

North Uist Community Council



Comharle Coimhearsnachd Uibhist a Tuath

NUCC minutes

Meeting held on Tuesday 14th December 2021 at 7.30pm via MS Teams

Present:

Joan Ferguson (**JF**) - Chair
Conor Lawless (**CL**) - Vice-Chair
John MacDonald (**JMD**) – Treasurer
Lynda MacLean (**LML**) - Secretary
Cllr Uisdean Robertson (**UR**)
Cllr Iain MacLeod (**IML**)
Donald Angie MacLennan (**DAML**)
Flora MacDonald (**FMD**)
Kenneth MacDonald (**KMD**)
Effie Rodgers (**ER**)
Raghnall Maclain (joined meeting at 8.25pm) (**RMI**)

Public:

David Downham
Jemma MacVicar (North Uist & Benbecula Locality Planning Partnership)
Iain Stephen Morrison (Am Paipear)

1. Apologies:

Michelle MacDonald, Rachel MacLean, DE Morrison

2. Adoption of minutes & Matters arising:

Amendment required – Item **6**. Scottish Salmon change to MOWI
ER proposed and **CL** seconded the minutes

Kersavagh Hill

UR confirmed not done yet but he has spoken to Comhairle and it is on their agenda.

Kilmuir Cemetery

JF, **CL** & **UR** met with Iain Campbell (CnES Cleansing Services Manager) on 28th October via MS Teams. **JF** then met with Peter and Iain last Friday (10th December) and they agreed to do all the works.

JF checked with all members regarding removing corner stone wall and replace with wooden fence, no objections were put forward. **JF** confirmed she requested to ensure was stock proof.

UC suggested possible funding sources - Crown Estate (though criteria not seen yet), Challenge Fund and Ward Funding.

ACTION: JF to measure and speak to Alasdair MacDonald for fencing quote.

Clachan Sands Causeway

UR spoke to Cailean MacKenzie who advised this is being kept an eye on and they have plans to do the stretch of road going forward. Applications will be worked on beginning of next summer, will be 2nd stage of levelling up fund. **UR** confirmed they will continue to fill pot hole with tar for time being.

Recycling Bins

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IML confirmed that CNES received around £800k for purchase of bins, skips, bin lorry, etc.

UR spoke to David MacLeod who confirmed it will go ahead and confirmed additional skips will be considered for North Uist.

IML Confirmed 7 or 8 skips for whole of Western Isles.

ACTION: NUCC to peruse additional skip for NU for summer months.

Provision of Chemotherapy at OUAB

FMD, JF, CL, UR and a member of the community spoke to Gail Allen (GA) and Frank Macaulay (FMA) who confirmed that Chemotherapy will not be carried out in OUAB due to paperwork involved with the Chemo coming from Inverness.

Escorts going okay, GA and FMA advised no complaints received. Some members feel this isn't accurate.

Fiona Creighton (Senior MacMillan nurse in Uist) retiring, Mary Buchanan taking over with Sheena MacSween taking on Mary's role, though has 2 years training to do.

Patient travel cost for Uist for 2019 and 2020 given though no cost of scanner provided. **CL** advised they were clear that scanner in Stornoway was used every day whereas one in OUAB would only be used a couple of hours per week therefore not justifiable.

UR has meeting planned with H&I airports and aviation dept. of Transport Scotland, issues of connectivity raised before but **UR** will raise again. Support for patients travelling was discussed, **ER** advised on 'just in case bags' with essential items.

ACTIONS:

FMD, CL and **JF** to work together to look at response and decide what want to query further.

UR TO speak to Loganair regarding potential provision of 'just in case bags'.

Communications with the community

JF been chasing Derek MacKay, CnES, in regards to training for NUCC members, no response from Derek received.

NUCC minutes have not been sent on to Belle Anne

ACTION: CL to gather all minutes and get them over to Belle Anne at the start of 2022.

