

# North Uist Community Council Meeting Comhairle Coimhearsnachd Uibhist a Tuath



<b>MINUTES</b>	<b>Date:</b> Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm	<b>Location:</b> Via Microsoft teams
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<b>Present:</b>	Joan Ferguson (Vice Chair)	Flora MacDonald
	Michelle MacDonald (Secretary)	Uisdean Robertson Cllr
	Donald Angie MacLennan	
	Kenneth MacDonald	
<b>Apologies:</b>	John MacDonald (Treasurer)	Effie Rodger
	Donald Ewen Morrison	Conor Lawless
	Rachel MacLean	Iain MacLeod Cllr
	Raghnall Maclain	Roddy MacKay Cllr
<b>Public:</b>	Jemma MacVicar (North Uist and Benbecula Locality planning Group)	

1.	<p><b>Apologies:</b> Apologies given by Joan.</p>
2.	<p><b>Adoption of minutes/action list:</b> FMD proposed the minutes from the previous meeting, JF second them.</p> <p>Cars at Clachan (beside recycling bin) have been uplifted, only one left. Suggestion made to place sign here saying not to dump vehicles. <b>Uisdean to ask council regarding possible sign.</b></p> <p>Secretary – Conor has agreed to fill in as temporary secretary until an EGM is held.</p> <p>BCC Fund – agreed to go for set amount and we will share the funding between different groups.</p> <p>Chemo in Uist and Barra Hospital – Flights have been purposely scheduled to allow for day trips to Stornoway for chemo patients. Uisdean to find out why chemo can no longer happen in U+B Hospital.</p>

3.	<p><b><i>Introduction to Jemma MacVicar – North Uist and Benbecula locality planning group:</i></b></p> <p>Jemma introduced herself and gave a PowerPoint on the North Uist and Benbecula locality planning group. The group looks at needs in our local area and focuses on the care and maintenance of the area, employment, childcare, and transport. Anyone who wishes to see a copy of the PowerPoint can email <a href="mailto:northuistcommunitycouncil@gmail.com">northuistcommunitycouncil@gmail.com</a></p> <p>Joan to email Raghnaalls contact details to Jemma to discuss Sollas playpark</p> <p>Question regarding dog fouling posters was asked – Jemma can send posters to anyone that needs them, and she is open to suggestions on locations for them.</p> <p>Question was also asked if signs could be put up indicating locations for public toilets and waste disposal points.</p> <p>CC members agreed to invite Jemma to all our meetings.</p>
4.	<p><b><i>Ferry Service:</i></b></p> <p>We have asked Alasdair Allan to find out about penalties on the Hebrides route if running late, still to hear back. Discussed correspondence received from Alasdair and Transport Scotland.</p> <p>Uisdean has had meetings with the health board to try and stop the delay for patients traveling to hospital for appointments.</p> <p>Ferry group proposed with subgroup for each part I.E lochmaddy, Lochboisdale etc.</p>
5.	<p><b><i>Kilmuir cemetery-rabbits:</i></b></p> <p>Joan showed picture of deep rabbit hole beside grave. Joan to meet with Uisdean at Kilmuir cemetery to discuss and find solution.</p>
6.	<p><b><i>Councilors report:</i></b></p> <p><b><u>Lochmaddy</u></b></p> <p>Enabling Works Contract – construction works ongoing; completion due mid-July  Main Works Contract - Selection Stage concluded and Invitations to Tender to be issued shortly; tender submission deadline end September 2021;  consideration of Final Business Case by Transport Scotland by end October 2021; contract award by end November 2021; construction start January 2022;  construction completion January 2023</p> <p><b><u>Uig</u></b></p> <p>Contract ward being progress by The Highland Council subject to conclusion of funding model and agreement with Transport Scotland; outage of linkspan still</p>

scheduled for September 2022 to February 2023; alternative service arrangements subject to consultation by CalMac in accordance with CHFS provisions through Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group

### **Surfacing.**

Proposed surfacing areas. Breedon's are coming down on Monday next week and starting in the South.

Hougharry is one of the worst roads we have at the moment. It is in a bad way basically from the Village, right down to the Huna Junction with the A865. Structurally it's not too bad, it's the existing surfacing that's rotten and past its "use-by" date.

The roads squad have done a pretty good job at keeping it passable as much as possible.

In terms of length 40t will probably give us about 160m of surfacing. It could easily take the whole 340t!

Proposed surfacing areas in Uist.

Lochportain = 40t  
Hougharry = 40t  
Grimsay =55t  
Liniclate =65t  
Locheynort =50t  
Kilphedar =90t

### **STPR2.**

Overall, the STPR2 Update and Phase 1 Recommendations, in the view of the Comhairle, are orientated strongly towards infrastructure owned and operated by Scottish Ministers. This automatically excludes island communities and this lack of inclusion is exacerbated by the 'sifting out' of key island transport priorities which the Comhairle and its partners have worked for years to progress. The STPR2 Update and Phase 1 Recommendations, if they follow the current trajectory, will exclude some of Scotland's most fragile communities from national transport strategy objectives for the next 20 years. Furthermore, these will set back the islands' fragile transport network from its current position. The Comhairle questions the value that Transport Scotland has attached to these fragile communities and its commitment to take the issue of Transport Poverty seriously (as NTS2 has stated that it would), while these islands are ranked highest for Transport Poverty in the Highlands and Islands. Indeed, a key driver for STPR2 should be to address Transport Poverty across Scotland and reduce regional inequality.

