

Assynt Community Council
25 May 2017
Community Room, Lochinver Village Hall
7.30pm

Approved Minutes

1) Present:

K Anderson (KA), A Dickson (AD), M Hutchison (MH), R Kerr (RK), P Jones (PJ), V Ling (VL), D McBain (DM), H Morrison Highland Councillor (HM), D Slator Chair (DS), J Thomas (JT)

Others Present:

Greg Allen (GA), Karl Bonnie, Matt Stringer (MS)

2) Apologies:

L Taylor (LT)

3) Expressions of Interest

There were none.

4) Minutes of previous meeting:

AD asked that the wording be changed regarding the refurbishment of the bus shelter. He is still in the process of applying for discretionary funding.

HM pointed out that there is already a budget in place for bus shelters.

Action - PJ to remind DS to bring up this matter at the meeting with David Summers on 29th May.

AD proposed the amended draft minutes be approved and JT seconded.

Matters Arising:

i DS has been in touch with Scottish Water and the contractors have confirmed in writing they will carry out the agreed work on the Leisure Centre Car Park. They are currently repairing patches along the coast road following water mains work.

ii Geopark have been approached to place a plaque at Strone Hill viewpoint (identifying the surrounding peaks) and the ACC is now happy to leave the matter in their hands.

iii AD believes the aerial on the ice plant is to be relocated to stand alongside the masts on the water tanks.

iv DS reported that there has only been one local enquiry to the First Responders scheme. VL felt this might be due to the timing, following on directly from the removal of weekend medical cover at the surgery. MH pointed out that there is some confusion at the different role of First Aider and First Responder. DM suggested producing a FAQ document, and the option of placing forms in local shops later in the year so anyone interested can register their name was also considered.

Action - To be shelved for the summer but raised again as an agenda item in October.

v DS reported that Margaret is happy for there to be an AED located at Achmelvich camp site.

Action - The matter to be discussed again in June.

vi DS is to discuss the PTS with other members of the NW Sutherland CC Forum.

MS left the meeting.

vii AD reported that the proposed new ATM at the Village Hall is now programmed to be installed hopefully by August. AD is currently investigating as to whether a glazed shelter can be erected to cover the ATM users.

viii The relocation of the dog waste bin next to the Play Park has still not been resolved. AD has shared advertisements locally for the Village Officer role to replace Ronald Fleming. It was felt generally that HC had been remiss in the time taken to advertise and fill this vacancy. KA pointed out that the litter bins along the waterfront have also been removed resulting in litter overflowing from the dog waste bins.

MS returned to the meeting.

AD asked why HC sent a pick-up truck all the way from Brora to uplift an unwanted mattress from Achmelvich when there is a HC pick-up available operated by the Harbour Division. HM pointed out that it might well be a case of compartmentalisation. He added that waste bins have been removed from various lay-bys along the NC 500 As well and felt the matter should be brought up with Andy Shaw who is responsible for Waste Management.

It was agreed that the appointment of a Village Officer will address some of these concerns.

Action - DS to raise the issue at the next NW Sutherland CC Forum meeting.

JT asked that the ACC write a letter of thanks to Linda and Ian Macleod who regularly carry out voluntary litter collection in the area.

Action - DS to obtain their details from JT.

ix VL referred to the Resilient Communities Fund application process.

Action - VL to pursue this once her work on the ACC Web Site is complete.

x VL feels strongly that there are problems with the Out of Hours Medical Cover system that are not necessarily being recorded or passed on to the ACC. This is particularly the case when a call-out is not deemed necessary following contact with NHS Direct on the 111 number.

JT agreed that there is a general feeling the excellent service we enjoyed is gradually being eroded.

Action - VL to explore the situation further and coordinate complaints if necessary.

xi DS has pursued the matter of the locked charity container at Torbreck Transfer Station. It is owned by New-Start Scotland, and after much deliberation it was agreed no further action be taken due to the legal responsibilities and liabilities.

5) Financial Report

KA read out the latest statement.

Business Instant Access Reserve Account: £4274.07

Business Current Account: £172.55

6) Correspondence

There were two planning applications - no objections.

PJ has received an email from Boyd Alexander who is the new CALLP Scheme Manager. An opening ceremony for the Glen Canisp Nature Trail is due to be held on Saturday 3rd of June and PJ will place posters locally. Boyd has also offered to attend an ACC meeting to give an update on the scheme.

Action - PJ to invite Boyd to attend in August or September.