Deer Management Group Consultation

JF attended meeting. Telephone number being made available if anyone has problems with deer, there will be an answering machine. Will be separate to Estates.

Outer Hebrides Flood Risk Management Plan

JF and **UR** haven't been able to arrange meeting with Donald John MacDonald (Comhairle Engineer, Uist) to discuss priority areas.

ACTIONS:

JF and **UR** to arrange meeting with Donald John MacDonald (Comhairle Engineer, Uist)

JF to add SG map which **KMD** provided to new document shared drive for all members to view

Aquaculture Stewardship Council consultation

ACTION: JF to contact MOWI to arrange NUCC members visit to Cheesebay site

National Care Service Consultation

Continued from previous minutes as no action had been taken as of yet.

UR confirmed was still on Comhairle's agenda.

ACTION: NUCC to write to Comhairle to ask for a new Care Home for North Uist to be included in the Comhairle Capital Programme

Parking at Bayhead Shop

JF spoke to Christine, Factor, North Uist Estate, who advised the work was to go ahead once had some dry weather.

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Abandoned Cars

JF or **KMD** did not manage to get registration plates.

ACTION: **KMD** will check abandoned cars are still there and take note of type of car and registration numbers and check with Lochmaddy Hotel if they have issue with the one parked down from Hotel then report back to Chair.

3. Co-option of Members

LML co-opted as member, proposed by **CL** and seconded by **FMD**

This leaves only one vacant space.

4. Secretary

LML agreed to take on secretary role.

Fee confirmed as £500 per annum, **LML** advised she will do it voluntary at the moment.

CL and **JF** to carry on with emails until beginning of the year.

ACTION: **LML** to quantify hours spent on NUCC work over next 6 months as suggested by **ER**.

5. Ferries

5.1. Lochmaddy Pier works

Comprehensive update in **UR** Councillor Report, refer to item **10**.

5.2. Proposed Summer 2022 Timetable

CalMac going ahead with option though all responses received locally were objecting to proposed timetable.

UR will respond back again to Robbie Drummond as need to continue argument of loss of capacity, explanation of where extra £800k costs have come from and Island community impact assessment. Lochboisdale to Mallaig will have 3 extra return sailings though smaller vessel and has reliability issues on crossing. Still reduction in service had up until 2019 and were promised extra capacity 3 years ago with new ferry in 2018.

ACTIONS:

JF and **CL** to write to Robbie Drummond (Calmac), Transport Minister, Chris Wilcox (head of ferries division at Transport Scotland), Rhoda Grant (Labour MSP) and Donald Cameron (Scottish Conservative Party MSP). Letter suggested to be published more widely – Twitter and Glasgow Herald.

JF and **CL** to ask Robbie Drummond to meet with NUCC while in Uist.

5.3. Proposed Uig Closure Timetable

Timetable came out today, one return sailing a day from Lochmaddy to Ullapool.

UR will respond on behalf of Comhairle.

Calmac doing consultation in Balivanich Hall tomorrow night (15th December) with Fiona Galbraith and another Calmac representative. **KMD** and **JF** will try to attend.

ACTIONS:

JF to email Fiona Galbraith (Calmac) to suggest a meeting with NUCC over MS Teams.

Member's feedback to **UR** by end of the week.

JF to email all members the link to view consultation

6. Tracks Update

NUCC have a list of tracks, mainly to shores, which need upgraded. Looking to develop a pot of money which can be used to purchase gravel for townships to use to patch tracks themselves.

CL gave update on funding which was applied for –

Western Isles Development Trust, small grants fund – project too big, they focus on projects costing up to £1000.

Healthy Islands Fund – application rejected with no feedback provided.

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Crown Estate Fund – application sent in a few days late and was rejected on that grounds.

Challenge Fund – 21 January 2022 deadline for submission of application. Maximum of £1000 available.

Ward Funding – Letters to Councillors requesting this.

RMI suggested to add Mishigarry track to list.

