

Minutes of the Meeting of Durness Community Council, Monday 1st September at 7.30pm Durness Village Hall.

1. **Present:** Kevin Crowe *Chair*, Anne Mackenzie *Treasurer*, Neil Fuller *Vice Chair*, Scott Macpherson, Donald Mitchell, Alan Andrews, Cllr. Hugh Morrison, Garry Cameron (*H.C. Temporary Ward Manager*) and Sarah Fuller *Secretary*.

Apologies: Eddie Meyer, PC Ian Sutherland.

Kevin welcomed Garry Cameron to his first meeting of the Durness Community Council. Garry then introduced himself and gave a brief history of his knowledge of the area as a policeman in both Lochinver and Lairg and when on to outline his role as temporary Ward manager based in Golspie, but accessible in all local service points.

Kevin asked for any questions.

Anne asked if the balance due from the H.C. has been paid to C.Councils yet? Garry was unsure, but offered to find out. Donald asked if Garry would be visiting the Durness Service Point, he replied that he would, but had arrived too late today.

Kevin extended an open invitation to Garry to attend Durness C.C. meetings

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting.** The Minutes of the previous meeting were passed by Anne and seconded by Scott.

3. **Matters Arising.**

- Ambulance & Air Ambulance Provision. A local family outlining a horrific journey to hospital, which their child had to endure, recently sent a letter to the Northern Times. The family have made a formal complaint to the Scottish Ambulance Service. A copy of a letter from Pauline Howie (Chief Exec. Scottish Ambulance Service) has been forwarded to the C.C. from John Thurso M.P. which details the improvements which are to be made to the KLB crewing issue, the number of staff is to be increased although still not in line with that of Lochinver. The C.C. felt that despite these improvements it would be difficult to attract new staff, as they would still be part-time positions.
- Lynx Bone, Smoo & Borrallie Caves. Dr Kitchener has obtained funding to carbon date 5 of the specimens found by Colin Coventry. The carbon dating should take place in October.
- Puffin Link. The puffin link has worked well this year. Peter Mackay is coming this week to remove everything for the winter; Donald asked if the C.C. could cover his expenses as he has given his time for free- all agreed. The donation box has raised £20.00. Funding for replacing cabling will need to be sought for next year, The RSPB, Visit Scotland and the Royal Navy are to be approached.
- Telephone List. A draft of the new list has been produced and will be brought to the next meeting.
- School Playing Field. **Action:** Cllr. Morrison to email again for clarification on ownership.
- M.o.D. No date has yet been set for the next Liaison Meeting. Sammy Craig (M.o.D) came to investigate the complaint of shell harnesses being washed up on the shoreline, he felt that they were not military- more likely to be from Commercial shipping, but would look into the matter further. **Action:** Kevin to seek confirmation of this matter. The Latest range

notice has 24hr bombing- Scott thought this was probably a typing error. Donald reported that during the last exercise tracked vehicles came within ½ metre of 2 areas of Primula Scotica. Donald has photographic evidence and has notified SNH.

- Caution Horse Signs. Cllr. Morrison has requested the signs from the H.C; they have not arrived as yet.
- Scottish Water & Smoo Cave. Mr Scott visited Loch Meadaidh and met with representatives of the C.C. and Colin Coventry to discuss the issues regarding water levels at Loch Meadaidh and the impact on the Boat Tours in Smoo Cave. Scottish Water has agreed to lower the level of the loch to allow the boat tours to operate. Donald reported that the repairs to the viewing platform in Smoo Cave are now complete.
- Smoo Cave Website. The C.C. agreed to offer the domain name to Colin Coventry.
- Bus Shelter. **Action:** Cllr. Morrison to find out who owns the land adjacent to the public toilets.

4. Reports.

- **D.D.G.**

Eriboll Harbour; The Draft Business Case from SKS Scotland is imminent. The next stage will be to raise funds for the development, design and site surveys up to planning permission. Health Hub; Costing's for the build are currently being updated and a draft lease agreement is being drawn up between D.D.G and the Hall Committee. Cape Wrath; The Directors of D.D.G. are currently attempting to research the facts & figures needed for the Business Plan, if anyone would like to volunteer to help with this task, any assistance no matter how small would be gratefully received. Bard Terrace, the work is nearing completion and an agreement with Albyn Enterprises is being drawn up for letting.

- **N.W.H.Geopark**

A draft business plan has been produced outlining the separation of the Business arm from the Social and Environmental Arm. The aim is that 50% of revenue will be derived from the business arm and this will part fund the social and environmental arm. Revalidation is due next year.

- **Treasurers Report.**

C.C. balance is £ 1377.78. Revenue from the Walking Booklets stands at £ 590.00 and from the website £1170.00

- **North West Sutherland Local Health Partnership (NWSLHP).**

There has still been no decision regarding local provision of Dental Services. **Action;** Kevin to chase up, including Cllr. Morrison and Cllr. Deidre Mackay in correspondence.

- Creag Riabhach Wind farm. Neil attended the recent meeting where it was agreed that an umbrella organisation representing all the C.C. area's which will benefit from this wind farm would be set up. The organisation will be called The North West Sutherland Trust; it will be registered as a SCIO and will administer the funds once the wind farm goes online circa 2020. Signatures of support from the C.C. are being sought for the next planning meeting in November- the only potential issue is the SNH Wildland Map.

5. **Planning Applications.**

Planning permission has been sought for an Oyster farm in the Kyle of Durness. Sepa and SNH have listed their requirements and Scottish Ministers have agreed in principle. Both Keodale Stock Club and the Ferry Operator are both in favour. The only opposition is from the owners of Gualin Estate who fear damage to fishing with the potential loss of 2 jobs. Presently there are 18 objections on the H.C. website all from patrons of the Gualin Estate. Donald felt that the SNH Wild Lands Map may have implications for the proposal and that he felt it would visually impair the area and possibly impact on local otters, with only the introduction of 2 part-time jobs as a benefit. Other C.C. members were broadly in favour as it would have positive impacts on raising the profile of the area and other local businesses would benefit. Kevin proposed that the C.C. defer making a decision until after the site meeting. **Action:** Kevin to confirm date of site meeting.

6. **Police Matters.**

Nothing to report.

7. **Meeting with Bob Robertson, Planning Dept.**

There is an upcoming meeting with Bob Robertson **Action:** Kevin to send details to Sarah to forward on.

8. **A.O.B.**

- **North Highland Way** Kevin has received huge amounts of emails from Tina Irving, he has reiterated the C.C. view that we cannot get involved whilst a private company appears to be leading the project.
- **H.C Contact list.** All C.C. Members please forward full contact details to Sarah for forwarding to the H.C.
- **Publicity of C.C. Work.** Kevin asked that this be discussed at the next meeting. Hugh suggested a publication similar to the Scourie news.
- **Speed Restrictions in Laid.** Cllr. Morrison stated this would have to be decided at Government level. Alan is to look into the requirements.
- **Cape Wrath Road.** Scott reported storm damage to the Cape Wrath road. This will be an agenda item for the Liaison meeting.
- **Rhigolter Track.** Donald has received a reply from Valerie Wilson (S.N.H) which states that under current planning requirements the track is permissible as an Agricultural track, however as of January 2015 changes to planning laws would require applying in advance for permission.
- **Vice Chairmanship.** Neil stated that due to other work commitments he would only be able to attend 1 in 3 C.C. meeting and felt he should step down as Vice Chair. Hugh proposed Donald for the position, Neil seconded. Kevin thanked Neil for his work in the past year.

9. **Date of next meeting.** Monday 6th October at 7.30pm.