

Assynt Community Council

25 October 2018
 Rhu Stoer Village Hall
 7.30pm
 Approved Minutes

1) Present:

K Anderson (KA), M Hutchison Chair (MH), P Jones (PJ), R Kerr (RK), V Ling (VL), D Slator (DS), L Taylor (LT)

Others Present:

J Jennett Highland Council (JJ), I Jackson, Education Officer, Care and Learning, Highland Council (IJ) and 3 members of the public

2) Apologies:

K Currie Highland Councillor (KC), A Pellant Assynt Development Trust (AP), D McBain (DM), J Thomas (JT)

3) Expressions of Interest:

None.

4) Minutes of September Meeting and Matters arising:

DS proposed the minutes be accepted and MH seconded.

Matters arising were as follows:

- **4 i. Litter**

The pick-up scheduled for 29th September was cancelled due to weather conditions but some volunteers were able to carry out some litter collection.

- **iii. Playpark:**

LT pointed out that he and JT had taken it upon themselves to repair the fence numerous times in the past whenever it was damaged by foul weather or other means after HC failed to respond to their requests. VL pointed out that since the Kirk Road Playpark is on HC land they are responsible for ensuring it is a safe environment for children to use and should be held to account. With this in mind it was agreed HC should be instructed to erect a deer-proof fence as soon as possible.

Action: PJ to make this an agenda item for early 2019.

- **x. NC500 (Drumbeg)**

LT is still receiving photographs highlighting the problems. The intention is to pass these on to HIE or representatives of the NC500

- **7 ii Parking outside the Surgery and the Caberfeidh:**

Action: LT to check with Robin Pope of HC regarding their plans for an Electric Vehicle Chargingpoint as some of the signage identifying appropriate parking places could be incorporated into the proposed EVC sign.

- **11 Toilet Closures Update:**

MH attended a meeting with HC and representatives of other community councils where officials of HC were made aware of the strength of feeling regarding their proposals to close a number of public toilets in

North-West Sutherland. At the HC meeting that followed to reappraise this issue, KC proposed an amendment that HC's initial decision be drastically revised as it was based on flawed information but her objection was dismissed by the meeting.

William Gilfillan has since confirmed that the toilet block currently in use in Gairloch will be relocated to Achmelvich once their new facilities are in place. The transfer has been approved but there is currently no timeline in place - indeed, the planning applications for Gairloch's new toilet facilities have yet to be lodged with HC. There were also concerns that this block will be a community asset transfer if and when it is moved to Achmelvich. At the initial consultation meeting with Debbie Sutton of HC, Sarah-Anne MacLeod and Jorine van Delft had offered to carry out the day-to-day maintenance of the new facilities, but the matter of asset transfer was never raised.

Kylesku toilets which currently operate full-time will be sold with a condition of sale being that the new owner runs a toilet there, but again there is no clear timescale. HC have already given notice to terminate the employment of the person responsible for cleaning this facility but initial plans to close these on 31st October have been put on hold since discussions regarding the sale are ongoing. There were concerns that the aforementioned condition of sale may not be enforceable and new owners might not maintain the facility as a public toilet.

The meeting gave MH their full support in continuing to press William Gilfillan for more meaningful information on this issue and to ensure both facilities at Achmelvich and Kylesku remain open.

- **iv Defibrillators:**

Action: DS to obtain prices for signs clarifying the location of local defibrillators (3 for Lochinver, and 1 each for Stoer, Drumbeg and Elphin).

- **10 Centenary Fields Status**

MH is still in the process of applying for funding on behalf of the ACC and has been asked to clarify the name of the site of the village playpark. It was suggested it be called 'Memorial Park'

- **v Bus Timetable**

DS is awaiting David Summers' response following the later schedule of the City Link service.

Action: DS to chase this up with David Summers.

- **6 i Forestry Grant Scheme Application.**

PJ has responded on behalf of the ACC offering full support for the Ledbeg Planiting Proposal application by the Assynt Foundation.

5) Stoer School Closure Update

JJ referred to the ACC meeting held in Drumbeg when it was agreed to take another look at the options regarding the future of Stoer School which has now been closed for 2 years. There are difficulties in justifying the school remaining moth-balled indefinitely. The alternative is to apply for a statutory notice of closure and JJ gave a brief explanation of the process and consequences of this approach.

Consultations with the local community will take place at various points during the process before any formal closure takes place. The building will then be offered to the local community for purchase before being placed on the open market.

There were concerns that the permanent closure of the school might make the Stoer peninsula a less attractive destination for young couples looking to settle in the area. However, there is already anecdotal evidence that children from the Stoer catchment area have benefited from being transferred to Lochinver Primary due to the opportunity to mix with a larger school population. The general consensus was that there would be no objection if the school should no longer remain moth-balled.

IJ left the meeting.

6) Financial Report

KA gave the latest figures: Business Current acc - £103.75
Instant Access acc - £6077.24

VL suggested some of the funds be spent on a project that would benefit the local community.

Action: PJ to include in the agenda for November along with any funding applications from local groups or individuals due for consideration before the year end.

7) Correspondence

i PJ referred to the email from a researcher at the University of Edinburgh inviting volunteers to participate in a sociological study regarding the Caplich Wind Farm planning application.

Action: PJ to advertise the invitation more widely.

ii VL referred to the proposed closure of the Unapool Polling Station that will require local electors to travel to Drumbeg to register their vote. It was agreed that the ACC should object to this proposal.

Action: VL to broadcast this on social media and PJ to add to November's agenda in order that a response can be agreed upon and actioned before the cut-off date of 10th December.

