

SHCC Minutes 1/3/2022

Present – Alan Ross – Chair; Effie MacLeod – Vice-Chair; Stephen MacKinnon – Secretary; Donnie MacDonald; Marion Morrison; Caroline Chaffer; Chief Inspector Alastair MacLeod – Police Scotland

Apologies – John R MacLean; Cllr Fulton; Cllr Finnegan

1. Policing – The Chair started by explaining the purpose of the meeting which was regarding issue of policing in Harris, which was that it appears there is no police presence a lot of the time.
 - Issues brought up within the meeting included: speeding in Tarbert outside the school; roundabout in Tarbert not being used properly; road when coming off Leverburgh ferry being treated as a racetrack; signage not being seen properly; Northton parking situation; and general lack of police presence which means there is no deterrent.
 - Chief Inspector included that for signage that is responsibility of CNES Roads Department and that there has to be a degree of prioritisation – every village want enforcement on speeding.
 - Cllr Mitchell raised the point of PC Fraser not spending a lot of his time policing in Harris but instead having to work up in Stornoway. Cllr Mitchell contacted the Chief Inspector about this previously and was not happy with the response.
 - Chief Inspector wants PC Fraser spending more time in Harris. The reasons for him being deployed to Stornoway were staff sickness and having to maintain safe staffing levels in Stornoway.
 - Every policing post in currently occupied in the Western Isles.
 - The question of why Barra has two police offers and sometimes are able to call in a third was raised – Chief Inspector said there were two for historical policing operational reasons.
 - Donnie MacDonald raised the worry that a vigilante scenario could develop if people know that it's going to take at least two hours for police to arrive in South Harris – Chief Inspector share this concern but said that if situation is urgent, Police will be in South Harris in less than two hours.
 - Donnie MacDonald asked if there is a way to directly contact Tarbert or Stornoway Police rather than having to go through the national contact centre throughout Scotland. Chief Inspector answered that there is a standard risk assessment. If urgent – police will be dispatched to South Harris right away. If less urgent, an appointment system for 2 to 3 days is more likely.
 - The idea of having vetted people who could contact PC Fraser directly was raised – Chief Inspector said this may happen but its not something he can encourage directly.
 - Caroline asked about Police Scotland's definition of community policing – Chief Inspector said that throughout his career it has moved away from that model with single officer stations going – response policing now rather than community policing.

- It was suggested that there should be an additional Harris Officer during the tourism season – Chief Inspector said that he would love to, but it is about visitor management more than policing and that visitor management across all agencies is the best long-term solution. He would be open to idea of summer secondment but would prefer to fix issue of main Police Officer being in Harris more often.
 - Chief Inspector said that there is no safe staffing level established for Harris. This is assessed partly on demand, violence, and population.
 - Chief Inspector said he can make sure that PC Fraser is not called out of Harris unless absolutely necessary.
 - Donnie suggested that the two Wildlife Crime Officers should go into local schools and contribute to De Tha Dol?.
 - The question was asked if PC Fraser was to leave his post would his post be advertised as a Harris post or a Western Isles post – He answered that there will always be a Harris post if he has anything to do with it.
 - Chief Inspector agreed that PC Fraser can keep a list of hours worked in Stornoway each month which would be made available to the Community Council. He also said that this might be helpful in building the case for another island post. He would be willing for this to be backdated as well.
2. Cal Mac – 31st October now the date for Uig Pier closing for works.
 3. Crown Estate Applications – Discussion over role of Harris Forum. They are applying for money for Peter Kerr's wages and Fred Taylor's wages, although HIE may provide funding for these.
 4. A.O.C.B – Parent Council – Someone from there should be approached to join SHCC – Caroline to approach them.

Open to Public – Agreed that agenda should be advertised in advance of meetings.

Next Speaker – It was suggested that someone from the Care sector should be invited. Suggestions included Peggy MacKay from W.I.C.C.F or Gordon Jamieson.

Date of Next Meeting – 5th April 2022 at 7.30pm at Leverburgh Free Church Hall.