

**BERNERA COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
Minutes of Meeting held Thursday 11 June 2020  
via Zoom Video Conference, 7.30pm-9pm.

**BCC members present via Zoom:** Joan Macaulay (Chair, JM), Cllr Norman MacDonald (NMD), Callum Richings (CR, Treasurer), Rhiannon Teather (Secretary, RT), Chrissie MacDonald (CM), Madeleine Macaulay (MM).

**Members of the public present via Zoom:** Julia Higginbottom (JH).

**Apologies:** Sue Long, Neil James Macaulay, Misty MacDonald, Cllr Angus Morrison and Cllr Ranald Fraser.

### **Previous Minutes**

The minutes for the meeting held on 14 May 2020 were approved by Madeleine Macaulay and seconded by Joan Macaulay.

### **Matters Arising**

It was noted that Virginia Allum resigned after the last meeting.

BCC welcomed the two co-opted members Chrissie MacDonald and Misty MacDonald.

### **Finance Update**

CR reported that the current account balance is £7099.36; monies received from Scottish and Southern for funding application (Magnar Cushion, Community iPads). MM queried whether the bank account could be upgraded in order to make the payment processes (e.g. for Magnar Cushion) more modern and efficient. She suggested replacing the current cheque book system with a bank card. The majority agreed this was a good idea. JM suggested it may be possible to upgrade the account online. CR to speak to the bank and investigate available upgrade options for the account.

### **Covid-19 Update**

JM provided an update. Since the last meeting, we collected six food boxes for Bernera residents from the Third Sector. Thus far three of the six boxes have been distributed. There was a discussion about the food boxes and a member shared a story about a resident receiving an unwanted food box, after a telephone call, from an unknown source (not BCC). Concern was expressed about this and there was a general discussion about the sensitivities involved with distributing food boxes. NMD recommended acquiring more food boxes to increase available supplies (especially as foodstuffs are non-perishables); JM relayed that the Bernera Shop has very kindly agreed to fill future food boxes and the Shop has six empty boxes ready in case of need. Since the previous meeting, we also distributed the official NHS Health Board leaflet (listing all contact numbers and helpful information) to every home in Bernera and Tir Mor. This included a note about the availability of food boxes for anyone that needs one. SL was not present at the meeting but it was noted that the committee is still awaiting sight of the list of

volunteers for each village. NMD recommended that the volunteer list be circulated to both the BCC and BCA.

### **Funding Update / Future Project Ideas**

JM provided an update. Our application to Scottish and Southern for funding for a Magnar Cushion and community iPads was awarded £1,500. This was less than originally hoped for on account of the volume of applications. It will be enough for the Magnar Cushion, with hopefully with some funds left over for community iPads, especially if the VAT can be reclaimed.

There was a discussion about who might need iPads and how to help support people in using them (especially if unfamiliar with the technology). NMD explained that the IT Services at the Comhairle can help to put any resident needing assistance in touch with someone in the community who can teach them how to use the iPads. MM noted the difficulties involved in teaching individuals how to operate the technology, especially via phone/computer rather than in person. MM also suggested that we put a note in the upcoming BCA newsletter about the community iPads to try and help identify individuals who might benefit from one. All were in agreement about including this information in the BCA newsletter. JM to approach KM about this.

MM had produced an excellent list of funding ideas prior to the meeting and asked for further suggestions. CR suggested development/repair of both skip sites (only really possible to use one side of the recycling skip). RT suggested a community woodland project and also queried whether the Challenge Fund was going ahead this year. NMD confirmed this funding probably would be available as usual – and that anything up to £2,000 or £1,000 of funds will be available for community projects depending on the volume of applications. CnES will confirm in coming weeks.

### **Human Remains on Little Bernera**

JM relayed that we have had a few resident queries about human remains on Little Bernera (due to coastal erosion of graveyard) and that this issue had been raised with the Council. NMD detailed that he had spoken to a resident and Calum Mackenzie at Tech Services about using gabion baskets to solve this issue. The challenge will be finding the required rubble and stones to fill the gabion baskets – may not be sufficient supplies on Little Bernera, so extra rubble/stones might need to be supplied from elsewhere. It was noted we have had some local volunteers come forward who would be willing to help and offer use of their boats. JM raised the issue of how this would be paid for. NMD explained that Tech Services said the gabion baskets would be supplied for free; the community will probably need to supply manpower, transport and rubble/stones to fill the baskets. It was noted that Environmental Health have been in touch with the owner of the island but not received a response. JM asked who would need to be notified about the repair works; NMD replied that the Comhairle will not object to the repairs, so this is not required, but the owner of the island will need to be approached.

## AOCB

1. **Magnar Cushion.** MM was given the go-ahead to order the Magnar Cushion.
2. **Kirkibost Toilets Cleaner Payments.** CR raised this issue and the payment of the new cleaner of the Kirkibost toilets was discussed. The previous delay in arranging payment was noted. JH reported that the Kirkibost toilets are still being used by fishermen and currently being cleaned once or twice a week. JM to email CR's contact details to the cleaner so they can be paid as soon as possible.
3. **Daily Ceilidh.** JH explained the role and purpose of the new newsletter/website. All different community groups have been approached to offer information for residents. JH explained that in the course of the project a small number of individuals have been identified who do not have broadband, access to internet/telephone banking, or technological devices sufficient for their needs. She expressed the importance of thinking innovatively about communication in the current circumstances. Responding to the point about device poverty, MM suggested that there are technological devices available for children (some 500 devices distributed); anyone who is struggling should (at the very least) be able to get on a list for support. First and foremost parents should contact the school, who should be able to acquire devices or facilitate access to them for children who need them.
4. **Resident Feedback.** JH expressed her views about the BCC's Covid-19 response and the general issue of community representation. There was a debate about whether more could be done to support people. BCC members emphasised that it is only possible to help people who ask for help and strongly encouraged those who are in contact with people who are struggling to help them approach the BCC, the BCA, and the Development Trust, or alternatively to self-refer to the appropriate services. All the main help lines and support services were listed on the NHS Health Board leaflet which was distributed to every home by the BCC.
5. **BCA Bernera Cafe Takeout Service.** CR expressed his gratitude for this new community food takeout service. All were in agreement – a warm thanks from the BCC to all those who are involved.
6. **Petrol Pumps.** To be taken forward. JM to consult the BCA on this. NMD explained that the funding will be allocated in the coming weeks and efforts should be directed towards bridging the gap for the rest of the funds (c.£20,000 still needed). NMD recommended approaching the HiE and exploring other possible sources of funding as soon as possible.
7. **BCA Newsletter.** JM queried when this would be coming out. CM to find out.
8. **Who needs an iPad?** All members to ask around the community. In response to previous contributions, JM asked JH if she can refer people to the BCC who might benefit from an iPad. NMD to make enquiries about whether existing devices can be upgraded for people who already have them. NMD to investigate options and pass this information to JM.

**Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 9 July 2020, 7.30pm.**

Please write to [berneracomcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:berneracomcouncil@gmail.com) to raise any issues or suggest ideas.