

Minutes of Meeting held on 13th January, 2005 in the Community Hall at 7.30 p.m.

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

Councillor Ewen Mackinnon; Bob Wilson (Scottish Woodlands); John Porteous (Wallace Stone & Partners); Lucy Fraser and Helen Cameron (Albyn Housing)

6 Members of the public.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were accepted, proposed Janet Mackay, seconded Ishbel Ferguson.

Treasurer's Report

Balance £2,056.68. Transactions during month - £49.50 being our representative's expenses in attending the NHS out-of-hours meeting in Inverness on 2nd December, 2004; £140 hall rental; £262.20 for toilet maintenance November/December, 2004.

Applecross Estate Woodlands

The Chairman welcomed Bob Wilson and John Porteous, consulting engineer, and invited them to address the meeting.

Bob Wilson explained that Brian Burns who was carrying out a feasibility study as previously reported had completed his investigative phase and was completing his report. Archie Maclellan who had looked specifically at potential crofting-related benefits had also contributed. The report should be available by the end of January and it is planned to discuss it locally before formal issue.

Bob Wilson also referred to the considerable damage to woodland caused by the recent severe gales and said that a survey would be carried out urgently and any necessary adjustments made to the proposals.

John Porteous described the proposed pier near to the post office (for loading timber on to barges). It was noted that this is to be a 24m long loading bay with 10m access road. The existing but damaged old jetty would be reinstated.

Bob Wilson promised to report on progress again at our next meeting.

Bob and John withdrew, having been thanked for their attendance.

Affordable Housing

The Chairman welcomed Lucy Fraser and Helen Cameron, Albyn Housing.

The Local Lettings Initiative was discussed – now that the housing development at

Craite Barn has been in operation for the first year. Albyn Housing would welcome comments from us (after due consideration).

A number of questionnaires prepared by Albyn, together with return envelopes, were left with us for distribution to members of the public.

Robert Gordons University, Aberdeen are involved with considering the Local Lettings Initiative and a focus day is proposed for 27th January, 2005 in Shildaig – to involve four representatives each from community councils of Shildaig, Torridon and Applecross. We accept the invitation and will be represented.

We note with pleasure that the Craite Barn scheme has received an award from Highland Council. A decision on the planning award for which it is being considered has not yet been made.

Wester Ross Local Plan

Murdo Finlayson reported that the public local enquiry is on programme and the Applecross site visit will take place on Wednesday, 19th January (meeting at Applecross Primary School at 10 am). We will be represented by Murdo.

Revised Post Office Hours

It was resolved unanimously that we accept the proposed alterations to Post Office hours negotiated with Mr. Dudley Barnes viz. closed all day Tuesday and open six hours on Wednesday.

Lighting, Craite Barn

We will formally request Highland Council Lighting Department to inspect and, where necessary, reinstate all lighting bollards along the right of way path which runs adjacent to the housing development.

Sheep Droppings at School

It was reported that the outside tap has not yet been installed!

Any Other Competent Business

- a. Speed Limit on Shore Street : The Secretary was instructed to submit a formal request to Highland Council to change the speed limit through Shore Street from 30 mph to 20 mph.
- b. Storm Damage - Roads : It was noted that serious storm damage has occurred to roads viz. damage to retaining walls, and parapet walls above, at Craig Darrach and serious undermining of the road between the Post Office and the "white gate". We will formally draw both to the attention of roads department.
- c. Storm Damage – Footpaths : It was noted that footpaths on the estate and the tree house have been closed for safety reasons.
- d. Toscaig Pier : A member of the public suggested that Highland Council should repair Toscaig pier and referred to reports of proposed inauguration of a ferry

service between Toscaig and Kyle (and other proposed ferry services). Councillor Mackinnon stated that the council will not undertake repairs or upgrading of the pier but would support the setting up of a ferry service and associated pier works which would be part of the cost of the ferry service and, should that materialise, might accept responsibility for the upgraded pier thereafter.

It was noted that the existing timber structure is now so badly damaged following the recent gale that it will have to be removed.

It was also noted that safety handrails are being installed at Toscaig pier by Applecross Pier Users' Association under a grant from Wester Ross Alliance.

It was confirmed that the Community Council would support any initiative to provide a ferry service from Toscaig.

- e. Second Homes Tax : A member of the public referred to published proposals to raise community tax on second homes to 90% from the current 50% and suggested that a rate higher than 100% of community tax on holiday homes might be more appropriate and might have the effect of reducing the cost of houses which come on the market in Applecross.

Councillor Mackinnon reported that Highland council will implement the proposal to raise community tax on second homes from 50% to 90%.

- f. NHS24 : It was noted that there has been a change in out-of-hours arrangements in that a telephone call to the local surgery will go direct to the doctor on call instead of automatically to NHS24. Anyone wishing to ring NHS24 may do so using the NHS24 telephone number.
- g. Home Carers, Applecross : The Chairman reported that he had been contacted by Norma Beaton, Home Carers' Supervisor, who asked him to mention the difficulties in recruiting home carers and to state that it is not such a heavy commitment as some might fear and that anyone interested is invited to ring up to discuss the matter. If carers do not come forward, it will not be possible to keep old people in their own homes as intended and they may have to leave Applecross to be cared for elsewhere.
- h. Main Community Noticeboard : It was reported that someone has offered to construct a new noticeboard to replace the one seriously damaged at the Post Office. This is gratefully accepted and it was agreed that the Community Council will meet the cost of materials.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 10th February, 2005 at 7.30 p.m. in the Community Hall.

The Chairman thanked all those present for their attendance and the meeting closed at 21.40 hours.
