

Assynt Community Council

28 March 2019
Elphin Community Hall
7.30pm
Draft Minutes

1) Present:

K Anderson (KA), M Hutchison Chair (MH), P Jones (PJ), R Kerr (RK), L Taylor (LT), J Thomas (JT)

Others Present:

5 members of the public

2) Apologies:

A Dickson (AD), V Ling (VL), A Pellant - Assynt Development Trust (AP), D Slator (DS)

3) Expressions of Interest:

None.

4) Minutes of January Meeting and Matters arising:

Matters arising were as follows:

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

No response to date from Kirsteen Currie.

- **11 Toilet Closures Update:**

MH has received further correspondence from William Gilfillan (WG) regarding the sale of Kylesku toilet. This has now been delayed while a title search takes place but the toilet will remain open.

Achmelvich toilets will also remain open for the next 12 months but the planned upgrade involving the replacement of the existing block with Gairloch's toilet block cannot be completed until the Gairloch community project is completed.

Action: MH to press for updates on HC's plans for Achmelvich after the new financial year begins.

- **10) Community Services iii Stoer Old Cemetery Flooding**

AD has made further enquiries regarding repairs to the cemetery wall and has been told the top stones need holes drilling and angle irons fitting to enable wiring to be put in place. This would dissuade sheep from gaining entry but it is the work of a fencing contractor rather than a dyker. RK pointed out that HC are responsible for graveyard maintenance.

Action: MH to approach David MacPhail or David Tyson to see if they are available to carry out the necessary work and obtain a quote.

- **7) iii Lochinver Bottle Bank**

Another letter has been received regarding the ACC's negative response to a request that the bank adjacent to the kirk in Lochinver be relocated close to the harbour due to the noise. It was suggested the complainant now pursue this issue directly with HC as the ACC's decision remains unchanged.

Action: PJ to reply on the ACC's behalf.

- **10) iii Electric Vehicle Charging Points**

LT reported these should be in operation by the end of May.

Action: PJ to include as an agenda item for May.

- **11) iv Ice Plant**

LT wished to make it clear that the proposed transmitter to replace the aerial cluster at the ice plant will be erected on the crag above the Leisure Centre rather than on the hill above Inver Lodge as reported in the draft minutes.

- **11) v ADT Update**

MH read out an updated report submitted by AP.

All responses to the Draft Housing Needs Survey have now been received. It was agreed there is no need for the ACC to see the results before the final report is drawn up.

Two Community Land Design workshops will take place on 25th/26th April and 30th/31st May. A representative of John Gilberts Architects will also give a presentation at the next AC meeting. Suggestions are still being invited for more efficient ways to use the spare land surrounding the harbour and there is a survey currently doing the rounds for members of the public to participate in this exercise.

The Sustainable Seaweed Farming project has now been registered and there are plans for AP to meet with local creel fishermen to discuss the issue further.

The Cludgie Project is awaiting professional engineering input before any further work can be carried out (which should commence in June or July).

The number of electric bikes for hire from the ADT has now been reduced to 9 as the anticipated match funding has not been forthcoming.

- **7) v Extra Litter Bins**

MH Has been in touch with the ADT again and they have agreed to pay for one bin at an approximate cost of £400 and it was agreed the ACC will pay for a second bin. One will be sited at Bay View car park and the other at the Doctors' car park.

- **7) vi KC report**

JT wished to point out that she and LT had been present at the meetings for the Christmas Lights but were not the only members of the community responsible for the provision of the lights as suggested in the February Draft Minutes.

- **9) Response to Muirden Energy Presentation:**

This is an agenda item for next month when VL and DS will hopefully be able to participate.

JT proposed the draft minutes be approved and MH seconded.

5) Financial Report:

KA gave the latest figures: Business Current acc - £154.22 and Instant Access acc - £8282.71

6) Correspondence:

i PJ has received another email regarding the planned replacement of doors and windows at the Old Bakery. ERG were due to deliver on 25th March and the owner of the property will now chase them for an update.

ii PJ had also received a request from Stoer and Balchladich Grazings Committee regarding the telephone box at Stoer. The door will not close properly so the box is neither windproof nor waterproof. PJ has contacted BT's Customer Payphones Service department and they have raised the fault with one of their engineers. The Secretary of the local Grazings Committee has been informed.

iii A request for support has been received from SALAD (Skye and Lochalsh Airport Discussion) objecting to HC's plans to allocate £170,000 for the further development of a Skye Airport. This is to help bolster the £1m necessary each year to make flights viable. It was agreed these funds could be better spent on maintaining the local roads allowing existing residents and visitors to travel within the area.

Action: PJ to report back on behalf of the ACC.

iv A request for support has also been received from the chairman of the NORoS (No Ring of Steel group) based in Rosehall who are concerned about further windfarm development proposed nearby.

It was agreed any response should be delayed until the matter has been given further consideration at the next ACC meeting. Given that Rosehall community is presumably already in receipt of funding from existing windfarm developments while Assynt receives nothing it would be difficult to offer support at this stage. The transport of turbine equipment between Lochinver Harbour and the proposed site would have an impact on the local community but there would be financial benefits in the long term.