8) Response to Planning Applications

There were no issues to discuss.

It was noted that the rejected planning application for Stoer Church has since been approved following an appeal.

9) Local Issues (Stoer)

There have been numerous instances of mains water supplies being interrupted due to burst pipes.

RK referred to the reaction on Facebook and reports that Scottish Water are planning to replace the pipeline to Clashmore, Clashnessie and Raffin.

DS confirmed that Trish Wilson (Community Liaison Officer for Scottish Water) has a project team looking at this issue but there is no definite timetable yet in place.

Action: DS to email for further details and PJ to advise everyone involved of their rights and how to claim compensation for interrupted supplies.

10) Clashnessie Footpath

Local landowners Mr and Mrs Kershaw were in attendance and asked to make a statement to the ACC regarding their woodland application to the Forestry Commission and their subsequent meeting with Matt Dent of HC.

This meeting was arranged to clarify outstanding points regarding the route (now the land is brackern-free), to discuss in more detail the nature of their agreed commitment to keep the route open and clear, their legal rights and liabilities and to discuss the gates at either end of the route. They felt it regrettable that the ACC had discussed this issue following this meeting without them being invited to present their case.

VL explained that ACC had an issue with Matt Dent as Footpath Officer rather than with the landowners. The ACC should have been involved in the consultation of December 2017 on proposed core paths but were not. Matt Dent had approached ACC on 24th May about reinstalling the sign at the beach which had

previously been removed by a resident. After discussion and consultation, the ACC agreed that the sign would be clearer the other way up and asked Matt Dent to implement this. Matt Dent produced a draft reorientation of the sign, which was agreed by ACC. However, his promise to re-orientate the sign was rescinded on 1st August because it would involve the entire consultation process being carried out again. This was when ACC first heard of the core paths consultation. Matt Dent had acknowledged this but was unable to explain why ACC was not on the mailing list.

Action: VL to contact Matt Dent again (and to copy in Mr and Mrs Kershaw) explaining that the ACC and the landowners are both in agreement that the sign should be reorientated as agreed initially between the ACC and HC.

11) Community Services

The following were discussed:

i Winter Gritting Programme

Graham Mackenzie has forwarded his proposals for this winter's gritting programme but there are a number of matters to be clarified.

Tracy Urry agreed that the Ullapool gritter would cover the section of road between Ledmore and Craggie in order to relieve the workload of the Lochinver gritters. This does not appear to have been taken account of in the latest proposals. It was also confirmed that there would be local consultation before the timings of the gritting schedules were finalised but these have not been discussed with the local community.

Action: DS to get back to Graham Mackenzie regarding the above.

ii Cattle Grid near the Glac

This is still scheduled to be replaced at the end of this year.

iii Winter Resilience Programme

LT suggested we participate in this scheme that provides salt bins, hi-vis vests and shovels for local volunteers to clear sections of roads/footpaths that are not covered by HC's road crew on a regular basis. It was agreed, however, that any requirement to attend a training course would be rejected.

Action: LT to follow this up and any requests for specific salt bins to be made through him.

iv Road signs at Ardvreck Castle warning of pedestrians

Action: LT to pursue.

v The split in the Duke's Stone

KA has asked Robbie Ardroy to look at repairing this.

vi Glac Junction

VL pointed out that the extreme left-hand verge of this junction needs resurfacing after Scottish Water left the site.

Action: LT to investigate.

12) AOCB

i DS referred to Community Care Assynt's Resilience Plan and it was suggested a similar plan be drawn up for the entire community listing buildings that could be used in an emergency, key holders, etc.

Action: DS to obtain the template used by Lairg Community Council for their own resilience plan and see if it can be used.

ii KA asked why the price of fuel at the Spar in Lochinver is higher than in any other petrol stations in the area.

Action: MH to contact Sean Rooney for more clarification.

iii MH, attended a Steering Group meeting on the Community Council Scheme Review, on behalf of ACC on 9th October. Feedback from the recent HC consultation, provided early messages on CC boundaries, membership and roles. There was consensus within the Group that

- local community councils did not wish to merge with neighbouring councils
- CCs should consider strategies to encourage youth membership
- CCs need more power and associated back-up administration services if they are to become meaningful within their communities.

There will be further discussion/review, working towards developing proposals, at the next steering group meeting (before the end of 2018) and at a Pan-Highland Community Council event, for all community councillors, in Dingwall on 24th November

DS pointed out that HC are looking to devolve certain powers to local community groups, but there is still a need for a central support network.

iv RK reported that an application by the 'Cludgie' Group for funding has been successful and there are plans for campervan facilities to be located next to the Leisure Centre in Lochinver. This will bring in much-needed revenues and also allow the car park to be repaired. AP was commended for his efforts and MH then read out a brief update on the status of other Assynt Development Trust projects.

v VL confirmed that the Assynt Community Council website is now up and running but is incomplete. It can be accessed here - <http://www.assyntcommunitycouncil.org.uk>

vi JJ reported back to the ACC on behalf of Rockstop.

Pete Harrison is looking to place a geopod in the local area. It was agreed this be located at the top of Strone.

Action: JJ to go ahead with the necessary planning application.

JJ then went through the re-evaluation exercise.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 29th November at the Committee Room of Lochinver Village Hall at 19.30.

PJ October 2018

Contact us here - assyntcc@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook - Assynt Community Council

or visit our website - <http://www.assyntcommunitycouncil.org.uk>

Proposed dates for remaining 2018 ACC meetings (subject to change):

November 29th : Lochinver

December : *No meeting*