

KINLOCHBERVIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on 03.02.15 at The Harbour Offices

Present: John Mann (Chair), Gary Sutherland (Vice-Chair), Christine Mackenzie (Treasurer), Murdo MacPherson (Secretary), Kirsty Holland, Angus Ross

Also Present: Hugh Morrison (Highland Councillor), Graham Wild (Kinlochbervie Community Company), Margaret Meek (Minutes)

Apologies: Mairi Eastcroft, Ian Sutherland

1.0 Minutes of 02.12.14

The minutes of the meeting held on 02.12.15 were proposed for approval by Angus and seconded by Christine. Approved.

2.0 Matters arising from Minutes of 02.12.14

2.1 Laxford

The signs are still not in place as there have been design issues. The signs will have a solar panel and small turbine.

2.2 Ambulance Service

After 3 months and the lodging of a formal complaint, a reply to the Freedom of Information request was finally received. The request posed 3 questions: for how many days over a 3-month period was the service single-manned, for how many days was there no crew entirely and for how many days was the ambulance broken down. Extrapolated to 1 year, the figures would be 6 weeks single-manned, 8 weeks with no crew and 1.5 weeks broken down. This means that for approximately 30% of the time the ambulance was either be single-manned or non-operational.

The good news is that a fourth person has finally been engaged and should be working in Kinlochbervie shortly; the area has been being without a fourth person for about 2 years.

Steven Gorman (Area Service Manager for the Ambulance Service) has stated that the plan is to allocate a fifth person to Kinlochbervie. This person will probably be in place by December as training will be required.

Andrew Moir (Scottish Ambulance Service) and Pete Cummings (Bond Air Services) were contacted for information about helicopters. Bond has taken delivery of a new helicopter equipped with night vision system that will be able to land at all hours in KLB. Pilot and crew training are required but the helicopter should be in operation by summer.

John Mann stated that the efforts of the Community Council regarding the Ambulance Service seem to have had a positive effect in bringing about change.

2.3 Highland Small Communities Trust – Manse Road House

Graham Wild reported to the Council that he has been in touch with Andy MacKay (Ward Manager). He confirmed that there will need to be a Business Plan done for the house. As there is no money available for this, Graham has registered with Joint Enterprise (contact is Brian Weaver) in the hope that this organisation will be able to provide a person to do the Business Plan.

Graham has repaired the leak in the house. It is still damp but is drying out.

2.4 Geopark

Murdo reported on the last meeting of the Geopark Board.

- There will be a separate Business Company within the main company.
- The main company will get charitable status.
- There will be a graduate placement position created.
- Re-validation is upcoming. The Geopark currently has “yellow card” status but is optimistic of gaining “green card” status although much work will be required.
- The Business Plan is not yet finalised.
- The profile of the Geopark is being raised through positive media coverage.
- Progress is being made on the Unapool Geo Centre.
- A café in the Unapool Geo Centre will be run in conjunction with the Kylesku Hotel; this should be operational by summer.
- There are currently active discussions with the Scourie Development Company regarding the proposed centre in Scourie.

2.5 Core Paths

Murdo reported that Matt Dent (Highland Council Paths Officer) will be installing signs on the Loch Innes path. Kenny Macrae has been asked for a quote for bank stabilisation work. This work would be undertaken by Robert Elrick. The request for funds must be submitted by mid-March.

Action: *Christine will contact Robert for a price and time frame.*

2.6 Brochure

There is £456 in the fund. There is no work being done presently to develop a new brochure. Although the most recent brochure is outdated, a new brochure is a big job. It was wondered whether the brochure was less essential in view of the fact that the community has a web site and will also be getting a new notice board.

2.7 Notice Board

Graham Wild reported that the notice board should be in place by the end of April. Local businesses are very interested in being included.

Gary has not been able to do the repairs yet.

Action: *Gary will repair the notice board with materials he has on hand.*

2.8 Kinlochbervie High School Community Gym

Kirsty reported that the gym is up and running. The biggest problem is out-of-hours access but discussions are on-going to resolve this issue.

