation packs will be dropped off at the local shops and medical centre in the next few days to start the conversation about this.
14. Co-options. The council thanked AF and MS who resigned at the end of the meeting. The council discussed co-options and agreed the need for new members. Agreed that Sec/Chair would confirm or position over co-options and youth membership etc with Highland Council and , and then seek EOI from the community for such co-options to be proposed at our next meeting
15. The meeting was closed.
16. **With the recent resignation of two of our councillors, MCC is looking to make up to four co-options to become full voting members of the Council until the next scheduled interim elections (due in the spring of 2021). We would be particularly keen to encourage representation from different geographical areas and interest groups within the area. Councillors must live in Morvern and be named on the Electoral roll. We meet, currently by ZOOM, once a month and take on other roles on a voluntary basis as and when we can. Additionally, MCC would very much like to welcome up to 2 youth members between the ages of 16 -18, who must live in Morvern and would become full voting members of the Council.**

If anyone is interested please contact Angus Robertson (Chair) or Annie Tordoff (Secretary) at [morverncc@gmail.com](mailto:morverncc@gmail.com)

