

Pairc Community Council Meeting

Thursday 30th September 2021, 7.30pm – Kershader Resource Centre & via MS Teams

Present: Morris Black (Chair)
Karis Beattie (Secretary)
Louise Nicolson (Treasurer)
Lyndsay Montgomery (Vice Chair)
Anna Macleod
Doro Reider
David Skene (via MS Teams)
Iain Nicolson (via MS Teams)

Apologies: Norry Macleod
Margaret Mackin
Councillor Grant Fulton
Councillor Paul Finnegan
Councillor John Mitchell

Attending: Fiona Stokes
Donald (Monty) Montgomery

1. Welcome & Apologies

Morris welcomed everyone as chair and commented on how good it was that the meeting could be held in person and online. The apologies were noted.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from the 26th August 2021 were proposed as accurate by Louise and seconded by Karis.

3. Matters Arising

Defibrillator upkeep - Louise reported on the position with the machines that require new batteries and pads. £1159 will have been spent from reserved funds by the next meeting and further fundraising will be required for ongoing maintenance. It was suggested that each village should be taking responsibility for their own machines. It was also commented that further machines could be purchased for those villages without a defib.

Pairc Assets Handyperson – Neil has been given a job sheet for work required.

Skip Concerns – Iain reported that a sign to display opening times for the skip will cost approximately £40 plus sundries for siting it beside the skip. Discussions on whether to re-site it are still ongoing with the cemetery committee.

4G coverage – Iain is happy to continue discussions with Orinsay residents who are in 'not-spots' and Gareth Wells from the Scottish Government Digital Connectivity Division, who is investigating the matter.

Taigh Celidh – Iain has been speaking to the previous committee and has collated information on their involvement with the building. This had been distributed to the group by email.

4. Sgoil na Pairc

PCC had arranged a meeting on 21st September to discuss the current position with Pairc school. Attending were: Karis Beattie, Morris Black, Iain Nicolson (PCC) Lyndsay Montgomery (Parent council), Pairc Trust (Fiona Stokes), William Macdonald (CNES Education director), Donald Macleod (Senior Education Officer, CNES) Trish Macleod (Head-teacher, Pairc & Sgoil Nan Loch). William and Donald offered a verbal assurance that there would be no school closures and that closure is never a purely financial decision. The Gaelic Medium Unit at Pairc is currently 'mothballed' and the group discussed how the 'Gaelic First' policy works against new children enrolling at Pairc, if Gaelic is to be the default. Donald and William acknowledged this unintended consequence, but said there was scope within the review process to re-open the GMU if parents want to see Gaelic provision at Pairc.

All agreed how important it is to have a school in the area; it is the heart of a community in many ways and issues surrounding catchment areas, ward changes, transportation, pre-school provision and housing were discussed.

It was agreed that: PCC will send a letter/statement to the community making everyone aware of the serious issues surrounding the school's viability and the result of this meeting. The wording is to be agreed by CNES and forwarded to the MSP's and councillors. Karis to draft and circulate to the committee.

5. Housing meeting with Pairc Trust

Karis & Morris met on 23rd September with Fiona Stokes, Angus Nicolson and Kenny Mackay of the Pairc Trust to share information on their work to progress new housing in Pairc. All agreed that more could be achieved by joint working from here onwards. Grazing committees and individuals who could help make land/buildings available for housing should be contacted directly at a village level, rather than a blanket letter/email.

It was agreed that: Housing will be included in the letter/statement about the school to raise awareness. Karis will feedback to the Lewis Association of Community Councils about the stance being taken in Pairc.

6. Eishken Grazings

Morris explained the background to a grazings lease used by Pairc crofters at Feiriosbhal on the Eishken estate. The graziers are an un-constituted group and have operated on a cash economy historically. There is fencing that needs to be erected, of which Eishken have agreed to pay half, but if the graziers cannot access match funding the grazing may be lost for the future. As PCC is representative of all of Pairc, Morris proposed that PCC apply for funding on behalf of the Feiriosbhal graziers.

It was agreed that: Following a unanimous vote, PCC will use their bank account to hold funding for the graziers in reserve, but the application to MCWFT will be organised by the graziers.

7. MCWFT 2021/22

Monty accepted a cheque for £1000 on behalf of Garyvard Grazing Committee for the work at Garyvard playing field. £4000 remains for the 2021/22 allocation. The group discussed PCC being able to apply to the fund to support the running costs of the Taigh Celidh – the SSE rates for electricity have increased.

It was agreed that: The Taigh Celidh issue will be raised at the next meeting – overall costs to be collated beforehand by Louise. A new form will be designed to fit the needs of Pairc groups – David to re-edit. All groups to be made aware of the application process and a deadline set for the end of November. The councillors will be invited to the next meeting to discuss access to ward funding.

8. Ravenspoint

The group discussed the current situation affecting Ravenspoint and were in consensus on the vital importance of having the facility open for the community. Pairc cannot afford to lose its shop and petrol station especially.

It was agreed that: The community council is fully supportive of the Cho-Chomunn na Pairc and will endeavour to help in any way to keep Ravenspoint open. Iain and Lyndsay agreed to attend the upcoming meetings to discuss a way forward.

9. AOCB

The Habost post-box enquiry is ongoing, but Karis felt it was unlikely that it could be moved via Royal Mail procedures.

10. Date of next meeting - Thursday 28th October 7.30pm. Resource Centre, Kershader and via MS Teams