



North Uist Community Council
Comhairle Coimhearsnachd Uibhist a Tuath

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**NORTH UIST COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD IN TAIGH SGIRE SHOLAIS
ON MONDAY 23 OCTOBER 2017 AT 7.30PM**

Present: Sheena Stewart - Chair
Cllr Uisdean Robertson – Secretary
Flora MacDonald – Vice Chair
Terry Wakeling
Donald E Morrison
Ken MacDonald
Cllr Roddy MacKay
Effie Rodger
Ragnall Maclain

Apologies: Donald A MacLennan
Jessie Morrison
Joan Ferguson
John MacDonald
Cllr Iain M MacLeod

Public: David Newman, Sealladh Hiort
Andrew Ross, NUDC
Alison Cropper, CnES
I S Morrison, Am Paipear

1.0 Adoption of Minute:

Proposed: Effie Rodger
Seconded: Flora MacDonald

2.0 Statement of Account:

Treasurer was unable to be present but had reported that there had been very little change since last month.

3.0 Matters Arising:

3.1 West Camp:

There was no new update from West Camp. It was proving very difficult to get any information on current plans. Any job losses if they happen would be devastating in the community.

3.2 Muillean nan Geirr:

The issue of the cable has still to be sorted and secretary will follow it up again.

3.3 HHP:

Work still to be carried out and Cllr MacKay will contact HHP again.

3.4 Ditching:

The requests regarding ditching at Lochmaddy, Ahmhor, Committee Road and Knockline are being addressed and will be followed up over the next while. Some work has already been done on the culvert previously raised as a problem in Lochmaddy.

3.5 Spaceport:

The latest talks in relation to the Spaceport have been promising. The situation is just a 'wait and see' and hope that this initiative works out to the benefit of the community.

3.6 North Uist Flag:

A discussion was held about the pro's and con's of the flag designs that had appeared on social media. Andy MacKinnon at Taigh Chearsabhaigh appears to be involved. The members of the Community Council decided to let things progress in its current direction of travel without getting too involved.

3.7 Deer:

The issue of how to find acceptable middle ground continues to be rather difficult. It is hoped however that the Deer Management Plan will shortly be finished. The need for scientific work through the Tick and Lyme Group is also critical. It is also important that we do not forget the incidence of disease in animals such as louping ill.

3.8 White Lining:

We are assured by Technical Services that white lining will take place either week commencing 30th October or week commencing 6th November.

4.0 Sealladh Hiort:

David Newman, Secretary/Treasurer of the group gave an update of progress. The information is included as an attachment to the minute. The Comhairle Planning Service had been very helpful and the group wished that to be acknowledged. The Ranger Forum had funded the planning application which had been done through the Community Council. There was a need now for a feasibility study to take the project to the next stage. HIE had agreed to fund 50% of the cost and Calum Iain MacIver, Director of Development, CnES had been approached for the remainder. Historic Environment Scotland had been approached and a Heritage Lottery Fund pre-application form was also to be completed. David wished to thank Alison Cropper, Community Regeneration Officer for all her help.

5.0 Visit Scotland:

Andrew Ross who is our local member on the Outer Hebrides Tourism Association attended the meeting. They were interested to find out our view in terms of the proposed closure of Lochmaddy Tourist office. The news had come as a bit of a bombshell to OHTA. A statement had been issued by them asking that Visit Scotland should come up with a more acceptable solution. It was admitted that footfall in Lochmaddy had been very poor in comparison to other tourist offices. Footfall in Lochmaddy was 6000 and that compared to 26000 in Tarbert and 18000 in Castlebay. Members admitted that a lot of people now go online to seek information. However the lack of good internet access made that solution an unacceptable one for North Uist. The issue of island proofing was also discussed but currently Visit Scotland are not subject to Community Empowerment although there is a move currently to change that. The members decided to write Visit Scotland and have the issue discussed with our MSP.

6.0 Housing:

A seminar was held in Harris to discuss the Strategic Housing Investment Plan. The invitation to attend was for community land owners. The meeting had no attendance at all from the North Uist area. It is clear that current thinking is that it is easier to spend the current monies available in Stornoway. This then gives us some concern in that there will be no much needed housing provision in Uist and as a result of that will impact on our economy. It was agreed to write Calum Iain MacIver, Director of Development to invite him to a meeting in North Uist.

