

South Harris Community Council – Minutes of Meeting 17th December 2018

1. Apologies – Neil MacLean, Lisa MacDonald, Billy Macfarlane, Kathryn Campbell, Councillor Mitchell, Councillor Cunningham, Councillor Finnegan
2. Present – Alan Ross, Stephen MacKinnon, Marion Morrison, Hamish Taylor, John MacLean, Kenny MacLeod, Caroline Chaffer
3. Minutes were proposed by Kenny MacLeod and seconded by John MacLean
4. Matters Arising
 - 4.1 Geese – Geese are back at football pitch and causing problems. Caroline will find out who deals with geese culling and Stephen will check if bird scaring poles with hawks are still available to be put up at pitch. It was agreed Community Council would buy more if needed.
 - 4.2 HHP – Alan is continuing to liaise with Councillor Mitchell to get a response to earlier enquiries.
 - 4.3 Paisley Sisters – Hamish and John spoke to the necessary people and they are happy for this to proceed. The plan is to stabilise the ruin and put up an information board. There is £5k with the Harris Tweed Authority available for this project. Leverburgh Enhancement Group will take plans for a trail forward.
 - 4.4 Lobster Hatchery – This will stay in the Harris Plan. There is a national lobster hatchery in Padstow; Alan will contact them for advice.
 - 4.5 Port of Leverburgh – Alan spoke to Ken MacDonald who advised that there are issues with the map which need to be sorted out.
5. Harris Plan – Alan is on the committee which keeps the Harris Plan up to date. Anyone who knows of any planned developments or ideas should let him know. Harris Development Limited have received funding for a three year Development Officer Post, who will be based in South Harris at Seallam!, to take forward the Harris Plan and report to the Harris Forum. Marion raised the need for a new minibus for the community. She will find out who the Chair of the minibus committee is and speak with them.
6. Local Asset Management Pilot Scheme – The proposal seeks to ensure that there is local decision making around Crown Estate leases within the entire Outer Hebrides Marine Region out to 12nm by the establishment of an Outer Hebrides Marine Leasing Partnership which will receive lease applications and come to a view on the added value, environmental sustainability and socioeconomic characteristics of the lease proposal. The community council discussed and filled the form in. We agree in principal with the proposal; key stakeholders involved should be community councils, The Western Isles Fishermens Association and Community Trusts; key considerations should be creating socioeconomic benefits in the islands and the impact on fisheries; we disagree that the Marine Leasing Committee should have the final say on leases, this should be made by the communities affected; Renewable Energy particularly tidal should be prioritised in the Sound of Harris;

community impact assessments should not be restricted to Community Trusts and should be carried out by Community Councils where necessary; proposals should be supported by the community at large and consultation should be done with whole community possibly by postal ballot; and finally there is major concern that if there is no proposal for the direct involvement of the individual community then decisions may be made for the overall benefit for the Western Isles but adversely affecting an individual community.

7. Community Conversation – Alan, Stephen, Hamish and Caroline recently attended a Council Community Conversation event in Tarbert. There was opposition to the introduction of more E-Learning where it would be replacing teachers. There was also concern that communities may not have the assets or the personnel to take on some of the new responsibilities that the council are proposing. There will be further events to come.

8. Visitor Levy – Outer Hebrides Tourism have said that the whole of Harris and Lewis are against a levy. Community Council members present again expressed how much a levy is needed to fund much needed infrastructure.

9. Development at Northton – There is a proposal for six new holiday homes as well as four camping pods on Northton Common Grazings land. Developer recently met Northton villagers and a vote will be put to them. Alan spoke to Grazings Clerk Rebecca Hutton who will pass on more detailed plans from the Architect when she receives them. Concern that adding more tourist accommodation without new infrastructure was expressed by Community Council members.

10 Northton Sea Wall – The sea wall at Northton is disappearing. Councillor Cunningham raised this with Tech Services and was told that the sea wall is not protecting any Comhairle assets and so is not a priority. It was pointed out that the council built the wall so should be responsible.

11 BT Poles – Two members of the public were present to explain the problems they are having with their phones in Lingerbay. The phones are badly affected when it is windy and make crackling sounds and sometimes go off altogether. This is particularly worrying as one of the gentlemen is elderly and not in great health as well as not having a mobile signal. Hamish had sent Councillor Finnegan a note saying that someone with seniority needs to deal with this. Alan will speak to DI MacDonald to find out if he can help or who the Area Manager is. Hamish will find out what's happening with EE as that does not seem to be working in Lingerbay either.