

Shieldaig Community Council

Comhairle Choimhearsnachd Sildeag

Minutes of meeting Tuesday 3rd March 2015

Present: Richard Munday (Chair), Gerry Beard (Secretary), Ann Barton, Donald Gillanders, Duncan Carmichael and Cllr. Audrey Sinclair.

Apologies: Lyndsay Dacker, Gemma Livingstone, Viv Rollo and Inspector Lynda Allan.

1. Minutes of the last meeting

Accepted as the record of the meeting.

2. Matters arising.

Scottish Water

A letter from Cllr Audrey Sinclair has resulted in the welcome confirmation that SW are to replace the cement/asbestos main on the School Brae and associated area during 2015/16. [post meeting note, SW have confirmed that all the remaining sections of old asbestos /cement pipe in the village will be replaced, with the work starting in mid-late March and lasting for c.14-16 weeks].

The new Scottish Water helpline is: 08000 778 778

3. Police matters

Lochcarron Beat report for February 2015

Total number of calls to Police Scotland from beat area in Feb 2015	29
(Feb 2014)	20

No crimes reported from Lochcarron during February

Other Police matters during month:

RTC on A890 at Ledgowan car slid off road in snow no one injured

RTC on A890 at Strathcarron car slid off road in snow, rolled onto it's side, no one seriously injured.

Mountain Rescue in Torridon Range - TMR and helicopter called out to assist climber who had fallen and suffered a head injury. Taken to hospital in Inverness and released after treatment.

Medical matter - Emergency services called to assist male who had injured himself

whilst working cutting down bushes near Torridon Hotel. Incident reported to Health and Safety Executive in Inverness.

4. Kinloch Woodlands Charitable Trust

The Community Council supported the restructuring of the Trust as a S.C.I.O., including the proposed increase in the number of community nominated trustees from 1 to 3. Viv Rollo is a current trustee. The Community Council agreed that Jim Alexander would be an excellent 2nd appointment and asked Viv to consider suggestions for the 3rd.

5. Finance

Report shows a balance of £1,895.59.

6. Community Emergency Plan

A possible framework for a draft Emergency Plan has been circulated to CC Members and is attached. The next step will be wider circulation and a public meeting to coincide with the April CC meeting. A decision will be taken at that meeting whether to proceed with detailed planning in partnership with SSE and other statutory service providers.

7. Campsite

Ruairidh MacLennan has provided the CC with a brief update on his draft plans for the campsite and ongoing negotiations with statutory bodies.

8. West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan

Issues for Shieldaig could include suggestions on possible sites for development, broader policies for local development or whether as a community we wished, and were likely to have the resources, to prepare our own community plan.

The CC agreed to prepare a draft document (Duncan to lead) for wider circulation and discussion before any formal response was made to the Planning Authority.

9. Ward Forum - Plockton

Richard and Audrey reported back on the forum at which Shieldaig and 4 other CCs were represented.

The agenda centred on the Police and Fire Services and preparation of the Local Development Plan. A key issue - which would be taken up with the Police when they next attended a CC meeting - was the need for more resources for community policing and liaison.

10. Aird fish farm feed barge noise nuisance

A number of Shieldaig residents are complaining of hearing generators/pumps etc within their homes.

Gerry to contact Environmental Health.

11. SCA

AGM on Saturday 7th March at 11.00

Agenda to include:

Appointment of Trustees

Treasurers report

Chairs report

Community projects e.g. Swimming pool cover, toilets, phase 2 Hall improvements etc.

Hall kitchen refurb due to start at the end of March.

12. Correspondence

Road Safety

By email: The HC Road Safety Officer is progressing the A896 traffic census with Police Scotland.

Super Fast Broadband

By email: Digital Scotland - Superfast Broadband is unlikely to come to Shieldaig and other small communities anytime soon because we have a phone system based on "Exchange Only Lines" where properties are served by a connection direct to the exchange, rather than from an on street green cabinet.

Quote from Digital Scotland "Due to the nature of the technology it is trickier to bring fibre broadband to premises with exchange only lines - but our engineers are rising to the challenge! Already more than 10,000 homes or businesses in Scotland with 'exchange only' lines can now benefit from fibre optic broadband."

Gerry to draft a letter to HIE who are funding partners expressing our concerns.

Village signs

By email: H.C. Community Services have provided a number of examples of how we might promote facilities and businesses located on the "loop", participating businesses would have to be registered with Visit Scotland - they can have the thistle logo after the business name. Interested parties to contact Gerry.

A.O.C.B.

Highland Small Communities Housing Trust

HSCHT are looking for suitable sites for the 3rd phase of their rent to buy programme. There was at least one possible site in the village but the CC considered that there should be a needs assessment and consultation within the local residents before this was taken forward. Gerry to pass this on to HSCHT.