Action: PJ to report back on behalf of the ACC.

v The vice-chair of Nairn River Community Council has requested information regarding the ACC's relationship with HC - and specifically their appointed liaison officer. It was pointed out that there has been no formal notification from HC of who this individual is, but it was presumed our ward manager carries out the role,

Action: PJ to respond on behalf of the ACC.

vi The Calor Rural Community Fund is once again inviting applications from local communities seeking support for deserving projects. There are 21 grants available in total ranging from £1000 to £5000.

Action: PJ to email further information to the representative of Elphin local community.

vii MH has received a complaint regarding the increased number of deer in the village and surrounding areas. There were particular concerns that deer might be able to gain access to the school grounds and playing fields adding to the problem of tick infestation and fouling.

Action: MH to contact the local head-teacher enquiring if deer are proving to be a Health and Safety problem.

Action: PJ to contact Elaine MacAskill of CALL requesting an update on their plans to erect deer fences enabling deer access to be better controlled.

It was pointed out that any concerns regarding deer in the village should be reported to the Service Point. All complaints are recorded and have to be responded to within 21 days. It was also agreed our three Highland Councillors should be informed of the severity of the problem.

Action: PJ to contact all three.

viii MH has received an email, complete with photographic evidence, reporting the dangerous condition of one particular section of road at Inverkirkraig due to potholes.

Again it was suggested this be brought to the attention of HC through the Service Point.

ix Following concerns for job security at the harbour if or when Brexit goes ahead, MH (along with two other community councillors) has been approached by a member of the local community requesting the ACC write to Jamie Stone (MP for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) asking him to vote in favour of Teresa May's withdrawal plan.

It was agreed the ACC has no right to intervene in party politics. It would be impossible to give a balanced representation of every member of the local community given that personal opinions on the issue will vary. It was also pointed out the individual concerned is at liberty to petition Jamie Stone himself, though it was agreed any interference in the Brexit process at this stage is far too late given the anticipated timetable of events.

7) Response to Planning Applications:

There were no contentious issues.

8) Local Issues (Elphin)

The new 30mph restriction appears to be working though speeding traffic is still an issue on the straight section of road within the 40mph zones. There were also concerns that the electronic speed indicator sign is no longer operational.

Action: PJ to report the problem to Joanne Sutherland and to enquire into HC's plans for the temporary 30 mph speed restriction once the trial period is over.

9) Dog Fouling

The problem persists, not only along the main village road but also at the breakwater. MH has received an enquiry from Brora Community Council asking for information on the ACC's attempts to tackle dog fouling.

Action: LT to go ahead and order high-vis paint to mark every occurrence of dog fouling within the village.

Action: PJ to produce posters asking all offending dog owners to behave more responsibly and clear up after their pets.

Action: MH to report back to Brora Community Council.

10) Community Services:

i Winter Road Maintenance

MH received feedback from Tracey Urry shortly after last month's ACC meeting.

The following points were discussed:

Drivers already have discretion to alter the spread rates of the salt when conditions require this.

It was felt this has not been demonstrated to be the case.

Currently there are Ice Alert Sensors based at Oykel Bridge, Knochan, and Kylesku Bridge. Consideration is being given for the installation of an additional sensor at Inchnadamph due to its colder microclimate.

It was suggested extra sensors be sited along the coast route as well.

Action: MH to push for the Inchnadamph sensor as a matter of priority.

The Duty Officers covering the A837 between Ledmore Junction and Craggie have been instructed to liaise regarding the requirement for the gritting of this route to be undertaken by the Ross-shire gritter, when conditions dictate.

This is contrary to what was originally agreed - that the Ullapool gritter should cover this section as a matter of course to take pressure off our local road crews.

Action: MH to bring this up with Tracey Urry.

Following liaison with Ullapool High School, a closer look will be taken at the option for the Assynt-Ullapool school run to start an hour later on those days when severe wintry weather results in the failure of the bus to leave on time.

The ACC will await further updates.

The ACC was pleased to learn that the advertisement for an Assistant Foreman has generated three applicants. However, the recent loss of another member of the gritting crew means there are currently two vacancies.

Action: MH to bring this to Tracey Urry's attention.

11) AOCB:

i RK expressed concern about the general condition of local roads, not only the main routes but the minor coastal roads. There would appear to be no funds currently available for road repairs.

Action: MH to bring the situation to Tracey Urry's attention, given that there have been meetings with representatives of the NC500 to consider the impact of increased traffic on the region's roads.

The meeting closed at 21.15

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 25th April at Lochinver Village Hall.

PJ March 2019

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Proposed dates for all other 2019 ACC meetings (subject to change):

May 30	Drumbeg Village Hall	June 27	Lochinver Village Hall (including AGM)
July	<i>no meeting</i>		
August 29	Lochinver Village Hall	September 26	Rhu Stoer Hall
October 31	Lochinver Village Hall	November 28	Lochinver Village Hall
December	<i>no meeting</i>		