

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

MONDAY 4 DECEMBER 2017

**Present** : Jim Bolton, Alasdair Firth, Teresa Bolton, Andrew Baxter (HC), Angie Campbell, Police Scotland (part) and 21 members of the public.

**Apologies** : Susan Taylor, Martin Sampson, Lesley Smart, David Campbell, John Hodgson.

1. Prior to the meeting, Jim passed on the Council's congratulations to Ardnamurchan High School who recently won the Scotland wide Enterprising Maths Challenge. This competition involved schools from across the country and many of those in the final were top independent and public schools with many more pupils than AHS. It is a real achievement for such a small, rural school to win such a prestigious competition.

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

As the Council is non quorate, last month's minutes cannot be approved. Whilst the meeting will go ahead, no decisions can be made tonight but will be deferred to the next meeting in February.

### **3. Matters Arising**

- **Phone Boxes** – one idea is for a cashpoint to be installed which has been done successfully elsewhere. It was felt that in such a remote area, faults would be difficult to get repaired so probably not a viable option. A decision on its future to be made at the February meeting.
- **Dal Mhor** – Teresa and Susan attended a public meeting on this last month. Unfortunately, there is little of substance to report – repairs are ongoing. Tracy Ligema, the NHS representative raised hopes for a future health hub incorporating elderly care, GP provision, nursing etc which she encouraged the community to support in terms of working with the NHS and Highland Council (HC) on developing plans for this within the next six months. However it soon became very clear there was no money available and it would be for the community to pursue funding streams. In terms of residents returning, she was non-committal, even when questioned on a recent meeting when closure of a number of care homes across Highland was mooted. A small working group has been established to work with NHS Highland and HC to reach a satisfactory outcome. Jenni Hodgson and Teresa are part of this.
- **Forestry Boardwalk** – A number of people met with Kirsty Mann from Forest Enterprise on site to discuss this. It was agreed access would be restored but this might not be in the form of a boardwalk. She will meet with Jeff Forrester, who is running the Scottish Water project, to discuss options, and report back.
- **Peninsula Meetings** – Jim is liaising with the other Community Councils on this. The future of the Corran Ferry and Dal Mhor are two issues which may benefit from a joint approach.

### **4. Finance**

- One payment of £69-48 to Jim Bolton for ink cartridges.

- MCT application for Pensioners' lunch successful.
- Certificate from Erskine Charity for recent donation will be put up in Lochaline Village Hall.
- Balance £9566-59.

## 5. Over 60s Lunch

All preparations in hand.

## 6. Drimnin Haul Road

- The Drimnin Community held a meeting on 27 November 2017 which discussed this (amongst other matters.) This morning MCC were provided with an extract of draft minutes pertaining to the haul road taken by Shirley Shaw. The Community Council has also received a statement from the landowners, again today, outlining their position. Jim read both documents out verbatim to the meeting, as they had yet to be distributed to the community.
- These minutes were lengthy but outlined the presentation by Frank MacCulloch, Arvikaconsult Ltd on four options for the extraction of timber, namely :
  - Upgrade of B849 public road
  - Construction of high road between Drimnin and Barr
  - Helicopter extraction
  - Sea extraction.
- The minutes then detailed each option in more detail and the numerous comments made in respect of these options. It became clear that at present the only possible option was sea extraction. Following various sites being discounted the favoured one is at Glenmorvern, although no approach has been made to the landowner nor any scientific work been carried out to see if indeed it is a viable location.
- The option of a possible compulsory purchase by Highland Council of the relevant piece of Killundine was put forward which would enable a high road to be put back on the table.
- It was agreed that landowners and HTTF would finance a scoping study of sea extraction options.

It soon became clear that many people in the hall did not consider the minutes to be accurate and in some respects were not a true reflection of what was said. Alasdair, who was at the meeting, confirmed no vote had been taken on any proposal. Jim suggested that the minutes should be made available to all those present and the minutes amended as appropriate. Shirley to Email/action this.

- **Questions/comments taken from the floor**
  - Martin Gale made several points :
    - a. HC made clear any opinions expressed by the community must be done through the Community Council so disappointing Frank MacCulloch not present tonight as thought.
    - b. Reference to BSW Timber in minutes – MG clarified his role as Chairman of BSW Timber Group. Three years ago, he was asked by many of the Drimnin Community to co-ordinate and be the lead voice on this issue due to his background and knowledge of the timber trade. He does

not believe there is a conflict of interest as BSW is part of CFI and works within those industry guidelines. In addition it would be unusual for any timber not be put on the open market competitively. In respect of the West Pier Iggesund are obliged to allow anyone to use the pier as it was renovated by grant money.

- Davy Shaw queried David Campbell's position – Jim will respond to this later.
- Clarification sought that next presentation should be to MCC, not Drimnin Community. (Alasdair Firth)

### **Jim responded**

- He did not feel the report was particularly helpful as there is very little detail – questioned cost if public money was used. Clearly this issue is something for the whole community's view, not just Drimnin. The options of a haul road or sea extraction are down to the landowners and to put it bluntly the landowners should be putting their hands in their pockets. As to the public road, Jim's personal view is no traffic over a certain weight should be allowed. He also thinks it is unfortunate that this issue appears to be causing great upset, unpleasantness and divide amongst the Drimnin community, who should be working together.
- Conflict of Interest - Jim stated that one of the landowners, David Campbell cannot take part in any discussions on this subject. Similarly, anyone else who has a conflict of interest, or may have, should think very carefully before becoming involved.
- Community Buyout of Killundine Estate or compulsory purchase of part thereof - The latter is unlikely to succeed as Killundine would not agree. The benefits of the former would be removal of traffic from the B849 and creation of an emergency access but this would only be suitable for 4x4s.
- Sea option could look into a skyline crossing the public road.
- The Community Council's role is to try and ensure the whole community pull together not fall out with each other.

