

Minutes of Meeting held on 12th August, 2004 in the Community Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Present : Alistair McCowan; Janet Mackay; George Graham; Juliet Mellor; Murdo Finlayson

John Farquhar Munro, MSP; Councillor Ewen Mackinnon

Apologies received from Ishbel Ferguson

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to Mr. John Farquhar Munro, our MSP, to this meeting of the Community Council.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were approved as a true record, proposed Juliet Mellor, seconded George Graham.

Treasurer's Report

The balance stands at £1,738.35, transactions during the month being £32.97 for setting up of the Community Council website by John McKeown and £45 to the Walled Garden for hospitality at the Wester Ross Alliance meeting in Applecross.

Applecross Estate Woodlands - Update

The Chairman reported that he had spoken to Bob Wilson who stated that the feasibility study has not yet started but is imminent. Delays have been due to the admin. processes involved in setting up the new company. It was generally agreed that this slowing up is desirable, as some felt that the matter of tree felling and timber disposal and possible associated community benefits was being driven too fast at one stage. We await further reports from Bob Wilson.

Wester Ross Local Plan Final Draft Consultation

Community Council representatives met with two members of the planning team on 14th July to discuss, in detail, problems with the plan raised in the community. As a result, changes were made to the community plans for Toscaig, Camusterrach and the farm area, and the restriction of one house per croft in Camustiel has been removed. The planning team was pleased that we have been prepared to consider the draft plan in detail. We acknowledge receipt of a copy of aerial photographs of Applecross.

Water Supply Problems

The Community Council is becoming very concerned about the apparent lack of interest shown by Scottish Water in our frequent complaints about debris (black bits) and chlorine in our potable water supply. Councillor Mackinnon pointed out that we are by no means unique in this respect, as there seem to be complaints all over the west coast. John Farquhar Munro took note of our concerns. It was reported that debris and chlorine continue to be a nuisance.

BT Aerial Mast

It was reported that a letter from the chief executive's office apologised for Sunday working and promised a coat of grey paint – which was applied a few days ago, this time without any contamination of surrounding areas and in less than a day.

Sheep Droppings at School

The Chairman reported on his discussions with the Camusterrach Grazings Committee Secretary. Their attitude is that they have no desire to fall out with the community but point out that this is a crofting community and sheep roaming freely around common grazing land has been a feature of the community for a very long time. They also consider that legally also it is up to those who do not want sheep on their premises to suitably enclose their land.

Juliet Mellor stated that she felt very strongly as a parent of young children and as a doctor that the question of possible infection by E-coli 0157, which experts state is a real possibility, cannot be ignored.

It was accepted that the problem probably only exists for six weeks each year and it was decided that we should write to the Education and Environmental Health Departments stating the community's concern and asking them to look at the problem and advise us.

Grass Verges

It was confirmed that as agreed at the last Community Council meeting, the grass verge between Milton and Shore Street was strimmed at our expense. Since then, the verges in the area generally have been dealt with by Highland Council but it was agreed that the job done is not very satisfactory. Complaints were received about sight lines being obscured by bracken and rushes on the lower reaches of the Bealach road and on the north coast road. We will write to Highland Council in the hope that Geoff Walker might visit to discuss our concerns.

Any Other Competent Business

- a. Footpath lights : The Chairman has discussed the lights on the footpath to Craite Barn site with Highland Council lighting engineer. Changing the lamps is really not an option, as control gear is also involved and even if possible, would be very expensive. He also visited the path at midnight recently and feels that the problem is over-stated, with only one bollard lamp possibly being a problem because it is close to a house. It was decided to leave the matter until we see if there are further complaints.
- b. Vehicle Parking at Applecross Inn : A letter has been written to Mrs. Fish as requested and the matter further discussed with her. The Chairman reported that she was very co-operative and is endeavouring to control parking despite the difficulties of enforcing this discipline. It was noted that the situation has improved. The caravan adjacent to the first house on Shore Street has also been removed.
- c. Post Office and shop : It was resolved that the Community Council should record the appreciation of the community for the service given by Ali and Eileen MacRae over the past twenty-six years.

As far as the post office is concerned, we note with alarm that the hours have been reduced from a full day to half day. This we feel is particularly unfortunate for Applecross, as we have no local bank or even a mobile bank, and the banking service via the post office introduced only recently is being seriously curtailed.

- d. Recent Army operations : It was also unanimously agreed that we should record our appreciation to the Army who, as a training exercise, have carried out various works of benefit to the local community including, inter alia, works at the heritage centre, a bird hide at Milton loch, bridge at Toscaig, a tree house and a viewing platform.
- e. Applecross toilets : Mr. John Farquhar Munro was kind enough to take up our concerns about lack of toilet facilities on the peninsula but we are deeply concerned to note in a communication from Mary McLauchlan, Director of TEC Services, to him, of which we received a copy, the implication that a recent accident was due in some way to inefficiencies on our part when we ran the toilets during winter. We will take this up via Mr. Munro in order to put the record straight.
- f. Speeding, Shore Street : The Chairman read a letter from Miss Elsie Pearson complaining about speeding in Shore Street and suggesting a reduced speed limit and signs. After much debate, it was noted that a reduced speed limit is unlikely to be accepted because of difficulties of enforcing it but that we should still press for traffic-calming measures. It was also suggested it would be useful if we knew who owned or was responsible for all parts of the road system through Shore Street such as who owns the sea wall etc. It was resolved that we should write to Highland Council Roads Department asking for a drawing showing all relevant information.
- g. Community noticeboard : A question was asked about progress with a replacement noticeboard at the post office. A quotation received is considered too high and an alternative solution using voluntary labour is being investigated by the Chairman.
- h. Affordable housing : Confirmation has been received from Highland Small Communities Housing Trust that they are prepared to carry out a survey into the need for further housing. This, they propose, will take the form of a questionnaire to all households. We will have an opportunity to see the questionnaire before it is issued.
- i. Community Council website : It is noted that the Community Council website is up and running. We are grateful to John McKeown for setting this up for us.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 9th September, 2004 at 7.30 pm in the community hall.

The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and the meeting closed at 20-45 hours.
