

North Uist Community Council

Comhairle Coimhearsnachd Uibhist a Tuath

MS Teams, 19:30 Tuesday, 28th September 2021



MEETING MINUTES

Present:

Cllr Uisdean Robertson
Joan Ferguson (Acting Chair)
John MacDonald (Treasurer)
Conor Lawless (Acting Secretary)
Flora MacDonald
Ragnall Maclain
Donald Angie MacLennan
Michelle MacDonald
Kenneth MacDonald

Apologies: Effie Rodger, Cllr Roddy MacKay

Public: Peter Coldwell

Joan and Conor stood down as acting chairperson and secretary respectively. Uisdean took over the chair and called for nominations for chair.

Flora nominated Joan and Conor seconded. No other candidates were nominated. Joan became chairperson.

Uisdean called for nominations for vice-chairperson. Joan nominated Conor and John seconded. No other candidates were nominated. Conor became vice-chairperson.

No secretary nominated, but Ragnall offered to approach Eilidh Maclain. Will consider advertising.

AP Joan and Conor will fill in in the meantime.

Peter Coldwell is the CnES biodiversity and access officer. He described that CnES struggle to win funding for access and would like to support community groups to apply for funding instead, and thinks they should be more successful. Described establishment of countryside trust. Peter chairs the deer management group and DMG meeting coming up soon. Lindsay Wainwright will distribute draft plan soon. Uisdean mentioned goose management. Peter said will try to make goose management plan soon.

AP Peter to send draft DMG plan.

AP Conor to arrange to talk to Peter about access.

AP Conor to arrange in person meeting about deer management.

Adoption of minutes:

Flora proposed and Ken seconded

Matters arising:

Uisdean requested “no dumping vehicles” sign for Clachan, beside recycling bin. However not checked up on that.

Uisdean raised questions around transport for chemotherapy with HIAL etc. Loganair quite helpful. Uisdean looking for details of examples of problems travelling for chemo.

AP Joan to get in touch with Cathy Laing to ask her to describe her experience

Playparks NUCC have £12k to share between Lochmaddy & Sollas projects. Conor mentioned that budget required for Lochmaddy > £120k.

AP Keep on agenda

AP Ragnall to check if Sollas bid active

Joan suggested Berneray & North Uist transport group. It was also suggested that perhaps there were already too many groups, with conflicting views, which suited Transport Scotland, CMAL etc.

Question about CalMac taking a late Friday ferry sailing from Lochmaddy to give early Monday sailing for freight. Not happening?

Uisdean spoke with Peter about rabbits in June. Can't do anything until grass cutting season is over. Joan got quotes for gassing.

AP Conor Send photos from D A McLennan of road condition to Uisdean

Ragnall proposed offering elections to 5th & 6th years at Sgoil Lionacleit for places on NUCC. There was some support for this idea, but some questions about how to support these young people: should be like taking on apprentices, obligation to train, mentor etc.

Communication with community. There was some correspondence criticising NUCC's publication of consultation on Spaceport CAA application. Several emails critical of solely using facebook to relay important information to community. Some members and councillors do not use facebook regularly. Older community members not confident with computers. One email reminded us about the Scottish Government's good practice guidance for local authorities and community councils:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-authorities-and-community-councils-good-practice-guidance/>

CnES e-Sgìre not good for publishing and archiving minutes: not updated since January 2020, minutes not searchable (only in .pdf format) and archives before 2017 display error messages.

AP Joan to contact Belle-Anne from e-Sgìre

AP Joan & Conor to investigate setting up mailing list for North Uist for distributing minutes and notifications

Councillor's report

Housing

The Western Isles have been awarded for 43 million over the next 5 years for housing. The money as per last time will go through the Registered Social Landlord, HHP. It is hoped that the money can be spend more appropriately this time or we will end up in the same situation that we did last time where most of the infrastructure was built in Stornoway because it was both cheaper and easier to do. We have had some discussion already about this spend and the need for flexibility. The Uist and Barra Housing Action Group would hope to be able to get hold of some of this fund in order to have a fairer spend in Uist and Barra. This group have now appointed a Development Worker Eddie Egan and his email address is eddie.egan@uistbarrahousing.org.uk

