

BERNERA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes for Meeting held on

Thursday 10 June 2021

6.45pm-8pm (via Zoom)

BCC Members Present (via Zoom)

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

Also Present (via Zoom)

Calum Mackenzie (CMK, CnES), Zachary Taylor (ZT), Simon and Emma Niederberger, Brenda Jones (BJ), Callum Macaulay (CM).

Apologies

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

1. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 May 2021 were approved by Calum Richings and seconded by Norman Macdonald.

2. Matters Arising

3. Finance Update

CR update. The current balance is 10663.07. 2380 to be paid out for Petrol Pumps (plus installation which is another 280), as well as another bill of a comparable sum for Pumps. Total of around 5,500 left after these payments. It was noted CM is still to be paid for pontoons planning, CR requested receipts. CM stated he emailed an invoice awhile ago but agreed he will resend this. CR agreed the invoice will be paid as soon as possible. RT put forward the request from LACC for £50 to contribute to fund for the LACC clerk/running costs. All members agreed to this. RT to follow-up.

4. Housing in Bernera (Letter, Future Meetings, Reps)

JM provided an update. A meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday 15th, 6pm, for the housing letter to be approved and/or edited. JM will send out invitation as soon as possible for this. RT provided an update that we have received an invitation to participate in Housing Needs Demand Assessment pilot, ahead of the live version scheduled for release on 21st June. It was agreed it would be helpful for Bernera to participate in the test run; RT to follow up.

5. Island Ferries / Lewis Association of CCs

RT provided an update, noting the circulation of the written update from Jacqui Ferguson (LACC Clerk) after the LACC ferry meeting. The minutes will be circulated once available. RT provided a brief report of the meeting, stating that participants were concerned about the lack of a long term solution and it was emphasised that Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government need to be held accountable. It was noted that it had been raised at the meeting that it is essential that we have a dedicated freight ferry but reps from CMAL and Transport Scotland were reluctant to agree to this.

In relation to this, members discussed the additional pressures due to summer tourism. ZT suggested that there is a good opportunity for lobbying at the moment. It is essential that the needs of island communities are higher on the agenda, especially with the UK Government post-Brexit and the additional funding available. JM reported that Comharlie have written to PM Boris Johnson. The concern about the long term lack of regular maintenance for ferries due to the lack of a spare ferry was raised. Others expressed concern about reports the Loch Seaforth had come back from the dry dock without a full repair.

6. Funding (Crown Estate, HIE, Bosta) and Petrol Pumps

ND provided an update regarding the Petrol Pumps. The Petrol Pumps should be open by the end of the month as the fuel pump has arrived and there is an installation date for the 21st. CM provided an update about the Bosta works. He reported the panels have arrived and the works are ongoing. It was queried whether the toilets would be open for tourists. He responded the toilets will be open for tourists and only one will be shut at any one time. CM reported that in the past few weeks, there have been a couple of blockages which had to be fixed, including peat in the pipes and an eel. JM queried the completion date. CM responded he is still waiting for a couple of items but is hoping for the end of the month.

7. Bernera Graveyards

To take forward; ND to look at potential sites. NJM to follow up about Little Bernera, as the materials still need to be taken over for the repair of the wall.

8. Bernera Bridge Update w/ CnES rep Calum Mackenzie

CMK provided a bridge update. He advised that the new date for the bridge to be fully open is now 21 September 2021. CMK explained that it has become increasingly apparent that opening the bridge early with temporary works (an option previously considered to enable some heavy loads to cross) would cause further delays to the final opening of the bridge. It is also apparent that construction contractors would require unrestricted access whilst undertaking a building project rather than be starting and stopping at critical stages. With a view to not causing further delays and disappointment, and also allowing unrestricted access across the bridge, the firm date is now 21 September. Once the contractors are able to put heavy vehicles across, it will be possible for others to do the same.

BJ stated that many dates have been quoted and revised subsequently and queried on what basis is this date more set than the others. CMK responded that dates have adjusted according to the advice given by engineers as the situation has progressed. It is now understood that the

abutment bearings and the approaches with retaining walls will need time to set prior to loading the structures. The contractor is certain of 21 September date, but optimistic that as soon as they can run their own vehicles on it, they can allow residents to do the same.

ZT asked about CMK's level of confidence in the date holding and how much credence it should be given. CMK stated that he had more confidence in this date than previous dates, where we were operating with more optimistic advice. Currently things are going well on site and the ground conditions are favourable. Bridge contractor can be ready once the ground works are done; there is an allowance of 7 weeks in the programme, however it may be possible to complete this in 5 weeks.

BJ requested milestones between now and 21 September so that we can better assess whether we are on track. CMK said he would pass a copy of the key milestones in writing to JM. CMK outlined that key milestones included: abutment preparation, bridge contractor starting assembly, pushing structure across, and approach roads. Bridge components are being assembled in factory. He reported that we are currently slightly ahead of schedule. CR requested an update at the bridge; it was agreed he would exchange contact details with CMK.

CMK was thanked for his clear and succinct brief at the meeting.

9. AOCB

1. **Community Centre Gym.** We received a query in the mailbox about when this would be reopening. ND reported that BCA are looking to reopen the cafe and the gym as soon as possible. CM stated that single-users or family units may be able to use the gym soon, hopefully from 21st June, and each and every member will be responsible for cleaning. Only BCA members can use it. Masks have to be worn.
2. **AGM.** It was noted we are overdue for our BCC AGM. The hall availability was queried and it was noted that the hall can be booked from June 21st, as it will be open for community group members from then. NMD noted social distancing still needs to be maintained, so it will be some time before usual numbers can be resumed. He noted annual accounts have to be submitted at the same time. Date to be decided.
3. **Dogs at Bosta.** MM has received some complaints about large dogs on Bosta frightening children as well as the increased waste. It is early in the year and bound to get worse. It was suggested that individuals should be spoken to if this is observed. It was also noted that the signage has been taken down which had previously helped resolve the problem. CM and ND noted that the signage issue could be referred to the Grazings Committees.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 8 July 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/>