2.9 Dog Fouling Campaign

Gary has ordered latches to repair the bins.

Action: *Gary will repair the bin once the latches are received; the Community Council will pay for the latches.*

2.10 Dentist for the North West

There has been no word. However, an article in the Northern Times reported that the NHS unit in Golspie could be closed; this would affect dental service in Golspie and Lochinver. As many people on the West Coast use this service (either in Golspie or Lochinver), its closure would have a huge detrimental effect.

Action: *Murdo and Gary will work together to write a letter that states the importance of this service for people on the West Coast and to seek information that would clarify the situation.*

2.11 Football Pitch

Nothing has happened but a meeting has been scheduled.

2.12 Fish Market

There has been no word.

2.13 Bus from Lairg

There has been no word.

2.14 Loch Clash Project

Councillor George Farlow has stated that the funding to clear the site must be spent by 31 March 2015. Graham Wild has been in contact with various people at HIE but no one was aware of the status of the project. At a site visit last summer, Highland Council staff stated that it would be cleared by Christmas; however nothing has happened.

VDLF (Vacant and Derelict Land Fund) will provide the money to clear the site. Highland Council staff will undertake the work – clearing the site, flattening the ground, reconnecting the electricity.

Action: *Hugh Morrison will query Highland Council staff as to the status of the work.*

2.15 Sandwood

It is hoped that signage for the Sandwood Bay path will be in place by April.

2.16 North and West Sutherland Trust

We are still awaiting the outcome of whether the Creag Riabhach Wind Farm goes ahead or not.

2.17 Benches at Droman

The materials are expected shortly and Graham Wild will repair the benches.

2.18 Clothing Donations

There is no word.

2.19 Super Fast Broadband

Gary reported that the cable is being installed now.

2.20 Cows Fouling the Road

John has written a letter to the correspondent.

2.21 Minute Secretary

Margaret Meek was appointed the new Minute Secretary. She will write to Alison Sinton expressing the Council's gratitude to her for her contributions as the previous Minute Secretary.

3.0 Treasurer's Report

The only activity since the last meeting was rent payment for the conference room.

4.0 Correspondence

There has been no correspondence

5.0 A.O.C.B.

5.1 Winter Gritting

Highland Council is considering halting late night gritting on roads that are not heavily used. This is known as "precautionary gritting" and would affect most of the roads in the North West. The morning gritting would not be affected.

John stated that there has already been a decline in service over the past several years. The current proposal will make it worse and will affect not only private travellers but school buses, community buses, fish lorries, other business travellers and health services such as fire and ambulance. People would also be much less willing to travel at night between communities for events.

Action: *Hugh, Gary and Murdo will compose a letter addressing the need for this service.*

5.2 Vodafone

There has been no Vodafone service for some weeks. This has affected personal and business users as well as the high school. There was general dissatisfaction with the lack of customer service from Vodafone. It was suggested that if service was not acceptable, customers should be allowed to cancel their contracts without financial penalty.

Action: *Gary and Murdo will write a letter to John Thurso and to various newspapers about the need for reliable mobile phone service.*

5.3 Storm Damage at Loch Clash

Recent storms have resulted in the accumulation of significant amounts of rubbish around Loch Clash. The Harbours Authority will do some of it but the job is too large. A digger is required.

5.4 Service Point Review

Hugh Morrison reported that Highland Council is reviewing the need for service points. The Council is conducting an on-line consultation to seek feedback from residents. This may be found at <http://www.highland.gov.uk/customerservicesreview>.

5.5 Policeman

Hugh Morrison reported that Ian Sutherland will be retiring as of 31 March 2015. A new policeman will be coming to the area.

5.6 Oldshoremore Cemetery

John Mann reported that gravestones are falling over at Oldshoremore Cemetery. This is due to rabbit burrows undermining the soil. The cemetery is Council property but the upkeep of individual headstones is the responsibility of the families.

6.0 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 3 March 2015 at the Harbour Offices at 7:00 pm