Lochmaddy Harbour

- Original main works contract with L&M Keating Ltd terminated 4 November 2020; contract administration concluded and pursuit of drawdown of Performance Bond on-going.
- Interim safety and security works by local contractor complete.
- Construction of the Enabling Works Package No.3 by Macaulay Askernish Ltd in collaboration with Scottish water and S&SE ongoing with completion due mid-September 2021.
- Manufacture of the permanent fender assemblies continuing through contract step-in arrangements with Trelleborg; components to be provided free issue to the new main contractor for installation during the course of the main works.
- Re-tendering of main works contract ongoing at time of writing with deadline for tenders being 17 September 2021
- Following the tender evaluation process and identification of the preferred bidder, consultation to be undertaken with Transport Scotland regarding a revised funding model and agreement based on the revised project cost. Matters then subject of consideration by and the agreement of Transport Scotland's Investment Decision Making (IDM) Board at end November 2021. The award of the Main Works Contract likely now by end December 2021, construction start February 2022 and completion February 2023.

CMAL/Calmac

Uisdean had met with Kevin Hobbs, Chief Executive Officer of CMAL recently. There was a discussion round the timeline for 801 and 802. It appears that 802 might meet its timeline. This was because there are less problems to be put right compared to 801 which had been at a more advanced stage when the yard was taken over. We had discussions round the two Islay vessels that have been ordered as well. Suggestions made that rather than just order two why can't we order 4 or even 6 which would help to sort out the various issues we have

just now round the Calmac network. The new ferries being ordered are able to be used at all ports rather than as the case currently where ferries can only be used at certain ports round the network. We also had some discussion round the Sound of Barra and Sound of Harris economic study that's ongoing at the moment. Particular concern had been raised relating to connectivity issues. Ferry timetables should be constructed in such a way as to allow patients from Barra to catch the morning flight up to Stornoway if they were attending hospital in Stornoway. Also discussions round the Little Minch Services and in particular the need to split the Little Minch Services between Lochmaddy-Uig and Tarbert which has had a shared ferry for the last 57 years. Suggestions made that when the Glen Sannox was available next year that the Caley Isles could be brought in to augment the service along with the Hebrides during summer. Other issues raised were to do with deep cleaning and the request to have equipment available on board the ferry so that crew could do the deep cleaning rather than waiting for a mainland contractor to come which was lengthening the amount of time the ferry was out of action. Also some discussion round the need to have more Calmac staff island based. This particularly is a problem in relation to the two Sound ferries where issues of Covid over the last year and a half have meant ferries being out of action while waiting for crew to come in from the mainland.

ATMS

The Comhairle Leader, Chief Executive and Chair of Transportation had met with Graham Day MSP Transport Minister who had attended the meeting in Stornoway along with Gary Cox who is Head of Transport Scotland's Aviation Division. There appears at the moment to be a will to re-look at the Air Traffic Management System plans which had not been the case over the last couple of years. At that meeting it was agreed that the Minister would ask Inglis Lyon to meet the Council and that has since happened. A number of questions were put to Inglis Lyon and the Chair of Transportation has since written to him on this particular issue again. There appears to be some movement on engagement with the proposals being put forward by Prospect but still concerns remain that the Benbecula Air Traffic Controllers would be replaced by a FISO unit .

NHS Patient Travel

A number of requests had been received in relation to patient travel and in particular concerns over the winter period when the weather is bad. A request has been put in that chemotherapy treatment be carried out in the Uist & Barra Hospital. Uisdean has said that he will take this forward at the Board meeting and write formally to the Board on this particular issue. This is an issue that has been raised in the past but has had no satisfactory conclusion

AP Conor - Gather requests/questions for councillors before next meeting

AP Uisdean - send councillor's report around before meeting

Levelling up fund: CnES can bid for up to £50M, bid goes in October - January
Community Renewal Fund application in, awaiting confirmation
Crown Estate Fund - no news about next year yet

Motorhome levy - campsite owners raised legitimate objections. Work of months to see what people's views are. Some concerns about levy raised.

AOCB

Mairi MacRitchie - Funding for school christmas party. No dinner this year so looking for £400 with match from councillors. General support for this.

Anne MacLean - fundraiser for defibrillator at Baleshare, sponsored walk. NUCC proposed to invite formal request to help with any shortfall.

Joan noted dip in road at Truimsgearraidh. Uisdean agreed, but said that it could be difficult to get funding to fix this properly

John mentioned that three bins removed from Lochmaddy pier by CnES because they kept being blown over and spilling.

AP Uisdean investigate how to get these returned

John mentioned that Lochmaddy hall looking for ward funding to support christmas parcels for OAPs (£600). Usually do a meal, but can't this year. CKC to make small package for each house. Discussion about where this covers, does it come all the way to Sollas? Crossover at Athmhor.

Joan wanted to start planting christmas trees again.