Butec Range

Considerable concern was expressed on behalf of the local fishermen about the possible extension of the closed area. But there was uncertainty about the stage that MOD were at in developing their proposals including for consultation with the fishermen. The CC will put in representations as soon as the position becomes clearer.

The meeting closed at 9 p.m.

Date of next meeting 7th April at 7 p.m.

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Proposals for a Community Emergency Plan for Shieldaig

Introduction

This paper sets out the framework of an emergency plan for the Shieldaig Community Council area as the basis for a wider public discussion. If there is general support for the proposals and subject to any further suggestions which may be put forward, more detailed planning will be taken forward with the emergency services led by SSE and with other relevant organisations. The key question for consideration, is whether advance planning on these lines is likely to be of practical assistance in a genuine emergency.

Principles

The aim will be to keep the plan simple, concentrate on essentials and review the information it contains annually to ensure that it remains up to date.

In theory an emergency could take many forms. However the most likely scenario and the one on which planning will be focussed is -

1. extreme winter weather affecting the whole or most of the Highland area resulting in extended power cuts, communities isolated by blocked roads, failures of public and private water supplies and serious damage to houses and other infrastructure. This could be the result of storms, snow, flooding or a combination of all 3.
2. conditions in which many of the normal emergency and support services which are organised on a Highland or National basis are themselves badly damaged or overstretched in dealing with demands elsewhere and are therefore unable to respond adequately to local needs.
3. a situation lasting from about 3 days to 3 weeks. Any situation lasting for less than 3 days can probably be coped with on an ad hoc basis by local personal initiatives. And a major emergency with disruption lasting for more than 3 weeks or damage so severe that it will take longer than that to effect at least temporary repairs, will need to be tackled Nationally.

An important question is who the emergency planning is intended to help. The starting point is those in the community who are vulnerable now, plus those who become vulnerable as a result of the emergency itself. In the first group are those with serious illnesses, the very old and very young and those living in isolated locations a long way from neighbours. In the second group will be those injured during the course of the emergency, those whose houses are badly damaged, those (in the case of long lasting power cuts) whose houses are all electric and those, particularly on private water supplies, who lose those supplies.

Another important question is the form that emergency planning should take in an area where many people are already very sensitive to and active in meeting community needs, are resourceful and independent minded. Clearly the wrong model is one which tries to tell people what to do. Much better would be one which -

1. identifies needs which might otherwise be overlooked,
2. identifies useful and available resources which people might not be aware of

3. enables communication with key people and organisations within and outwith the area who might be able to offer help
4. provides a clearing house of information about who is doing what in order to prevent duplication and missed opportunities
5. identifies practical steps which can be taken in advance to improve personal and household resilience

Content

If there is general agreement to prepare a community emergency plan, following is a suggested outline of what it should contain -

1. A list of particularly vulnerable households and individuals. Ideally this would be prepared in conjunction with the local medical services. But there are important issues of confidentiality and the question whether to secure the prior agreement of the people concerned. Would “help needed” emergency display stickers be a good idea? Are some people highly dependent on electric powered facilities -eg low pressure beds, hoists
2. A list of emergency contacts in the key service providers - electricity, phone, water, medical , police, fire, Highland Council etc and details of how to contact them. Similarly for contacts in neighbouring communities who might need/ be able to offer help.
3. An inventory of potentially useful, well maintained, local resources held by people who would, in principle, be prepared to make them available for community emergency use - generators, chainsaws, pick-ups and 4WDs, all-terrain vehicles, roof and other ladders, building materials and tools, earth moving equipment, fuel, boats, water purification equipment, camping gear etc.
4. A list of people likely to have spare, warm space in their houses who would be happy to take in others who are temporarily displaced from their homes
5. A review of the local communications network to establish what probably would and what would not work in an emergency; back-up arrangements to cope with outages; any (modest) investment needed to build in more robustness. This is a key topic because without effective communications it will be difficult to assess needs and organise assistance.
6. A list of people prepared to take responsibility for checking on needs and coordinating help in their (small) local areas, essentially to ensure that nobody has been overlooked. Similarly names for a small group of people willing to organise a central co-ordinating unit to liaise across the Community Council area and with the external service providers. This to enable priorities to be established across the area and to establish effective links with external bodies.

7. A practical guide as to what people might do to improve their personal resilience based on sound local experience - “plug in” phones, portable electrical generators, timely oil deliveries, water purification kits, camping stoves etc.
8. A separate analysis of what will be needed for “the Coast” as against Shieldaig itself.

Next Steps

A discussion at the next Community Council meeting on 3rd March with a decision then whether to circulate a questionnaire to the wider community as the basis for a public meeting at the start of the Community Council meeting on 7th April;.