

Castlebay & Vatersay Community Council DRAFT

Minutes of the meeting held via zoom on 8th December 2020 at 19.00

Present:

Paul McGuire (PMG) - Vice Chair
Eoin MacNeil (EMN) – Committee
Michael Galbraith (MG) - Committee
Iain MacNeil (IMN) - Treasurer
Katie Denehy (KD) - Committee
Mark Wilcox (MW) - Committee
Alastair Campbell (AC) - Committee

In Attendance:

PC Phil Fardell
Cllr Donald Manford

1. Welcome

PMG opened the meeting at 19.00 and welcomed all present. In the absence of having a clerk, KD offered to take the minutes.

2. Apologies

Cllr Iain MacNeil
Brian Currie (BC) – Chair
Kenneth MacLean (KML) – Committee

3. Minutes

Minutes of 27th October were agreed on.
Proposed by EMN
Seconded by AC

4. Matters Arising

a) Speeding at corner of Nasg road

It has been raised as a concern by several residents the speed of which many cars travel past the corner of Nasg road end.

Action/s; PC Fardell stated notices have gone up in Guth and on Social Media. Still waiting to hear back from Angus MacDonald for 20's plenty signs for Horve. PC Fardell will follow up and let CC know when contact has been made. Agreed to take off Agenda and review this in March 2021.

b) Playpark

Query raised as to whether Playpark is included in new hub plans. It was agreed to get clarification as to the park being repositioned and for the CC to ask what improvements are to be made regarding repositioning to help alleviate drainage. CC agreed we want a playpark fit for purpose within the campus.

Action/s; Cllr Donald Manford to follow up

c) Streetlights

Concern has been raised by numerous residents in regards to the lack of street lights in certain areas on the island. Concern was also raised at the disrepair of one street light in Horve which looks as if it is due to fall over.

Action/s; PC Phil Fardell has submitted letters on behalf of Police, Fire Brigade and both Community Councils to head of Assets and has since been advised by the council that these letters now need to be submitted by Chief Inspector to Head of Assets. This has been done and awaiting reply. PC Phil to follow up.

Action/s; DM followed up on the broken lamp which had been identified as a health & safety issue. Technicians did inspect the lamp but looked at the wrong one. DM will let technical department know again it is the lamp beside No 11 St Brendan's in Horve.

d) CalMac

Transport forum are looking for a meeting with Transport Scotland in regards to vessel choice and ongoing concerns. EMN shared information about the proposed vessel replacement & investment proposed for building new boats. EMN will put this information in the Guth also.

Action/s; Cllr DM To follow up on their invitation to explain Calmac decision making on vessel choice

Action/s; EMN to build on more discussions with Calmac in-regards to flexible use of timetable and to engage in principle on having a banking system.

e) **Vatersay Causeway**

PMG reported that finding application has been submitted to Crown Estate round for feasibility to be conducted on enhancing and improving facilities at Vatersay causeway.

Action/s; Cllr DM agreed to engage in dialogue with CnES to help identify safe storage for the kreens.

f) **Covid Economic Recovery Group Update**

This group meets every fortnight and are working on a creating a Barra & Vatersay regeneration Action Plan. This forum is open to all businesses on the island and individuals who have an interest in helping draft this plan. All are welcome to come along and attend any meetings and give an input. There are no funds apportioned to this group but this forum can signpost businesses to the right funding bodies. Information goes into the Guth fortnightly with updates.

This Draft plan has 22 agreed Action points which cover all aspects of Life. Every Action point has specific tasks apportioned to it with key people who have agreed to feedback on that particular Action point ie; Ambition for high quality jobs or Ambition for housing ect. It was agreed at the CC meeting that it was imperative for the islands to build our own capacity to be heard. If interested in attending these meetings please contact Marion MacNeil ; email ; marion.macneil@btinternet.com

Action/s; BC to give updates on forum to CC

g) **Hub Update**

Report has been agreed at Policy & Resources committee at full council meeting and decision will be made by Scottish Government by early Spring with works due to commence early 2022. Discussion took place as to the location of the helipad which in the Hub plans will remain in it's present location when the new hub is built. MW gave an input and stated that the helipad should be integrated as part of the new hospital build and it was agreed by the CC to raise this at the consultation which was taking place on 10th December.

Action/s; Cllr DM to continue to give updates.