### **Further comments from the floor**

- Community Buyout/Compulsory Purchase
  - Possible Community Buyout of Killundine Estate or compulsory purchase of the strip of land required for the road.
  - Martin Gale reported that of the 72 residents in favour of a high road, 45 have said they support road alignment and would welcome further investigation into possible compulsory purchase of the strip of land that would make this possible.
  - Mike Foulis said that if we went down the Community Buyout, we could use recent legislation (new Part 3A of Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003) which allows for community right to buy abandoned, neglected or detrimental land. Jim commented that MCT could perhaps be approached as possible ultimate owners if this is pursued.
  - Rhonda Newsham – was vocal at last meeting because believes anything other than high road will tear Drimnin Community apart therefore buy out is best option.

- Majority would be in favour of a high road but Killundine is the stumbling block which a buyout would solve.
- Andrew Baxter's view - any compulsory purchase has to be supported by the full Highland Council and in his view they are unlikely to support this. HC Solicitors would be hesitant because landowner would object leading to a public enquiry and resulting legal costs.
- Sea Option
  - Jonathan Moseley, representing Glenmorvern addressed the meeting. He "objects to any proposals making use of a floating pier to extract timber by sea along any length of the Morvern coastline." He further stated that any solution must be sustainable and not a short term fix. Sites under consideration are home to several endangered species and any floating pier site would be an industrial site with all that entailed in terms of Health and Safety requirements, pollution risks etc. His view is the only acceptable solution is for a high level forest track which the landowners should sort out as they are the only ones to benefit from the timber extraction. He also supports further investigation of a community compulsory purchase option under The Scotland Act 2015 whereby landowners actions or inactions create significant disadvantage to the community.
  - Davy Shaw questioned why a sea option could not be one running through Drimnin Estate past the Chapel to the sea.
- Still concern over fourth timber "Trial". MCC have received no correspondence from HC on this.
- Davy Shaw asked what the value of timber in the forests will be - £15m over 10 years (MG). Jim expressed a personal view that it sticks in craw that landowners can dip their hands in the public purse to allow them to make such profits.
- Martin Gale asked that minutes fully reflect what has happened. Teresa responded that the minutes will be an accurate record of this evening's meeting.

## **7. Highland Councillor Report**

- Awaiting Scottish Government's budget announcement but HC need to make savings of £150m over the next 5 years. Andrew is arguing that some areas should be protected, including the roads budget. This is currently in 4.1m arrears and winter maintenance has been cut by 30%.
- Schools budget likely to be protected
- Biggest challenge is meeting costs of capital projects agreed many years ago to protect jobs in the Highlands and now left with unsustainable costs of increased borrowing.

## **8. Police Report**

- 30mph speed limit in Drimnin – vehicles have slowed down but then straight back to 60mph. Alasdair said reported strong feeling in community for the whole road to be 40mph which was supported by Angie. She also agreed with residents that other side of 30mph signs could be blank rather than show 60mph.
- Still pushing for 20mph zone around primary school to be extended west on Drimnin Road – Andrew Baxter will contact Roads Dept. and MCC will support Angie on this.

- Crime low – success in reporting one individual for recent thefts on peninsula result of local communities helping in this.
- Christmas Drink Driving campaign – Six in last 7 months numbers reported highest in recent years on peninsula. Reminded if drinking don't take car or drive the following day – limit is 22 which equates to about ¾ pint.

9. **Planning** - Nil

10. **Correspondence**

- **Transport Forum Minutes** – included possibility of electronic signs at Corran Ferry, a designated walkway onto the ferry and a cycle rack. Also stated that Lochaline/Fishnish ferry on the only Calmac route not to show an increase in traffic.
- Health and Social Care Minutes
- **Corran Ferry** – Decision needs to be made soon regarding a ferry or fixed crossing. Studies funded by Scottish Government will be starting in New Year Andrew will be conducting a peninsula wide survey of residents' views, probably through De Tha Dol? in February and he will be also seeking views from each community.
- Highland Senior Citizens Winter Newsletter
- **CMal Consultation on Ferry Berth improvements at Lochaline** – received today. Will request extension to 28 day consultation period as once again being carried out over the Christmas/New Year period.
- **Lochaber Transport Forum** – requesting, via Kate Forbes MSP, a full Parliamentary review of West Highland rail line to protect the future of Scotland's rural economy.

11. **MCDC**

Jim has formally resigned. Alasdair and Susan are MCC reps. AGM in January will allow for others to join Board if there are vacancies – Martin keen to do this.

12. **Items from Councillors**

War Memorials – Teresa pursuing funding options for this.

13. **Items from the Public** – Nil

14. **Any Other Business** – Nil

**Date of Next Meeting – no council meeting in January; next meeting Monday 5 February in Lochaline Village Hall.**