

Assynt Community Council
31st May 2018
Drumbeg Village Hall
7.30pm
Minutes (Approved 28th June)

1) Present:

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

Others Present:

Jacqelyn Jennett (JJ) (Highland Council), Willie Jack (WJ) (Assynt Development Trust), Adam Pellant (Assynt Development Trust) and 7 members of the public

2) Apologies:

Kirsteen Currie (Highland Councillor) (KC), J Thomas (JT)

3) Expressions of Interest:

There were none.

4) Minutes of April Meeting and Matters arising:

It was confirmed that the draft minutes be made public 7 days after being shared with the community councillors (rather than 5 days as quoted in the original copy of April's draft minutes).

VL then proposed the draft minutes be approved and KA seconded.

Matters arising were as follows:

i. Flooding in Stoer Cemetery:

KC has issued a formal complaint to the Highland Council about the drainage and is awaiting a response.
Action: KC to press further and hopefully report back at the next meeting.

ii. Litter

MH has spoken to the Harbour asking them to collect the litter along their section of roadside.
SNP Sutherland Branch has also offered to help with a clean-up on Saturday 16th June - this will probably start at Badidarrach and work towards the village.

iii. Clashnessie Beach Access:

RK has been in touch with the planning department with regard to obtaining the necessary planning permission.

VL also referred to the sign near the beach car park showing the revised access to Clashnessie Falls. Matt Dent had maintained the map was correct and asked the Community Council's opinion on reinstalling it. It was agreed it would be better the other way up to make it easier for visitors to locate the path.

Action: RK to continue processing the planning application.

Action: VL to report back to Matt Dent with a suggestion that the sign be redesigned to make it easier to follow.

iv. Playpark:

Debbie Sutton (HC) has informed LT that both items of equipment currently held in storage will be in-

stalled in the Kirk Road playpark by the end of June. However, the equipment was purchased with a view to installing one item in Kirk Road and the other in the village paypark. LT has made Debbie aware of this but there has been no further communication.

Action: LT to chase up.

v. Cruamer Bench:

Now that Nick Gorton has left Inver Lodge his offer to pay for the repair of the bench no longer applies.

Action: KA to speak to Robert Taylor who was originally due to carry out the repair.

vi. Footpath between Kirk Road and Inverpark:

DS has heard nothing more from Hugh Morrison.

vii. Dog poo bags:

Caroline has supplied the necessary key to JT.

viii. Rock Stop maintenance:

Mark Mackenzie provided the only tender and the ACC agreed to arrange for him to press ahead with the necessary repairs.

Action: DS will inform Rock Stop.

ix. Closure of Public Toilets

Meetings are due to be held in Scourie and Kinlochbervie to discuss the issue. DS referred to the Drum-beg toilets which are not scheduled for closure but which are only open during the tourist season.

Action: MH hopes to attend the meeting on 19th June and will report back.

x. Geopark Representative:

No one has come forward in response to the advertisement

xi. 24hr fuel at the Spar:

Action: LT will continue to press for an update , but Sue Macleod is currently off work.

xii. School Heating:

DS has spoken to the local headmistress and despite visits by HC's maintenance department to inspect the system the problem has not been resolved. Minor repairs have been carried out but HC claim there are no funds for a proper upgrade.

Action: KC to discuss the matter further with the headmistress.

JJ offered to access the Capital Spend Budget plans and see what HC's intentions are to address the problem.

Action: JJ to check and report back her findings to DS.

5) Financial Report:

KA read out the latest figures. Business Current account - £130.74 - Business Instant Access Reserve Account - £7175.77.

6) Correspondence:

There was none.

7) Assynt Development Trust Report:

WJ, Chair of the Assynt Development Trust, gave a brief report on the background to the setting up of the ADT and on its plans for the future.

The first project to erect a deer fence around Culag park has been successfully completed and he passed

on his thanks to the ACC for their donation of £500 to help fund the project.

Two part-time Development Officers have also been appointed: Adam Pellant and Ewan MacLachlin.

The ADT's long-term plans, due to their ability to carry out asset transfers, include affordable housing, job creation schemes, and support for the Discover Assynt tourism provider.

There are plans to set up a waste handling facility for campervan owners alongside one of the approach roads to Lochinver. The proposed site at the Glac has already been cleared and has all the necessary amenities in place, but the land is owned by the Vestey's and there is little prospect of them handing this over to the community other than on a lease basis which will involve a protracted and costly legal process.

It was suggested there might be land owned by HC that they no longer need that could be acquired under a community asset transfer.

8) Local Issues (Drumbeg):

a) NC 500

The problem of campervans parking in passing places and struggling to make speedy progress along single-track sections of road (particularly East of Drumbeg) is a major issue. The road verge is also becoming increasingly eroded due to traffic volumes. Part of the problem is driver education, but also many who visit the area seem oblivious to the fact that many local people need to drive at a reasonable speed in order to arrive in work on time.