Action/s; EMN to raise helipad issue at consultation and feedback.

h) **Campervans**

Concern has been raised by residents in-regards to campervans parking in laybys and in other parts of Barra & Vatersay and not using the campsites. Cllr Uisdean Robertson has submitted a report to the council looking at the viability of introducing a by-law which will ensure all campervans have to go to a designated campsite.

Action/s; Cllr DM to follow up with more info at next meeting.

i) **Christmas Lights**

AC to lead on Christmas light decorations and it was agreed to have them on display by first week of December.

Action/s; AC to lead on this and will ask others in the community to help when required.

j) **Medical Practice update**

GP MW gave an update in-regards to the medical practice no longer having the contract for providing Out of hours GP service for St Brendan's. Below is the statement which the GP practice gave which details the situation in more depth;

The Health Board's Friday announcement came without warning to any of us. It has caused needless alarm and concern throughout Barra and far beyond. It is difficult to understand the Health Board's intention considering the timing and incomplete content of this communication.

On Barra the Out of Hours service and St Brendan's community hospital are the responsibility of Western Isles Health Board. For many years these services have been subcontracted to Barra Medical Practice. As the people of Barra will be more than aware, provision of healthcare workers to Barra has been steadily eroded (freezing of nursing posts, reduction in midwife hours, loss of the community psychiatric nurse post, reduction in health visitor services, loss of a social worker etc.). At the same time the demand for care on Barra, including that traditionally done by mainland hospitals, has increased. Continuing the status quo is not an option given the above, particularly in light of the upcoming retirement of one of the GP's and the need to attract a replacement doctor.

Barra Medical Practice negotiated with the Health Board over the past three years regarding a new contract to address these issues and provide sustainable healthcare on the island. These talks were wide ranging and aspirational consultations, including our suggestions of (i) raising the banding of nurses to reflect their actual duties and responsibilities (ii) training opportunities for nurses and doctors in Glasgow with reciprocal backfill (iii) development of hospital consultant clinics on Barra and (iv) an increase in the doctor provision in light of a forthcoming retirement and increasing demand on the medical services on Barra. Considerable work went into this design of services, including staff from Stornoway visiting Barra to characterise the work and need on the island. It has always been at the forefront of Barra Medical Practice's negotiations that there should be equitable healthcare provision for Barra compared to all other locations.

At a meeting in February 2020 Barra Medical Practice were promised a new contract for St Brendan's/Out of Hours in two weeks by the Health Board. Subsequently in June 2020 the new Medical Director informed us that he did not intend to proceed with this commitment. Instead, his vision is that St Brendan's will be run like Broadford Hospital with

visiting employed Emergency and Rural GP doctors, as is also the case on Uist. On the 1/7/2020 we were given sight of some of these plans with the restriction that we were not to discuss them but to know that the "ethos" of this solution had been widely shared. Presumably the restriction on not sharing this information has been rescinded given the Health Board's statement on Friday. It is expected that these plans have been further developed in the intervening five months.

With a GP due to retire in April 2021 and the concern re the likely inability to recruit another GP to undertake the current workload, Barra Medical Practice gave notice of its intention to withdraw from the provision of services to St Brendan's on 1/7/2020 to take effect on the 1/4/2021. This is to ensure the continuation of GP services on the island. We have had no further input from the Health Board until the press release on Friday.

Whilst disappointed not to be involved with shaping the St Brendan's services, the Health Board's plans would be a positive step for the island. We look forward to working with new team and hope the Medical Director will take the time to visit Barra to see the realities of working in the most isolated medical facilities in the UK.

The CC agreed that this situation needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency as there are grave concerns as to cover of St Brendan's hospital and out of hours GP service.

Action/s; DM to submit an FOI to health board regarding decisions made.

Action/s; DM to ask for meeting with Chief Executive.

Action/s; EMN and MWC agreed to write to Cabinet health Secretary

5. **Police Report**

Following on from update about abandoned vehicles, it was noted that some vehicles have since been moved from Horve. basis.

6. **Financial update**

IG reported the CC current balance stands at £7665.39

7. **AOCB**

- (a) EMN gave an update in regards to the public bus service and stated that currently there was no public bus service for Barra.

Action/s; PMG agreed to write to CnEs to get an update.

- (b) BC asked if there was anyone who could do a summary sheet of all the work the CC has been involved in.

Action/s; KD agreed to do this and will send round to other CC members when done.

Date of next meeting;

Tuesday 26th January 2021. Time 7pm.