7) Community Services

There is a meeting scheduled for Monday 29th May with Graham Mackenzie and the ACC to address various outstanding issues. DS has received an email from John Clark giving updates on some of the scheduled work and this document will be used as a basis for these discussions.

The cattle-grid at the Glac was identified as one particularly aggravating issue given that it has still not been attended to 18 years after HC first decided it needed replacing. HM believes the matter should have been better managed given that there are trained teams already responsible for cattle grid replacement.

The cancellation of the late bus from Ullapool to Lochinver will also be discussed with David Summers on the 29th. GA has a particular problem with this and had attended the meeting under the misapprehension that the bus service was to be discussed in detail at the current meeting.

VL suggested individuals with personal grievances as a result of the cancelled service be invited to attend Monday's meeting but the committee felt this would be unwise, especially as there might well be some in the community who feel excluded if not invited.

Action - GA to pass on his details to VL so David Summers is made aware of how the cancellation has affected all members of the community.

GA left the meeting.

VL suggested the meeting with David Summers be structured in such a way that he is asked to account for his gross mismanagement of the situation (back to when the school transport service was curtailed in January 2016) before he has a chance to offer a solution which may well put the onus on the local community.

8) Geopark and Rockstop

After some discussion it was agreed the replacement doors be painted white.

DM has been invited to give the ACC a quarterly update on other Geopark activities at future meetings.

9) Competitive Tendering

and

10) ACC Website update

Following recent attempts to resurrect the ACC website, there had been concerns regarding the cost of set up and the way in which a contract was awarded for this work.

DS reported that a signed contract had been obtained a year ago when the website was first discussed. Although there had been differences of opinion regarding the need for a website, the issue of tendering had not been raised at the time. It was agreed a year trial be carried out on the basis of the initial quotation for set up and this is already under way. But future maintenance will be put out for tendering.

The intricacies of competitive tendering were then discussed in detail. Tenders have to be discussed in private rather than in public, names of individual tenders must remain anonymous (but reputation as well as price are factors to consider) and there must be a level playing field for all concerned when tenders are being invited.

Action - JT to draw up a policy document to allow this to be taken further.

11) Campervan Facilities update

This matter has now been passed to Discover Assynt.

12) Deer on Culag Park

MH reported that it is no longer possible to teach PE or have after-school sports activities on the Games Field due to the large amount of deer droppings. The ACA owns the land and has been made aware of the situation.

AD has spoken to Elaine McAskill of CALL and she has indicated that ACA may be in a position to apply to CALL for a Community Grant for deer fencing the Park.

Action - MH to contact Elaine and look at processing a grant application.

13) Sheep at Stoer Cemetery

Action - DM to fit new sheep scarers.

14) Policy regarding use of public funds for gifts

The committee agreed this not be done in future.

15) Review of Bench Replacement Scheme

In the previous meeting DS had asked for feedback on the current state of local benches.

JT has agreed that the Assynt News will replace one of the benches alongside the Culag River.

KA has spoken to Nick Gorton and the Inver Lodge has offered to replace the bench at the foot of their hill.

JT reported that the bench at Strone Hill viewpoint has been put back in place after it fell down the nearby slope. This is one of several donated over the years and the cost of maintenance is an ongoing issue in many cases.

16) AOCB:

i DS asked for an update on the locations of future meetings.

PJ replied as follows:

June - Drumbeg Village Hall : July - no meeting : August - Lochinver : September - Stoer Village Hall ; then October to Spring 2018 : Lochinver.

Action - PJ to include venues of the next meeting in the Assynt News when minutes are published. PJ also to place a notice in the Drumbeg Hotel advertising June's meeting.

ii HC have received a petition from shop owners along Lochinver Main Street and residents who live above these premises complaining about inconsiderate campervan owners who park their vehicles on the street and leave them there for hours at a time. As well as an eyesore, they take away valuable parking spaces from prospective shoppers and for those who need access to their homes.

One suggestion was the placement of a sign to prohibit campervan owners from leaving their vehicles unattended in this way. John Clark has already passed on the matter to Golspie.

MS replied that legally the only solution would be to apply for a maximum stay notice - but this would apply to all vehicles. In certain places, permits are issued to residents allowing them special parking rights.

MS has also been asked to look at vehicles speeding down the Glac on the approaches to Lochinver. Certain fish lorry drivers have already been identified and the matter has been taken up with the Transport Managers concerned. A 20 mph speed limit was not seen as a viable solution, but it was suggested a 'smiley-face' sign might serve as a reminder to drivers to watch their speed.

The meeting closed at 21.10.

The next meeting will take place on June 29th at Drumbeg Village Hall.

PJ May 2017

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