A meeting is due to take place with the organisers of the NC 500 during the summer and it was suggested that photographic and anecdotal evidence be obtained to highlight the problems caused by increased traffic and anti-social behaviour.

One practical solution would be for more signage instructing drivers to allow traffic to pass or overtake as well as identifying certain sections of the B869 road as unsuitable for caravans and large campervans.

Action: Drumbeg residents to put together a document and pass on to LT for forwarding to HC.

9) Stoer School Review:

JJ, area care and learning manager for the North, explained the reason for the latest review. The Scottish Government have a policy of not closing rural schools, but Stoer Primary School has stood empty since 2016 due to a fall in pupil numbers and the building is beginning to show signs of neglect. The review is intended to gauge local views on whether the school should be formally closed and the building used for other purposes or remain moth-balled as it is now. Depending on the outcome, full consultation will be carried out before any decisions are made. But given that pupil numbers in Lochinver school are also falling, it is likely that children from the Stoer/Drumbeg catchment area will continue to be sent to Lochinver for the foreseeable future.

Discussion followed on the reasons for the fall in pupil figures, the impact of a formal closure, and ways to attract more families to the area through the development of more affordable housing projects with the possibility at the same time of setting up home-based industries.

It was agreed that for the time being there is no great urgency for Stoer school to be formally closed

10) Allocation of ACC Funds:

This was missed off the planned agenda for May, but it was agreed the process for the allocation of ACC funds now needs to be formalised as agreed in March.

Reference was made to the policy document drawn up by VL and circulated to all ACC members outlining the fairest and most transparent way of processing individual requests for funding. Following further discussion it was agreed that a maximum sum of £5000 of ACC funds be set aside to benefit the community based on ACC income. £1000 would be held in reserve and the remainder split two ways - £2000 available to successful applicants (groups or individuals) requesting funding, £2000 held back for projects that the ACC identifies as requiring urgent action for the enhancement of the area - such as the fencing along Cruamer, replacing damaged fencing, deer fencing around the play parks, etc.

Action: VL to draw up the necessary application documentation and details to be widely advertised on

the website, Facebook and in the Assynt News.

11) Community Services:

i) DS referred to the response from Tracey Urry (Community Services Area Manager) following her meeting with the ACC on Monday 23rd of April. Some progress had been made on complaints raised - including white lining at the Glac Junction, temporary repairs of the cattle grid at the entrance to Lochinver (this will be examined again at the end of this year's tourist season) and confirmation that the salt dump will be relocated to the harbour. The winter roads maintenance policy is still to be reviewed, but the existing two gritters which are almost ten years old are due for replacement and might be augmented by the provision of an additional 4x4 pick-up truck. There was some concerns as to why HC policy involves the replacement of both gritters at the same time rather than with a rolling 5 year interval that might reduce the impact of mechanical failures due to an aging fleet.

Action: LT to study Tracey Urry's response in more detail then report back to DS so a reply on the ACC's behalf can be sent to Tracey.

ii) Other concerns were raised regarding the Glac Junction - in particular the width of the road at the corner where the main road turns onto the B869. Scottish Water has placed cones on either side of the verge which increases the risk of traffic turning left onto this road veering into the middle of the road. Visibility is already restricted along this section of road and the current layout poses a potential hazard to vehicles heading both ways.

Action: DS to contact Scottish Water.

iii) The local police have placed traffic cones along sections of the main road entering Lochinver in lieu of yellow lines to discourage parking.

Action: DS to raise the issue of yellow-lining with Tracey Urry again.

iv) The street lights have not been reprogrammed to take account of longer daylight hours. Alex Dickson had complained to Community Services in the past regarding this issue and the timings were changed accordingly, but there have been no further adjustments made.

Action: LT to take this up with HC.

12) AOCB:

i) Scaffolding is now in place around Lochinver War memorial and work due to commence shortly.

ii) Two film crews will visit Assynt during June. Timetables for both have been published on the ACC facebook page and will appear in the Assynt News.

One crew will be filming at Ardvreck on Friday 1st June and there may be temporary traffic controls in place. And a South Korean crew of approximately 10-20 people will visit Glen Canisp and Lochinver on Tuesday 19th June.

iii) DS referred to the new Data Protection Legislation that has come into effect. In order to comply, the ACC are required to inform all individuals on the current mailing list of the reasons why their details are included on our database, how the information will be stored and used, and offering everyone the option to have their details removed.

Action: PJ to pursue this by contacting all concerned.

The meeting closed at 21.25. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 26th June at Lochinver Village Hall at 19.30 and will also include the AGM.

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

July	<i>No meeting</i>
August 30th	Elpin Village Hall
September 27th	Lochinver Village Hall Committee Room
October 25th	Stoer Village Hall
November 29th	Lochinver Village Hall Committee Room
December	<i>No meeting</i>