7.0 Police Report:

There was no police presence at the meeting.

8.0 Councillors Report:

Capital Programme: Priorities for the Capital Programme are Castlebay School and a new Care Home in Stornoway. It is anticipated that the Capital Programme will be at a reduced level.

Concessionary Fares: There had been a move to introduce concessionary fares on the Sound of Harris and Sound of Barra ferries. It was agreed that this would be part of the budget setting exercise in February along with all the other requests.

HIAL: There was a concern expressed about the new byelaw being introduced at Benbecula airport. This would have an impact on the current local car hire provision.

Islands Deal: Discussions were ongoing reference the Islands Deal. This was being done along with Orkney and Shetlands Islands Councils. The projects within the deal had to be transformational. Groups in Uist would be part of the discussion in terms of projects they were putting forward. This would be the first rural deal for Scotland and would include contributions from both UK and Scottish Governments if successful.

Playparks: Cllr MacKay had successfully moved an amendment to the playparks report. This means that there will be more local consultation in terms of playpark provision in Uist. It was critical that the community took part in the consultations.

Broadband: The issue of broadband is moving slowly but in the right direction. A solution has been found for Grimsay and it is hoped that progress in terms of the west side of Uist will happen early in the new year.

9.0 Matters Raised by Members of the Public:

9.1 Lochmaddy Bank of Scotland:

Opening hours continue to be a concern. We have raised this a number of times and especially when illness is given as a reason for closure. The issue will once again be raised with the bank hierarchy.

9.2 Communities Board:

An invitation had been extended to the chair of the Communities Board Angus Campbell to come to Uist. He has indicated that he is happy to do that and will ask his fellow board members from the Western Isles. Disappointment was expressed that there was no member from Uist on the board.

9.3 Audit Scotland:

Audit Scotland would be meeting with the Association of Community Councils to discuss their findings in terms of the ferry report.

9.4 Breedon:

A complaint was received in terms of the difficulty in getting material from Breedon's quarry in North Uist. Secretary will raise the issue with Breedon in Stornoway. It was also mentioned with the cuts in budget toward road maintenance that the tar plant based in Stornoway could be closed down. That would cause significant complications in terms of tarring going forward.

9.5 Wind Turbine Project:

See information sheet attached to the minute.

9.6 Lochmaddy School:

See information sheet attached to the minute.

10.0 Correspondence Received:

10.1 Council Tax:

There is a two page form which is for completion relating to the discount available on council tax for Severe Mental Impairment. This form does not ask detailed questions about income but does require part of the form, a certificate, to be completed by a registered medical practitioner. This is available on the internet site here:

[http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/counciltax/forms/Severely%20mentally%20impaired%20\(exemption%20or%20disregard\)%20\(v1.1\).pdf](http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/counciltax/forms/Severely%20mentally%20impaired%20(exemption%20or%20disregard)%20(v1.1).pdf)

The longer form is for claiming council tax reduction. This would be issued to anyone where Comhairle were aware or thought that they were in receipt of attendance allowance. It is a national form and is also used to apply for housing benefit. This means more detailed questions relating to income and capital are included. Here is a link to the form:

<http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/benefits/documents/HB%20and%20CTR%20Claim%20Form.pdf>

Comhairle plan to use the new Financial Inclusion service for which they have just secured funding for, to promote uptake of discounts and benefits relevant to dementia and long term mental health conditions. There will be more information/promotional activity once the service is up and running in the new year and they will also consider highlighting this particular discount as part of the annual billing process for council tax.

10.2 Social Fund:

It was agreed that there would be a six way split in the Social Fund.

10.3 North Uist Agricultural Society Children's Party:

It was agreed that percentage of the £587 in the account for Christmas lights should be dispersed to the society. It was also agreed to give £200 from ward funding.

10.4 Senior Citizens Parties:

It was agreed to give £300 ward funding towards each of the parties being organised.

10.5 Election Posters:

The Comhairle had said they would chase up the election agents for the parties that still had posters attached at various locations.

10.6 Defibrillator Signs:

There was a need for increased and more obvious signs to indicate where defibrillators were situated.

11.0 Mod:

The Community Council wish to express their congratulations to the children who took part in the Mod in Fort William.

12.0 Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be on Monday 20 November in Hosta Hall at 7.30pm.