

CASTLEBAY & VATERSAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held in Castlebay School on 9th May 2016 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Michael Galbraith Chair, Christina MacNeil Vice Chair, Iain G MacNeil Treasurer, Eoin MacNeil Committee, Cllr Donald Manford Ex-Officio.

APOLOGIES: Marion MacNeil Committee, Angus MacNeil Committee.

Michael welcomed those in attendance and apologies received. As there is no Clerk at present, Eoin agreed to take minutes at this meeting.

Action: <i>Position of Clerk to be filled.</i>

Matters arising from the previous minutes (8/02/16)

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Iain Gerald MacNeil and seconded by Eoin MacNeil

Transport: It was noted that Transport item was on the current agenda.

Vatersay: Iain outlined the current position of the Annie Jane in terms of the repairs that were required to be carried out and funding that was needed. The project funding to clean and repair the monument. There was considerable ground work to be undertaken and also fencing. Sources of funding could be a memorial fund or challenge funding.

Pontoons: The Community Council met up before the CC meeting with Euan Scott and Roddy Jardine from CBAB and received an update on the progress of the Pontoon project. It was noted that CBAB would continue to brief the community as the project develops.

Old CO-OP: The Chairman referred to the minutes with regard to the Old CO-OP. There then proceeded a lengthy discussion, over 1 hour, with the basis of the argument from some of the members of the public in attendance being that the Castlebay Community Council should retract its letter to the Comhairle. This letter had indicated that the current Community Council agreed with the previous Community Council's point of view, that the Old CO-OP should be demolished.

It was highlighted from the floor, that at no point did the previous Community Council agree that the building should be demolished. It was also asserted that there is no written evidence in any minutes that support this and no oral accounts should be accepted as a fact.

Members of the Buth Bharraigh who were present at the meeting were asked about the lease that was currently held with the council. It was stated that initially a 5 year lease was offered to the organisation and it had been sent back to the council for a new draft. The latest draft is still with solicitors and has not been signed.

The members of the Buth present highlighted the potential loss of income that would follow, should the building be demolished. With over 80 suppliers and the support of a petition and survey both undertaken, there was clearly sufficient indication that it was in the community interests that the

building be saved from demolition. It was also pointed out that although there were no written plans drawn up, building improvements had been costed and plans were being pulled together.

The Chairman Michael pointed out the Community Council members had been placed in a difficult position and had been subjected to derisory comments and feedback for some members of the community for not supporting the demolition outright.

It was highlighted that the Buth had been given different assurances regarding withdrawal of the demolition order, withdrawal of the funding element identified for the demolition and they had also been originally given assurances from Council officers that they would be given a purpose built building that would meet all their needs. This was not now the case in terms of the new buildings which would now be too small to meet the Buth's future plans for a bakery, community kitchen, café and laundrette as well as other things.

It was suggested from the floor that the Community Council should support the Buth's view, to retract the letter that had been sent and that the Buth could make use of all three buildings to meet their needs.

Donald Manford outlined the fact that the council's approach to the matter had been very disappointing and that it had turned two community organisations against each other. The matter, through council process, was due to be reported on in the October schedule of council meetings.

Eoin MacNeil asked what the timeline was in terms of the building being vacated by the CO-OP. It was stated that the CO-OP left the building in 2009, was advertised for lease in June 2013 and the Buth took occupation on 1st December 2013. The Chairman stated that he had heard that rent was not being paid by the Buth and asked if this was correct. Sarah MacLean stated that the rent was paid and up to date. Eoin asked when as an organisation had they started paying rent and was informed from the start (1 December 2013). Eoin asked why, at a meeting he was with between Sarah MacLean and Jean Urquhart MSP on 20 July 2015 in the Buth, Sarah had stated that they had not paid the rent and were refusing to do so until they got a lease that suited them. Sarah MacLean re-iterated that the rent was fully up to date.

The Buth members requested that the council be asked for an update on the report that was being prepared in advance of the October meeting. Evidence should also be sought on what information was held in terms of any community consolation, engagement or dialogue in relation to the demolition.

Action:

1. It was agreed that the Community Council would write to the Council and ask what discussions and correspondence had taken place on the run up to their decision to include the demolition of the Old CO-OP in the regeneration funding package to the Scottish Government.
2. The Community Council will consider the Buth members request for a retraction of its letter to the Council supporting the previous Community Council's decision for demolition. This on the basis of the Buth members' assertion that there had been no such decision made by the previous Community Council.
3. The Community Council would ask for copies of the report made to the Scottish Government for Regeneration Funding support. A copy of the current report being prepared for the October Comhairle meeting would also be sought.

2. Castlebay Play Area

Christina would arrange for the transfer in funding to the Community Council. The state of the play areas was discussed.

Vatersay was in a poor state of repair but ownership and responsibility was not known.

Castlebay was in a poor state, drainage causing much flooding and was only accessible two months in the year.

Action: *To check with CNES (Marion MacNeil) if she had any information regarding responsibility and insurance.*

4. Transport

Air Service: Michael Galbraith informed the Community Council that numbers were up by 1500 on previous year.

Action: The use of the Air winter service this year be highlighted as a priority in order to maintain the same level of service all year round.

Ferry Service: The suitability of the Isle of Lewis was discussed and the problems that had been encountered.

Action: *It was considered that a Barra Transportation meeting should be held to consider the ferry service and the use of the Isle of Lewis in the winter months.*

5. Treasurers Update

Iain Gerard outlined the current financial position with a balance of £9,900 being available. It was noted that the current cheque for £500 to the Barra games had not yet been cashed.

Action: *The Games co-ordinator to be contacted regarding the outstanding cheque.*

6. AOCB

Christine raised the issue of the amount of general rubbish that was lying around the CO-OP. The provision of bins around the football field was also questions.

Action: *It was agreed that the CO-OP be approached regarding a sponsored clean-up of the area.*