ACTIONS: CL to apply to Challenge Fund

CL to write to Councillors to request Ward Funding

CL reapply for the next round of Crown Estate Funding

RMI to pass details of Mishigarry track onto **CL**

7. Kilmuir Cemetery

Covered under Matters Arising, refer to item 2.

8. Jemma MacVicar, North Uist & Benbecula Locality Planning Partnership

JMV updated on Christmas light displays

JMV advised on promoting local food production in Uist in line with Government Local Food For Everyone plan. The hope is to establish a group with support from HIE for Local Food Producers in Uist to benefit from funding.

Reminder: Christmas light competition closing date tomorrow.

ACTION: JF share Christmas lights competition on NUCC Facebook page

9. CnES Challenge Fund

Use Challenge Fund for access tracks. No other suggestions.

10. Councillor's Report

Lochmaddy Pier

- 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 substantially complete.
- 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. Revised contract with Trelleborg includes additional costs arising from market volatility in prices of steel, rubber and transportation of manufactured assemblies from Far East and Europe.
- Main Works Contract - procurement and evaluation process remains ongoing; Transport Scotland Final Business Case review and approvals process ongoing. 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. Current milestone envisaged January 2022; award of the Main Works Contract likely now February 2022; construction start March 2022 and completion March 2023.

Benbecula/Stornoway PSO

The tender documents are just about finalised by procurement. They will go this week, aiming for Monday or Tuesday. We do expect a significant cost increase. To at least have some options to consider if this becomes reality we have added a few variations to the options for pricing in addition to the status quo to maximise the chances of getting something acceptable back that we can afford. This includes an opportunity for tenderers to have more freedom with flight schedules, rotations

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and service days. We will not be required to accept the cheapest option, so any significant service change, including a potential return to a 3-day service, would go back to the Comhairle.

Baleshare Causeway Levelling Up Fund Transport Bid

Develop options and high level cost estimates for addressing community severance issues for the communities on Baleshare Island as a result of enforced causeway closures caused by inundation and overtopping of the existing causeway due to extreme weather events and the impacts of climate change. Concept designs to explore options to make the critical causeway link to this community more resilient and make recommendations on what additional studies will be required to inform decision making on the final design solution to address the issues being experienced by the existing causeway.

Western Isles Spinal Route Levelling Up Fund Transport Bid

Develop proposed concept design alignments for these sections to upgrade them from single track to single carriageway and prepare high level cost estimates.

- Direcleit to Miabhaig Junction – 1.9km
- Scarista Cemetery to Northton Junction – 3.8km
- Berneray Causeway to Portnalong Junction – 2.5km

North Ford Causeway

Allocation of £875,000 received from Local Bridge Maintenance Fund

Works programme to replace structure with 2 lane carriageway Structure

HIAL

The meeting scheduled for the 26th November was cancelled and is due now on 17th December. There is a current review ongoing but Benbecula is excluded from that review. The worry remains that Benbecula will be “thrown under the bus” to reach an agreement with Prospect on services from all other airports apart from Wick on the HIAL network.

Calmac Summer 2022 Timetable

The third option proposed to the community was circulated as was the response back from the Comhairle which was based on feedback received. To date there has been nothing back from Calmac since the deadline of 7th December for consultation response.

Calmac Small Vessel Replacement Programme

This is a major programme to replace up to ten small vessels serving the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) network due to operational life expiry. Included in the programme is the Loch Portain.

Crown Estate Funding Allocation: 2021/22

The total amount for the Western Isles for 2021/22 is £1,721K, a reduction from 2020/21, but on a par with the first award in 2019/20.

JF advised community groups had been in touch to thank councillors for the funding received.

ACTIONS:

JF/CL to email Councillor Report to all members

Add to Agenda for next NUCC meeting to discuss further the Benbecula/Stornoway PSO tender with possibility of NUCC writing on behalf of the Community.

