

Minutes of Meeting held in the Community Hall on 9th September, 2004 at 7.30 p.m.

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

Councillor Ewen Mackinnon; 3 Members of the public

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Two alterations were agreed. Under AOB (d), the words "and also to Applecross Trust" after "our appreciation to the Army".

AOB (f). In the second sentence, the words "after much debate, it was noted that" should be changed to "In Councillor Mackinnon's opinion".

With these alterations, the minutes were accepted as a true record, proposed by George Graham, seconded Janet Mackay.

Treasurer's Report

There were no payments during last month and the balance stands at £1,738.35.

Applecross Woodlands

The Chairman introduced a report just received from Lorna Lumsden. This indicated that as soon as the company documentation has been formalised (Applecross Rural Conservation Ltd.), the feasibility study will start (likely in early October). The report was welcomed and the Secretary was asked to write requesting that Bob Wilson and a representative of Applecross Trust attend our next meeting, so that the up-to-date position and proposals could be discussed.

Revised Post Office Hours

The Chairman reported that he had written to Post Office Ltd. to object to the reduction in Post Office hours and requesting re-consideration but that, so far, there was no response. Members unanimously agree that the revised hours cause considerable inconvenience, particularly to those who receive benefit by cheque by post which arrives in the afternoon and cannot be cashed until next day, and to those whose only opportunity to do business at the post office is during their lunch hour.

Grass Verges

It was noted that strimming of the verges between Shore Street and Milton, at our expense, has been beneficial. The cost was £16.45. Verges generally on the peninsula were very badly done in the first instance but were re-done after discussion with Roads Engineer, Geoff Walker, and are now much more satisfactory.

Water Supply Problems

The situation seems to have improved but will be monitored and further problems reported to Scottish Water as necessary.

Re-Surfacing Shore Street and Retaining Walls

The Chairman circulated a file note he prepared after a recent meeting with Geoff Walker, dealing with poor treatment of verges (as already reported above), re-surfacing of Shore Street and the retaining wall between the Post Office and Smithy Corner.

On Shore Street, there are no formal agreements between the Council Roads Department and the landowner but the Council accepts responsibility for the road and any relevant retaining walls. Proposed re-surfacing will involve shaving off the present surface and replacing it. Where there is bitumen at present, it will be replaced.

The retaining wall between Post Office and Smithy corner is vulnerable to collapse due to traffic vibration. Roads Department have been asked to look at widening of the road to avoid vehicles having to come close to the wall.

Smithy Corner

It was reported that visitors often take the road to the farm and campsite instead of the main road to the Post Office, despite a sign before the junction. It was agreed that we should ask Roads Department to install white lines and give-way markings on the road to the farm, as we feel should have been done when the road was upgraded.

Uneven Road Surface adjacent to the Inn

Complaints were made about the uneven surface at the junction between the main road and car park. It was resolved that we should ensure this is discussed when re-surfacing commences.

Sheep Droppings at School

This subject was again discussed. Juliet Mellor stated that we must take the risks seriously, as the facts are known and the dangers are real and that some action is urgent and necessary before next winter. It was resolved that we should ask for guidance and advice from Environmental Health Department. We should also consider local action such as sweeping up sheep droppings and power-washing on a daily basis but it was pointed out that, at present, there is neither an external power point nor external water supply at the school.

Any Other Competent Business

- a. Albyn Housing : The Local Lettings Initiative is due for reconsideration and revision and a representative from Albyn Housing is prepared to come to our next meeting for discussion. It was resolved to invite the representative to the November meeting, as the October meeting is likely to have a heavy agenda.

- b. Housing Needs Survey : The draft survey document proposed by the Small Communities Housing Trust was circulated to members. General comments were that all adults in the community should receive the survey document rather than just each household and concerns about how it is intended to validate the results from the survey.

It was resolved that we invite Robin Phillips to our next meeting to discuss these and other points.

- c. Meals-on-Wheels : It was noted that meals-on-wheels was discontinued and replaced by issue of frozen food – and microwave ovens if necessary – without those who have run the scheme here for many years even being notified of the change. It was unanimously agreed that our meals-on-wheels local service was extremely cost-effective because it was run by volunteers and that it also had a very important social element. Again, we are forced into an accountancy-driven national solution, which is not appropriate for us, and without any consultation.

There is apparently an alternative solution under consideration led by Judith Fish. This is most welcome and it was agreed that Juliet Mellor will discuss the matter with Judith.

- d. Post Office Cables : In reply to a question, the Chairman reported that he had discussed the matter of the cable left on the surface between the Post Office and the Craite Barn site. BT stated that it is common practice to lay such cables on the surface, particularly where a service has to be provided urgently, and there are no plans to change this to a buried cable in the short term.
- e. Flooding in Milton : It was reported that there appears to be subsidence in the road outside the old bakery, as large pools of water now appear after rain. This will be taken up with Roads Department.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 14th October, 2004

The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and closed the meeting at 21.15 hours.
