

Minutes of the Meeting of Durness Community Council, Monday 31st August

at 7.30pm Durness Village Hall.

1. **Present:** Scott Macpherson *Chair*, Anne Mackenzie *Treasurer*, Donald Mitchell *Vice Chair*, Alan Andrews, Neil Fuller, Cllr. Hugh Morrison, and Sarah Fuller *Secretary*, Dr Alan Belbin, Fiona Duff (NHS Primary Care Manager North), Bob Silverwood (NHS Area manager Caithness & Sutherland), Ken Proctor (Associate Medical Director (Primary Care)NHS Highland), Frances Arrowsmith.
2. **Apologies:** P.C. George Silcock.
3. **NHS Highland.**

The Community Council meeting began with Scott welcoming the representatives from NHS Highland.

Fiona Duff stated that unfortunately there were no applicants for the GP post in Durness. It has now been 2 months since NHS Highland took over running the Durness Practice, the C.C. were asked if there were any issues? Cllr. Morrison responded that the only complaint he had been made aware of was the necessity of taking time off work to visit a Doctor. Fiona stated that it is difficult to provide later appointments, but the Doctor is available until 6pm twice a week and patients could also see a doctor in Scourie or KLB surgeries if this was more convenient. The new nurse is also due to start work this week and dedicated Nursing Clinics will also be available once a week.

Fiona also asked about drop-in versus appointments, as most of the locum's felt that the appointment system worked best. The C.C. had no objection to the request for moving to appointment only surgeries from the beginning of October.

The Receptionist post has been advertised and interviews are due to take place next week.

A discussion ensued regarding the shortage of G.P's nationwide, Ken Proctor stated that of the newly qualified doctors, only 30% become G.P's with the remainder becoming hospital consultants. This underlined the shortage that Dr Belbin has been warning us of for many years.

At present a degree of continuity is being provided by Dr Berrie and Dr Gordon. Towards the end of September an Advanced Nurse Practitioner will join the multi- disciplinary team for 5 days and share the surgeries with the G.P. Ken Proctor stated that there will always be the need for a G.P. in Durness and it is vitally important that the service provided is at least equal to that which Dr Belbin has provided. The Ambulance Service are currently looking to introduce a Paramedic Practitioner to their team, this role is similar to an Advanced Nurse Practitioner and they would be independent of the Ambulance. Cllr. Morrison added that the Fire Service are also looking into providing First Responders.

Frances Arrowsmith stated that the Cape Wrath Challenge Committee would be more than happy to include the advert for the G.P position on their website. DDG would also be happy

to do this. There is no current advert for the permanent position, but when it is re-advertised the NHS will provide a link to these websites. Fiona stated that the NHS are currently using the media to try and recruit locums and G.P's.

North Sutherland Redesign (Caladh Sona Replacement).

Scott attended the first of the 3 meetings regarding the replacement of Caladh Sona and the potential for a different concept of community based care which enables people to stay at home for as long as possible. Scott stressed that the possible location of any direct replacement for Caladh Sona is not being discussed at these meetings. **Action:** Cllr. Morrison to email the minutes of the last meeting to the C.C. The next meeting is in Tongue on the 8th September and the final meeting in Durness on the 15th September. Neil asked what the timescale for decision making is? Bob Silverwood responded that a decision should be made at the turn of the year.

Scott thanked the Representatives of NHS Highland for attending.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting. The Minutes of the July meeting were passed by Anne & Scott.

5. Matters Arising.

- Puffin Link. No funding is available for the puffin link. Donald estimated that puffin numbers are reduced by approx. 50% this year compared with last year, a watching brief is to be maintained to see if numbers increase next year. **Action:** Donald to ask Peter Mackay if he wishes to salvage any of the storage unit and solar panel.
- M.o.D. The next Joint Warrior exercise will take place in between 5th & 17th October, the next Liaison meeting will be arranged for this time.
- Speed restrictions in Laid. Nothing to report.
- Capeside Road. Coal Tar is now available for the Capeside road, the work is due to take place after the Joint Warrior exercise in October.

6. Police Matters.

Nothing to report.

7. Reports.

- **D.D.G.**

DDG are currently looking into the idea of a community owned Distillery which would be run as a Community Interest Company, that allows for investment with capped dividends and any profit to be re-invested in other community developments. The Business case for the harbour project should be ready by the end of September.

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

Revalidation of membership of the European Geopark network has been taken place and the initial response was very positive. The final report is expected in the next few days. The Geopark are holding a climbing festival next month, more detail can be found on their website.

- **Treasurers Report.**
C.C. balance is £ 593.33. The H.C. Grant will be £873.20 £290.00 is due to Ronnie Lansley for the website.
 - **North West Sutherland Local Health Partnership (NWSLHP).**
Nothing to report.
6. **C.C. Elections.** The C.C. elections are open for nominations from Monday 21st September to Tuesday 6th of October. **Action:** Sarah to put up posters to advertise the election.
7. **Constitution. Action:** Cllr. Morrison is to find out which H.C. representative should sign the Constitution.
8. **A.O.B.**
- Creag Reabhach Windfarm. The Site visit is to take place on the 14th of September. **Action:** Neil to send letter of support from C.C.
 - Police, Allow Overtaking signs. Cllr. Morrison stated that 10 signs are needed and that funding for these may be available from the Ward Discretionary Budget.
 - Alan reported 2 new potholes just past Keodale turn off in a left hand siding. Anne reported the potholes on the top of the Sango bend and Scott mentioned the pothole on the Braemar bend. Alan also reported that the culverts are blocked near Katie and Donnie MacDougall's and during heavy rain it washes away his drive. **Action;** Cllr. Morrison to report these to the road crew.
 - Durness leaflet. Donald reported that the VIC has run out of the Durness leaflet and a reprint is needed. Neil stated that the map on the leaflet needs redrawn, Cllr. Morrison suggested that it be linked to the proposed noticeboard map.
 - Notice Board map. Action: Scott to put up posters asking for information from anyone who wished to be included on the map. Neil thought there might be a noticeboard in the bike hub.
 - Sunday papers. Anne reported that John Menzies won't pay the carriage to bring the Sunday Papers to the village. Action: Scott to write a letter of support for the company currently providing this service.
9. **Date of next meeting.** Monday 5th October at 7.30pm.