

Minutes of the Meeting of Durness Community Council, Monday 4th February at 7.30pm Durness Village Hall.

1. **Present:** Kevin Crowe *Chair*, Anne Mackenzie *Treasurer*, Donald Mitchell, Denise McNamara, Neil Fuller, Nick Barth Sarah Fuller *Secretary*, Cllr. Hugh Morrison, P.C. Sutherland, Kevin Arrowsmith(DDG), Sheila Frazer (DDG), Mike Fitch (DDG), David Halpin (DTE Scotland), Col. Peter Hollins, Tony Jackson.

Absent: Francis Keith

2. **Meeting with MoD Representatives.**

Kevin outlined the recent history of the letters from the Right Hon. Mark Francois M.P. the latest of which rescinded the preclusion of access to Cape Wrath.

Col. Hollins outlined the MoD's need for shelter and gun emplacements on the Capeside which would not be on peat. Notwithstanding the D.D.G. Community Right to Buy bid the MoD have undertaken a survey of the buildings at the Lighthouse and estimate that a sizeable figure would be required to bring them up to Health and Safety standards. A decision on this issue has not been taken by the MoD. Col. Hollins stressed that within the constraints of public safety it was never the intent to restrict access.

Kevin stressed that the Campaign was always to maintain access and in no way anti-MoD.

The Floor was opened to questions.

Neil asked how active is the range currently and if the land belonged to the MoD would this increase usage? David Halpin replied that the range is open all year, with the exception of the last two weeks of July and the entirety of August. Col. Hollins thought that due to financial restraints even if the land was owned by the MoD usage would be unlikely to increase.

Kevin Arrowsmith asked what troop accommodation would be built? Col. Hollins thought that the Lloyds buildings would be demolished and something built on that site.

Cllr. Morrison asked if the H.C. got material ready for road repairs would the MoD be able to help? Col. Hollins replied that they would be more than willing to help at any time.

Neil asked if the new Cape Wrath Trail website could be included in the mail shot for range activity notices? Neil to forward details to David Halpin.

Kevin then raised concerns expressed within the community that local businesses do not get the opportunity to bid for MoD contracts. Col. Hollins responded that Qinetiq are contracted for any maintenance work and that where possible local businesses are used.

Kevin asked if there was any news about the Report into the beached Whales? David Halpin is to chase up and forward a copy of the Report.

Kevin asked if there was any likelihood of the MoD being able to put in lights at the Heli Pad so that the Air Ambulance can land after dark? Col. Hollins responded that the MoD do not own the Heli pad so would be unlikely to fund lighting. David Halpin is to contact Joint Helicopter Command as they may have portable lighting which could be used.

Kevin thanked David Halpin and Col. Hollins for attending. David Halpin, Col. Hollins and Tony Jackson then left the meeting.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved by Neil Fuller and seconded by Nick Barth with one alteration.

4. Matters Arising.

- Housing. No progress as yet.
- Core Paths. There is no Leader funding until 2014.
- Puffin Link. Fiona Mackenzie (Sutherland Partnership) has not yet found a source of funding for Maintenance costs. Anne suggested the revenue from the website adverts could fund this year's costs. Kevin proposed the C.C. ask the contractor to maintain for this year, all agreed. Neil asked if Visit Scotland would be able to part fund, Donald is to explore options.
- Rob Donn Memorial. Cllr. Morrison passed on the paperwork for the C.C. to fill in for the Brown signs. A quote is being sought from David Campbell for concreting around the railings. Kevin reported that a new edition of Rob Donn's songs and poems is likely to be published by the Royal National Mod and Gaelic Book Council.
- Ambulance & Air Ambulance Provision. Kevin has followed up, but still no response from Andrew Muir.
- Erection of Flagpole. No further progress.
- Creag Riabhach Wind Farm Meeting. Neil attended and distributed a report on the project. The proposal of 32 Wind Turbines would provide 5 full time jobs in the Alltnahara area, plus construction work. A fund for community benefit would be set up and shared between N.W. Communities with further monies available in a Charitable Trust. If the project passes Planning the probable start date would be 2018/19 with monies available one year later. The residents of Alltnahara are in favour of this project.
- Whales. Donald is still awaiting the final report on the whales stranded in the Kyle.

5. Police Matters.

- There has been no response to the alleged vandalism at Cocoa Mountain.
- There have been 3 instances reported recently of out of control dogs worrying sheep. A notice is to be put on local noticeboards warning dog owners to keep their dogs under proper control.

6. Reports.

- **D.D.G.**

A meeting took place with R.J.Macleods with regard the Loch Eriboll Pier project and a meeting is due to take place with the R.N.L.I in the next week.

The Cape Wrath Trail is now a charitable organisation and an interim website advertising the route will be up and running for this year.

Money has been granted from the National Lottery to employ someone to produce a business plan for Cape Wrath, the position is to be advertised this week.

- **Geopark.**

The inaugural meeting of the Geopark took place last month, the Directors were assigned roles and planning took place for Revalidation by the European Geopark Network, which will happen later this year.

- **Treasurers Report.**

The Durness C.C. bank balance currently stands at £3964.76.

Anne reported that the Light up a life evening had raised £546.80 this year.

7. Lynx Bone.

The lynx bone has been carbon dated, the results are awaited. Ecologist David Hetherington has expressed an interest in assisting once the results are forthcoming.

8. Smoo & Borallie Caves.

The archaeological report has been received. Sarah to circulate.

9. Keodale Risk Assessment.

James Mather has asked for C.C. support for any funding application he may need to make his raft compliant. James has also identified loose rocks and slippery surfaces on the slipway. Kevin is to arrange a site meeting with James and Cllr. Morrison.

10. C.C. Scheme Evaluation.

Kevin outlined the suggested amendments, all were in favour. Kevin is to fill in and return.

11. A.O.B.

- A letter has been received from the Youth workers asking if the monies left from the motor club could be used to fund extra youth club activities. All agreed.
- Donald reported that visitor numbers to Smoo cave were down 5% last year, but still above 40,000 people.
- Donald has been given 450 trees from the Woodland Trust but no tree guards, he asked if the C.C. could fund £150 for these. All agreed.
- Cllr. Morrison has recently attended the Sutherland District Partnership Quarterly meeting. Cllr Morrison asked if there was a chance of an X-ray machine being sited in K.L.B. the N.H.S. are to cost the idea. Although this is in the very early stages the C.C. were greatly in favour.
- Kevin A. reported that a grant of £20,000 towards the Health Hub was awarded recently. This is a great boost to the fundraising.

12. Date of Next Meeting. Monday 4th March at 7.30pm, Durness Village Hall.