11. Correspondence

11.1. Scolpaig Access

Correspondence received from Catherine Johnson. **CL** spoke with Alison MacCorquodale as an individual regarding no vehicle access as gate is locked and no disabled access due to kissing-gate. Alison advised this was due to environmental impact of cars along with the safety aspect. Alison advised the Comhairle may replace the kissing-gate with a wheelchair accessible gate.

FML pointed out if gate is locked and emergency services need access what would happen due to safety concern.

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It has been suggested for Comhairle to add safety signage or fix the track.

ACTIONS:

IML to look into Scolpaig access and contact Comhairle.

JF and **CL** to arrange site visit to Scolpaig in the New Year and email Alison to attend to meet with NUCC.

CL to write back to Catherine with update on NUCC plans.

11.2. Bayhead Shop Car park

Covered under Matters Arising, refer to item 2.

11.3. Lifeboat Provision enquiry for North Uist

NUCC been approached by member of community, Gerry Lister, who would like to campaign for a lifeboat station to be situated in Lochmaddy as would take 2 hours for lifeboat to come from Stornoway. **CL** advised there is now a lifeboat situated in Leverburgh which is listed on the RNLi website. Gerry Lister felt there was a severe lack of markers in Scottish waters.

ACTIONS:

UR to speak to Harbour Master, Kenny, regarding markers and whose responsibility.

JF to speak to local fishermen to find out if they have any concerns of areas not marked in local bay.

JF to respond to Gerry in the New Year.

11.4. Spaceport – Enquiry on NUCC view

Enquiry received from Arianne Burgess looking for NUCC view on Spaceport – environmental impact and economy benefits.

Spaceport presentation was discussed, changes now apparent which shows it had been downscaled. Concern if community will still benefit from it. The Spaceport are to submit a new or revised planning application which has not yet been actioned.

FML advised on the grazing rights for Scolpaig, application process was not dealt with acceptably with stipulations added into second application and it is now understood that the land is allowed to be worked. **UR** and **IML** both declared interest.

ACTIONS:

CL to write to Alison to get more information on Spaceport.

CL to respond to Arianne Burgess advising despite environmental impact meeting community now unsure on what is happening with site and whether community will benefit from it.

UR to ask question to Comhairle on the process of application for the grazing rights.

12. AOCB

Ùrachadh Uibhist planning application

NUCC approached by Rhoda MacLennan-Trusswell, Development Manager for UU who is looking to put in a planning application in NUCC name to make improvements to the centre including developing and expansion, change of use for some areas, expanding Hebridean Kitchen, Deli and shop. This will reduce the cost of the application. No objections were noted from any members.

ACTION: JF to advise Rhoda that NUCC are in agreement.

Information leaflet

JF suggested a leaflet to go to every household in Uist and Berneray to make them aware of the Uig Pier closure and impact on timetable. **JF** gained cost from Am Paipear for 900 flyers - A5 colour leaflet £180, A4 £270 and 2nd class postage would be £594. Utilise it to have other information on the back of it, Spaceport was suggested.

ACTION: JF to contact Calmac for funding from their Community Fund.

Dunskeller Cemetery

No official map of cemetery and where layers are, worry that local knowledge won't be here forever. Can a survey be carried out to get a map and plan drawn up?

ACTION: RMI to speak to **UR** to find minutes of NUCC meeting where this was previously discussed.

Add Dunskeller Cemetery to Agenda for next NUCC meeting.

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Secretary work

FMD suggested a fee should be paid to **JF** and **CL** for the amount of work they have put in since previous secretary stepped down, this was unanimously agreed by all members.

JF would like to donate her fee to a local charity of her choice and **CL** would like his to be put into the NUCC pot to distribute for benefit of community.

ACTION: JF to advise **JMD** on her chosen Charity. **JMD** to arrange payment.

Shared Drive

A shared drive has been suggested to enable all members to view documents instead of having an influx of emails.

ACTIONS: CL to look into shared drives and set one up on behalf of NUCC giving all members access.

13. Date of next meeting

Suggestion for next meeting to take place early February. A note will be distributed to all members advising on a date once it has been agreed.