

CASTLEBAY & VATERSAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held in Castlebay Community School Thursday 4 October 2018 at 18:30

Present

Michael Galbraith (Chair)
Iain G. MacNeil (Treasurer)
Claire MacNeil (CBAB)

Christina MacNeil (Vice-Chair)
Eoin MacNeil (Committee)
Finlay Macrae (Calmac)

Apologies

Donald Manford (Local Councillor), Marion MacNeil (Committee), Paul Steele (Local Councillor), Katie Denehy.

1. Welcome

Michael Galbraith welcomed all present.

2. Minute of previous meeting

The Previous minute of the meeting held on 3 July 2018 was proposed by Christina MacNeil and seconded by Eoin MacNeil.

Matters Arising:

Herring Walk

- Eoin MacNeil and Michael Galbraith attended a meeting earlier today to discuss handing over the management of the Herring Walk to CBAB. Euan will contact MacNeil of Barra and Solicitors to progress.
- Some of the ornamental barrels have been repaired by Donnie MacNeil but due to the time of year have not been put back yet.
- Euan Scott (CBAB) has sourced £20k for improvements to the Herring Walk e.g. a proper pathway for prams. Money could be used for a feasibility design study for continuation of the pathway to the pontoons area. A group is to be formed as a voice for this project. Bins along the walk could also be considered. The Community Council is all agreed that they would like to see the upgrade taking place and are happy for a place on the proposed group.

Playparks

- Katie Denehy has not heard anything back from Malcolm Burr (CNES Chief Executive) regarding work here. We are disappointed no action has been taken. Iain G. MacNeil will chase this up.

Roads

- No issues at present.

Cockles

There are a lot of green algae areas on the beach nowadays which is a potential safety hazard. A local management group could be established to monitor usage of the beach but this would have to be managed. A lot of cockles are being harvested; Michael Galbraith has noted a difference in the beach and Christina MacNeil can also see a difference in the landings. A suggested closure to harvesting was discussed. Claire MacNeil will ask Euan Scott about previous surveys, who facilitated this and what were the results, following this there needs to be an up to date survey undertaken.

3. Transport

Ferries

- The Community Council has paid for planning permission for a 'Calmac staff' car park. A map has been put through of an area that will hold approximately 10 cars. This will help alleviate the problem, not solve it. Finlay Macrae (Calmac) thanked the Community Council for resolving this issue. He said that the car park would not be exclusively for Calmac use.
- There are new restrictions in the corner beside the pier. To be monitored by Calmac staff.
- Eoin MacNeil updated on the Calmac Community Board meeting in August. He said that it is important to compliment the crew for their positivity and hard work. There was a focus on vessel redeployment and replacement. One group will also look at communication. The amount of pets on board has tripled and discussion is ongoing particularly as there are now three pet areas and no children's area. The shop has also been removed. There is a lack of TVs and charging points. Some negative comments also regarding the last call for lunch being made at 11.30. Finlay Macrae will notify Calmac of the main points raised from Barra.
- The opening of the gangway remains an issue, as there is a lack of consistency. People are standing getting soaked when the gangway could be opened earlier.
- Christina MacNeil asked about the option of Castlebay or Oban providing lockers to leave bags in when ferries are delayed etc. Finlay Macrae said that this had been a long term ask and is largely to do with security. It would have to be manned, require a scanner etc. Nobody has been willing to take this on in the past.
- The possibility of the Tiree ferry moving from a Wednesday to a Thursday next year. No major objections from Barra as both days suit. Michael Galbraith asked for draft timetables to be issued for review earlier.
- The current timetable is good. However, there is still the issue of the Isle of Lewis sometimes having to wait in Oban Bay for the Isle of Mull to leave. This could be resolved if the IOL Captain always left at 07:45. The old link span in Oban is due to be replaced in February 2019 but it will remain the same size meaning that the IOL will remain restricted to link span 2.
- Gas comes in on the Wednesday crossing (Clansman). This is why there is a Wednesday sailing. On record Calmac are willing to get the gas over as soon as they can but need plenty notice.

Planes

- It has not been agreed where the winter flights are being cut to cover the increase in the summer ones. Michael Galbraith was under the impression the number is 21 flights but this is still to be confirmed. Michael Bratcher from aviation at Transport Scotland should be here the w/c 5 November. Eoin MacNeil offered to contact him for confirmation and send an email round.
- Michael Galbraith mentioned airport developments ie Terminal renovations & Skye potentially requiring the Twin Otter aircraft.
- Christina MacNeil asked about the issue of passengers still having to go through the narrow airport café to baggage reclaim. Michael Galbraith said that for Safety (ie keep passengers away from Fire Appliances) and to support the Café operation, as they could lose business, however, the renovation plans are looking at separating the café customers and aircraft passengers.

4. Housing

- Following the Housing Minister's visit to Barra, there has been hardly any investment in new builds here. From the funding that is available to the Western Isles, only £8m of the £25m has been spent - and all of this has been in the Stornoway area. The problem here is identifying land so VABV and CBAB have started to work on this, looking for potential site locations.
- Allocations Policy – Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) have responsibility for this. Some townships might be willing to give up some of the common area for housing - for township people - but HHP cannot promise to do this. The Community Council believes that the community should have a say in who is allocated the new houses in Horve. The last email sent to HHP asked them to come down for a meeting to discuss. The Community Council will write to HHP for an update.
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5. COBEN Project

- The Local Energy Plan asked for a representative from the Community Council to attend and Iain G. MacNeil went to the first couple of meetings. There is Government funding to develop a Local Energy Plan. The Community Council has received a letter from the Chair of the Steering Group asking if they would take ownership of the Local Energy Plan. It was agreed that we can be involved but not administratively. Eoin MacNeil recommended that we support this.
- HITRANS are also planning to put 4 electric bicycles at the airport.

6. Pathways around Castlebay / School

- This issue has been brought up again. Iain G. MacNeil noticed a surveyor, which is a positive step. A walkway to Castlebay is required.

7. AOCB

- The Community Council would like to thank all the members in the local community that fought to save the RBS branch. This was a very positive outcome.
- The condition of the old, neglected shop beside the hostel was discussed. Michael Galbraith will write to Environmental Health to see what can be done.
- The recent campaign by Marine Scotland for a licence for kelp harvesting was discussed. There is an online petition to voice opinion through. All present objected to it's proposal.
- A request from Castlebay School for a monetary contribution for the Comhairle-led Dileab (Legacy) Project. An inter-generational meal and concert is planned for Friday 30 November and any funds received would assist with the hospitality.
- Treasurer's Report – the planning permission for the car park had cost £220.50 & £25 for War Memorial Wreath.
- Land transfer of the King George V land - the Community Council responded with no objection.

DONM - early December.