For the above reasons, the Comhairle cannot support STPR2 in its current form but will continue to work with Transport Scotland, its consultants and Highlands and Islands stakeholders, to ensure that island transport priorities are not ignored as national transport strategy for the next 20 years is being developed and that more favourable transport outcomes can be achieved for our islands.

### **Scolpaig.**

In terms of future management of the land area at Scolpaig Farm, with support from the Comhairle's Legal team and in partnership with RSPB, an outline habitat management plan has been developed. Expressions of interest in a seasonal grazings let (in order to deliver the plan) have been sought. Given the significant level of interest amongst local crofters (16 expressions of interest), a formal application process has been developed to ensure transparency and fairness in granting the lease.

The Application Form and assessment criteria process is being finalised and will be sent out to the interested parties shortly.

#### **Skye/Uist Cable.**

SSEN published their draft ED2 Business Plan 'Powering Communities to Net Zero' (2023 to 2028). The draft Plan includes a proposal for two new 33kV subsea cables between Skye and the Uists, one to North Uist and one to South Uist. The proposal is for a ring circuit to be introduced to the Uists in order to enhance network resilience and a by-product of this ring circuit will be a doubling of current cable capacity from 14MW to 28MW. Export from the Uists will continue to be constrained by the need for downstream Transmission upgrades in Skye which are still scheduled for 2025 / 2026. SSEN point out that, if there is a significant uplift in connection demand on Skye in response to these Transmission upgrades, there could be an impact on the volume of generation that can be exported from the Uists.

During preparation of the ED2 Business Plan, SSEN consulted the Comhairle on several occasions. During these engagements, Comhairle Officers pushed SSEN to consider renewal of the Skye – Uist cable while introducing increased capacity in the new cable(s). The draft ED2 Business Plan therefore represents a good outcome for us but there is still work to be done as formal consultation takes place around the draft Business Plan over coming months. The consultation period for the draft Business Plan is now open and SSEN intend to submit a finalised Business Plan for OFGEM approval in December this year. We will be engaging fully in this consultation over the coming months and will continue to push for the higher capacity ring circuit solution to be included in the finalised Business Plan. Hopefully, OFGEM will then approve the necessary £64m investment when they consider Plan contents early in 2022.

#### **Loganair.**

##### **Benbecula**

With effect from 21 June 2021, a dedicated Glasgow service and a full Stornoway schedule would resume which would assist with patient travel, particularly those who undergo chemotherapy treatment on Tuesdays. Jonathan Hinkles had confirmed that the fleet replacement programme continued on the phasing out of the SAAB 340s for ATR turboprop by early 2023. Due to the pandemic there were extremely good leasing terms on the ATRS and Loganair would take advantage to continue with fleet transition.

The current PSO service between Benbecula and Stornoway had been extended to next year but a careful eye would have to be kept on this as Comhairle budgets come under increasing pressures.

#### **Under 22's Ferry Travel.**

Transport Scotland has recently undertaken an Islands Community Impact Assessment (ICIA) of free bus travel for U22s and has sought the views of stakeholders. The Comhairle responded and indicated that the scheme would

	<p>have limited economic impact for young people on islands in comparison to young people on the Scottish mainland as they need to travel by ferry to access educational, social, recreational, sporting and employment opportunities on the mainland.</p> <p><b>Barpa Langass.</b> A bid had been submitted to Historic Environment Scotland for funding to do work on the Barp which was in need of stabilising work.</p> <p><b>Community Renewal Fund and Levelling-Up Fund.</b> Comhairle were submitting a bid to the Community Renewal Fund and following up with further bids into the Levelling-Up Fund in October. Detail of bids not finalized but should include Spinal Route, Bridges and Causeways.</p>
7.	<p><b>EGM:</b> Next meeting will be an EGM, need to find new chair, vice chair and secretary. Date to be confirmed.</p>
8.	<p><b>Correspondence received:</b> Letter from Trianaid regarding speed signs, they have asked about increasing the amount of speed signs and suggesting that the speed be taken down from 40mph to 30mph due to the vulnerable residents. Need to find out what information is needed to propose a decrease in speed limit. Agreed to add to agenda for next meeting.</p>
9.	<p><b>AOCB:</b> Concern was raised regarding the road at the bottom of the hill at Kersavagh in Lochmaddy. Water has washed away the road and it has become hazardous when going up the hill. Uisdean to speak to Roads department at CnES. Donald Angie to take pictures of road and send them to Conor.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Date of next meeting: To be confirmed</b></p>

### Actions list:

- Uisdean to ask council regarding possible 'no dumping vehicles' sign at clachan/locheport road end.
- Joan to email Raghnaills contact details to Jemma to discuss Sollas playpark
- Uisdean to speak to Roads department at CnES
- Donald Angie to take pictures of road and send them to Conor.