

Benbecula Community Council

Minute of Meeting held on Thursday 21st September 2017 at 7.00pm at

Tagsa Uibhist Office, East Camp, Balivanich

1. Welcome and Present:

Councillors: Gail Robertson (Chair), Andrew Walker (Clerk), Murdina Naylor (Treasurer), Hugh MacCormick,

CnES: C'llor Roddy MacKay

Public: Linda MacDonald, Izabella Doyle

Police: WPC Liz MacKay

2. Apologies:

Councillors P. Steele, U. Robertson, I. McLeod, I. MacNeil

3. Minutes of Meeting of 17th August 2017:

Proposed by Andrew, seconded by Gail

4. Matters Arising:

Andrew Walker has been appointed Clerk to BCC, on resignation of Irene MacKay

5. Treasurer Report (Murdina):

Present Balance stands at £9,332.82. Only expenditure was payment to Tagsa Uibhist for rent of room for BCC Meetings.

6. Correspondence:

Linda MacDonald was in attendance representing Nunton Township, and presented a letter and Petition signed by all tenants, expressing grave concerns about (i) speeding traffic, (ii) road safety of children, pedestrians and animals, and (iii) requesting consideration of need for road signage, footpaths, cycle tracks and speed limits. After lengthy discussion it was agreed that Clerk/Chair write to both the Comhairle and Police Scotland, given especially history of these concerns, as discussed many times previously by Benbecula CC. WPC Liz MacKay referred to actions on-going by Police Scotland, monitoring driver behaviour in areas where concerns have been brought to their attention. Izabella Doyle has concerns about parking issues in Balivanich, and also speed of vehicles, and will write separately to BCC about these.

7. Ward Funding:

- (i) **Sguais Uibhist** – Murdina referred to letter from this newly established group seeking financial assistance for repairs and maintenance of this East Camp building now brought back into use as a squash court. Details were provided of income/expenditure to date, other sources of funding, and present shortfall of £3586.00 from total of £8287.00. Councillors have made separate contributions of £150 each. The squash court is now in use as a community facility, and training courses are now on offer. **Agreed to make a contribution of £500 from Benbecula CC.**
- (ii) **Uist and Barra Food Bank** – Murdina, as Trustee, spoke to this item. A working Committee has been formed, with Helen MacLean CAB as Chair. Regular meetings take place, with the intention of becoming operational by Christmas. Help is being sought in identifying suitable premises in North Uist, South Uist, and Benbecula, as outlets. Some funding has been received from the Comhairle (£2100.00), and local councillors are contributing £250 each. The Franchise with The Trussell Trust costs £1500. **Agreed to make a contribution of £500 from Benbecula CC.**
- (iii) **North Uist Athletics Club (NUAA)** – help is sought in contributing to costs associated with travel to the mainland to compete in athletic events. Costs of £1500 accrue for 12 athletes away for two nights. North Uist CC and local businesses also approached. **Agreed to make a contribution of £250 from Benbecula CC.**

8. CnES Members' Report (C'Ilor Roddy MacKay):

Area Play Parks – C'Ilor Roddy MacKay referred to this item, and Committee Report, to Education and Children's Services, following on from public consultations, which were allegedly poorly attended. A budget allocation of £300k has been reduced to £100k, and many play parks run by local committees are now in a poor state of repair and maintenance. The Comhairle will concentrate its resources on play parks within the confines of schools, and expects others to be the responsibility of local parents' groups (but not all these are readily identifiable). Roddy referred to particular play parks within the Benbecula area, stating that it is his attention to speak to this item when raised in Committee. Gail requested that information be requested on costs of both demolition, and repair/maintenance. **Roddy to report back to BCC on Comhairle proposals and decision.**

Housing – considerable capital has been made available to increase the social housing stock by up to 274 houses within the next five years. Only 7 properties are listed for the lochdar and Balivanich areas, although it is reported that HHP are looking for land on which to build. Roddy sits on HHP Board as a Comhairle representative (also Chair of Balivanich Residents' Association).

Superfast Broadband – Murdina, Roddy and other councillors and community councillors attended a meeting the previous Tuesday with Donnie Morrison from HIE, to hear of progress with the roll out of Broadband in the Uists. Sixteen cabinets now installed in Uists, and a "Live" sticker indicates they are in operation. Problem spots were identified, and the point reinforced that customers have to sign up for a service with their provider. Mobile phones should have access to 4G service by December 2017. Two new masts have been erected in the Uists. The Scottish Government are still confident that all areas will have superfast broadband by 2020.

9. Police Report:

WPC MacKay reported on the recent period under review. Three new PC's appointed to the Lochmaddy Station. There is a police sergeant and three PC's based in the Balivanich station, and two PC's in Lochboisdale. Recent workloads have been compounded by holiday and sickness absences, but staffing now much improved. A total of 98 incidents have been reported to the police, with 28 located in the Balivanich area. These were referred to as mainly anti-social behaviour, and drink related. Late night/early morning parties have on occasion required police attendance. WPC MacKay will discuss issue of speeding in the Nunton/Balivanich areas with her Sergeant.

In response to earlier discussion, WPC MacKay confirmed that MOT testing and certificate is compulsory in the Uists, despite DVLA willing to license vehicle without evidence of this: noted also that vehicle insurance cover is void without an MOT. WPC MacKay was thanked by the Chair for her attendance and report.

10. AOCB

- (i) **CMal/CalMac Meeting about Piers' Upgrade (Lochmaddy/Uig/Tarbert)**
– Gail attended the recent meeting at Lochmaddy, and reported back. Proposals are still at “consultation” phase, but important to note that works proposed for Lochmaddy pier will result in closure of this facility for one week in November (13th – 19th). Gail provided details of proposed timetable covering this period, with Lochboisdale pier used instead of Lochmaddy. It is anticipated that MV Hebrides will provide one sailing daily on the Uig/Tarbert/Lochboisdale triangular route, with MV Isle of Arran doing extra sailings on Tuesday/Thursday. Gail raised a number of concerns for commercial transport operatives, and has submitted her views in writing.
- (ii) **Internet Safety, Young People** – Gail referred to this as an issue of considerable concern to parents and statutory agencies required to implement safe practices and procedures, within agreed protocols. The mobile phone/tablet/iPad internet technology is advancing at such a rapid speed, and young people seem more adept at how to “surf the internet”, and may become exposed to inappropriate sexual material, and even sexual grooming. Considerable discussion ensued, with agreement reached that raising awareness and training for all concerned, in a joined-up inter-agency basis, is a priority. Reference was made to the importance of key agencies with expertise in this area – NHS Health Promotion, Comhairle Child Protection Committee, Police, and School Headteachers. Further discussion required on how best to take this item forward.
- (iii) **Uist Council of Voluntary Organisations (UCVO)** – Andrew referred to recent difficulties arising from flooding at their Airport Road premises. Key organisations are based here including the Thrift Shop and Am Paipear staff. Discussions are proceeding with the Comhairle and HIE about the need for new premises, both short and longer term, with the view that a new build as a preferred option would provide the opportunity for other voluntary/third sector agencies also in need of better accommodation, to become engaged in these discussions. Short term options included discussion about Nunton Steadings as possible premises, but UCVO are not convinced about the suitability of this building:

10. Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday 19th October at 7.00pm at Tagsa Uibhist Office, East Camp, Balivanich.

Andrew Walker
Clerk, Benbecula Community Council
(16th October 2017)