

# **Benbecula Community Council**

Meeting February 2021

## **MINUTE**

### **1. Attendees & apologies**

#### **a. Community Council Members attending:**

- i. Rona MacKay (RM)
- ii. Vanessa Langley (VL)
- iii. Hugh Maccormick (HM)
- iv. Angela MacDonald (AM)
- v. Fiona Buchanan (FB)
- vi. Tracy Walker (TW)

#### **b. Alison Cropper, CnES**

#### **c. Cllr Roddy MacKay**

#### **d. Cllr Iain MacLeod**

#### **e. Cllr Iain MacNeil**

#### **f. Roddy MacKay (HIAL)**

#### **g. Sheena Stewart (UCVO)**

#### **h. Iain Stephen Morrison (Am Paipear)**

#### **i. Abigail Taylor (Am Paipear)**

#### **j. Donald Currie**

#### **k. Alasdair MacEachen**

#### **l. Graham Martindale**

#### **m. Apologies**

- i. Ross McClenaghan, Police Scotland
- ii. Uisdean Robertson
- iii. Alison MacDonald

### **2. Declarations of interest**

- a. RM raised her potential interest in the HIAL downgrade to Benbecula airport

### **3. Approval of minutes & matters arising**

- a. HM proposed the minutes and VL seconded them

### **4. Balivanich regeneration project**

- a. Old Bakery – slow progress, difficulty in getting a surveyor
- b. Safety measures Balivanich School entrance, safety barrier coming next week
- c. Replacement of old bus shelter with new – not bespoke, just ordered, 3 weeks to deliver
- d. 20mph flashing sign to be replaced with improved design
- e. Speed control measures at entrance to Balivanich supported by Transport Scotland

- f. Joining steps Columbia Place to bus stop and provide pedestrian crossing and hand rail
- g. Cleaning walkways either end of Balivanich ie Uist Hardware to Balivanich and MacGillivrays to East Camp, BT Office plus enhance design, better surface
- h. Footpath disability access improvements. Cllr Roddy MacKay to ask users and Tagsa. There is enough money for 10 to 16 dropped kerbs
- i. Replace all old street lights on sea side between thatched cottage and old primary school with energy efficient lighting. It was queried whether this should be in council's remit rather than included in Regeneration funding
- j. Double yellow lines outside Lovetts
- k. Improvements to directional signage – any further requests contact Alison Cropper
- l. Transport Scotland would like to see gateway features eg Welcome signs
- m. Neal Ingram will help with positioning signs and help with any safety or construction issues. RM to organize meeting

5. HIAL – life vests, boat & traylor

- a. Donald Currie, the Lochboisdale Harbour Master, was welcomed and he presented his proposal to purchase the as a Community Safety Rescue Vessel for £6.5k to be manned by local experienced volunteers and funded by local communities and hopefully Storax Uibhist. Much discussion ensued and offers of help eg training. All Benbecula Community Council members present voted in favour of the sale of the boat to HIAL.
- b. The boat will be able to potentially provide a rescue service to Balivanich and perhaps Grimsay.
- c. There was a query over the equipment listed on the inventory with the boat. Roddy MacKay (HIAL) said that all equipment listed on the inventory was provided with the boat. **RM will send inventory to HM who will liaise with Roddy MacKay (HIAL).**
- d. **Agreed that Rona will contact Uist Association of Community Councils (UACC) to ask for their view and hopefully confirm/approve the sale,** and look at ways to spend the sale proceeds. Roddy MacKay (HIAL) asked that Benbecula Community Council use the sale as a news story to promote the new use and it was agreed by BCC members. **RM to contact HIAL with a quote.**

1. Air traffic control - Benbecula Airport

- a. HIAL and CAA to present its case to Scottish Government Petitions Committee – **RM will post the date for viewing on TV to BCC members.** Transport Scotland and Minister for Transport to answer questions from Petitions Committee. ATMS Project to be audited by Scottish Government Audits Committee Roddy MacKay (HIAL) updated that the downgrade of Benbecula Airport to AFISO is marked to be implemented from April 2022. HIAL looking for accommodation in Balivanich for the AFISO Centre of Excellence.
- b. Other updates – There will be new seating in the airport terminal; toilets to be refurbished; LED lighting for buildings; better x ray machine; vending machine to be

installed as catering services not functioning; Car parking will be improved next year. Concern was raised about experience of someone with disability going through x ray.

2. Police update (if available)

- a. Sent apologies – had 32 calls. Aim to set up Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and hoping to get people interested and signed up. New sergeant at Benbecula - Iain McCorquadale

3. Councillors update

- a. Education Meeting – new chairperson for Uist
- b. Emergency Planning Meeting which included covid issues
- c. Details of Budget to come shortly

4. Funding

- a. Salt bins have been ordered - need stickers. Luminous jackets to reward dog walkers looking after environment not yet bought, waiting to see how much left after salt bins.
- b. Thank you from Balvanich Playpark for Xmas lights
- c. Vouchers for Carers – waiting for receipt(s) from Linda Macdonald. **TW to follow up**
- d. Hospital decorations and projector lights completed

5. Correspondence & Social Media

- a. **AM will put an advert of Minutes Secretary on Facebook** – paid post

6. Council Building

- a. Sheena Stewart had had contact with council officials – some third sector organisations interested in renting a wing. Cllr Macleod reported that Council wanted to keep the building as an office and there would be no relocating of jobs to Stornoway. This is a red line. Cllr McNeil reiterated that councilors are totally opposed to closure of building, it is important to maintain a presence in Balivanich rather than at Market Stance.
- b. Rona suggested community groups need to get together to put possible plans to Council.

7. AOCB

- a. HM reported update on dip and water on access road to Culla Bay. He spoke with Melanie MacLean who has adjacent croft. Worries expressed that filling it in might lead to flooding on croft land. Both the crofter and the Township Clerk do not want the hole to be filled in. Decision for **RM to contact the residents who had previously brought the issue to BCC**, and refer them to the Township Clerk.
- b. Road gritting – incident when Ambulance said that it could not attend someone ill as road not gritted and dangerous. Fiona said side roads not gritted. **FB will confirm with Council what gritting policy is**. Concern expressed that not gritting roads could be attempt to save money - £250k. Main road from Lochmaddy to Lochboisdale gritted but not further on to Berneray or Eriskay. Discussion around getting winter tyres for some key workers or groups.

8. Date of next meeting

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 5.30pm

Meeting finished at 9.20pm  
VL