

BERNERA COMMUNITY COUNCIL**Minutes for Meeting held on****Thursday 11th March 2021****6.45pm-8pm (via Zoom)****BCC Members Present (via Zoom)**

Joan Macaulay (Chair, JM), Madeleine Macaulay (MM), Neil James Macaulay (NJM), Chrissie Macdonald (CM), Calum Richings (Treasurer, CR), Rhiannon Teather (Secretary, RT), Cllr Norman Macdonald (NMD).

Also Present (via Zoom)

Kenneth Macaulay (KM), Calum Mackenzie (CMK, CnES), Patrick de La Lanne (PL), Natalie Bowling (NB), Simon Niederberger.

Apologies

Alice Murray, Norman Macdonald, Cllr Ranald Fraser, Cllr Angus Morrison.

1. Welcome**2. Previous Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 11 February 2021 were approved by Neil James Macaulay and seconded by Chrissie Macdonald.

3. Matters Arising**4. Finance Update**

CR provided a finance update: balance is 6,913.07. Since the beginning of the year, 13,400 spend on Petrol Pumps. JM queried the total figure of spending thus far, including before Christmas (31,000 allocated for the project originally); CR to follow up and clarify from previous statements; noting deposits etc. were paid prior. CR noted Hydro is still to be paid. CR to sign form for Crown Estate funds for Bosta and return to JM the following day.

MM queried whether any progress had been made with upgrading BCC account to digital banking. It was agreed this would be both timely and more efficient. It was suggested the upgrade could probably be done over the phone in just a few hours if it is not possible to have a meeting at the bank in person at present. CR to follow up.

5. Funding (Crown Estate, HIE, Bosta)

JM provided an update. The funding for Bosta toilets (upgrade, new solar panels, new septic tank; 10,000 from the Crown Estate and 12,000 from HiE) will be available soon. There was some discussion about the types of solar panels that will be installed; JM confirmed these have already been ordered. BCA have also received funding for solar panels at the Community Centre (15,000).

6. Petrol Pumps

CR provided an update: the hydro cable is in but not yet connected, the shed is completed, all of the ducting is in place and there is now fuel in the tanks. We are still awaiting connection by service providers (Hydro and BT) but these are being followed up.

7. Ditches and Drainage

RT provided an update. The list of areas requiring maintenance (compiled by residents and BCC) was sent to Mr MacRitchie. We had a quick response confirming that these will be put into the maintenance programme for 2021-22. NMD reported that the budget settlement has freed up some money for road improvements which means CnES finances are better than predicted. There will be additional funding coming from the Scottish Government for maintenance of roads, ditches and pot holes.

8. Association of Community Councils Update and Housing

RT provided an update. Earlier this year Community Councils were contacted about re-establishing an Association of Community Councils from across Lewis. JM and RT have been attending preliminary meetings as BCC reps. The inaugural meeting was held on Tuesday 2 March, during which the constitution was approved and office bearers were elected: Alex John Murray (Point CC) as Chair, RT (BCC) as Vice Chair, Jacqueline Ferguson (Breasclete CC) as Secretary, Joanne Dixon as Treasurer (Point CC). RT outlined function and remit of Association as set out in constitution: ascertain views of member Community Councils, forum for discussion of views, act as a lobbying body in areas of interest identified or agreed, facilitate flow of info between Community Councils and CnES, provide assistance to Community Councils.

In future meetings, organisations and reps to be invited – in the last meeting, among other things, housing was highlighted as a key area for future agenda; reps to be invited from HHP, CnES etc. RT queried which areas BCC would like to put forward as a priority, especially on housing. There was a discussion about housing sites previously identified (Old Manse, now sold), Glebe, historic issues with title deeds and land not being decrofted. Land procurement highlighted as an issue to be taken forward.

9. Bernera Bridge Update w/Calum Mackenzie (CMK, CnES)

CMK provided an update. The site investigation team due to come to Bernera have been delayed until the end of the month. It is hoped that the time can be made up once the site investigation team is on the island. With this delay factored in, the new bridge should be passable by the end of June. The service diversion work will proceed as planned.

NMD requested assurance be provided that the money allocated for Bernera Bridge budget from CnES and the Scottish Government will not be redistributed for other road projects (this point had been agreed elsewhere). CMK explained that the Scottish Government have announced that they will contribute to the cost of the bridge but the amount is as yet unspecified. There is a funding shortfall at present but the project will not be held back as there is flexibility in the budget to cover the cost of the bridge. CMK provided reassurance that the bridge has been ordered and that it will arrive mid-April; preparatory works with site investigations will be visible in the coming weeks. CR along with other members of the community have put themselves forward as contacts after a site meeting to help assist.

NB queried whether there was a risk of further delays. CMK responded that the delayed site investigation team are programmed in for late March or early April. Teams are very busy with works on the mainland.

KM reported that gas canisters have cost £800 thus far; in the period Nov-April it would normally cost £650. CR responded that gas contractors have a contractual obligation to provide the service and should not be levying additional charges. CMK added that the gas contractors do not have a small enough tank container and this is the crux of the problem. There are also legal restrictions on the transportation of bulk gas bottles. CMK stated that he appreciates the forbearance of the community and the plan is that the bridge will be passable by the end of June.

NB queried whether 'passable' refers only to cars or if this means passable to all vehicles. CMK clarified passable means for all vehicles.

PL queried whether it would be possible to have photographs of the present works. JM responded that they have not yet begun; CMK added that activity would begin in the coming weeks. It will be the end of April before the large components arrive. Artists impressions are available. CR referred to a plan to have time-lapsed footage of the works for the historical recorded. NMD concurred and suggested both sides of the approach should be filmed. It was indicated that documenting the works was built into the contract but the logistics are yet to be confirmed.

10. AOCB

Info boards. CR has had discussions about this with Mr Gillies at a site meeting and asked for information about the area available for parking and the information board as the current space will be lost. The information board is useful for the community so there was agreement this should be reinstated once works are completed.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 8 April 2021 at 6.45pm.

Please contact: berneracomcouncil@gmail.com to make suggestions or raise any issues. The minutes from previous meetings, dating back to 2012, can be found at: <https://e-sgire.org/communities/ward4/community-associations/>