

Applecross Community Council

Minutes of Meeting 9th October 2007 (Unapproved)

Present: Ishbel Ferguson, Murdo Finlayson, Alison Macleod, Gerry McPartlin

In attendance: Highland Councillor Biz Campbell, Archie MacLellan, Robert Hanna

Five members of the public.

Apologies: Ruaridh Cameron, Ewen Gillies, Richard Green, Jean Urquhart, Audrey Sinclair, Robbie Bain

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 11th September were approved (proposed Ishbel, seconded Murdo).

The minutes of the Special General Meeting on 2nd October were approved (proposed Ishbel, seconded Murdo).

2. Matters Arising

Insurance for filling station: Murdo has not managed to speak to the HC insurance expert, who is on holiday.

White Lines on the Bealach: Renewal of the lines is high on the list of next year's priorities. If the contractors are not able to do it, the local road team may renew them by hand.

Playground: The required repairs have not been carried out yet.

Speed Limit Reduction: Disappointment was expressed that the original timetable for installing the lights at the school imposing a 20mph limit is not being adhered to. They were originally to be installed in October, but have now been postponed until well into 2008. This is not acceptable, given that the road outside the school has a 60mph limit and the children cross the road to reach the school playing field. Murdo will suggest that the Parent Council contacts the Highland Council to express concerns. He will also write to the Council, copying the letter to the Highland Councillors for our ward. Biz promised to help.

3. Procedure for Agenda and Minutes

Although Alison has pointed out that it is normally the secretary's job to make up the agenda, Murdo would like to carry on doing it himself. Alison asked him to send a draft agenda to the other Community Councillors so that they can see if they would like anything to be added before it is issued. Gerry also felt this would be helpful. Murdo agreed to e-mail a list of what he plans to include.

Murdo had not received the minutes last month, although Alison had e-mailed them to him twice and not received a delivery failure message to indicate that he had not received them. Alison confirmed that she sticks to the normal procedure for issuing minutes.

4. Treasurers report

The balance in the treasurer's account is £5,368. The filling station account balance is £306.

5. Correspondence

- Minutes from Shieldaig CC
- Notes from Lochcarron CC meeting, which had not been quorate
- Letter from Anne Macleod, Nursing Team Leader, Wester Ross, giving information about changes to the nursing team in this area. There will be no change to the service provided.
- Letter from Peter Peacock MSP inviting responses to questions about flood management in Scotland. This will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Notice of the draft core path plan which will be available at the Post Office.

6. Heritage Lottery Fund Application

The Focus Group and some members of the Steering Group have produced a community survey which will be sent out to the community on 15th October, to be returned by 31st October. The aim is to give the community information about the ALPS application and to invite people to contribute their ideas for projects. It emphasises that no decisions have been made about what projects will be included in the application. There will be an open day at the Hall on the 24th October, manned by Robert Hanna and Focus and Steering Group members, so that anyone who wants to discuss any aspect of the scheme can do so before they complete the survey.

Robert will hold meetings with the crofters (at 4.30pm on 18th October) and local business people (at 10.30am on 19th October), both at the Hall, to discuss the scheme with them.

Murdo asked Robert if a summary of the main points of the Landscape Character Assessment could be provided, as the document is 190 pages long and not very accessible. A summary would give people an idea of what to base possible projects on. Robert replied that he was working on a more user friendly version; this may be available for the open day. He expects Steering Group Members to be familiar with the original version, as they will be responsible for creating a strategy based on the document along with the Trust and himself.

A new Leader scheme will be distributing money from early 2008. Local Action Groups will be formed to decide how it will be distributed. Robert is concerned that as yet there is no mention of representatives from Applecross being involved and urged the Community Council to make inquiries. He will provide Alison with contact details.

7. Scottish Water Annual Conference

Murdo attended. Scottish Water is not aware of any constraints on the water supply in Applecross at the moment. The capacity of the treatment works may eventually be insufficient, but this is modular, so if demand outstrips supply a new module can be added to resolve the problem.

8. Highland Small Communities Housing Trust AGM and Housing sub committee

Murdo and Alison attended the AGM.

Murdo invited Di Alexander of HSCHT to attend the CC meeting in November to talk about the work of the Trust.

The Trust now holds surgeries rather than conducting surveys of housing needs. People can then make an appointment to discuss all the possibilities open to them and seek advice. The Trust would be happy to hold a surgery in Applecross. It also carries out community needs assessments which cover needs other than housing; this would also be worth pursuing.

There are plans to combine all the housing lists in Highland (rural and urban) into one. This will be easier for those with housing needs as they will only need to register once, but may cause problems as the area for which they are registered may not match the electoral ward and so people may be offered a house from a wider area than they wanted.

The Trust no longer applies the Local Lettings Initiative which was used to allocate the houses at Craite Barn, but they have a new policy which is equally effective. They have also started considering the skills which a small community is lacking when considering who to allocate houses to, which could be helpful. Albyn Housing has simplified the system used for selling affordable housing plots. If a house built on an affordable plot is sold HSCHT will take a third of the selling price as their equity.

Gerry invited Murdo to join the proposed housing sub committee (proposed Gerry, seconded Ishbel). Archie MacLellan also agreed to join the sub committee. Morven Taylor of the HSCHT was also suggested as a member as well as representatives from some of the crofting grazings committees.

Archie offered to start work on a survey of the land for possible housing sites.

9. Winter Opening of Toilets

One person has enquired about the cleaner's job and it was agreed to ask her to start as soon as possible. The Highland Councillors have agreed to provide the amount requested from their discretionary fund to finance the opening of the toilets for the winter.

10. Community Council website

Alison has spoken to John McKeown again about the maintenance of the website. He is reconsidering his original decision not to be involved in this after she promised to include the website address on all CC notices, minutes, letters etc.

11. Update on Out of Hours medical meetings

Gerry attends these meetings regularly, with representatives from the other five CCs in the area, the Scottish Ambulance service and the Mid Highland Community Health Partnership.

At the moment Applecross is lucky to have a 24 hour service provided by Dr Cargill and Dr Barbour, but this is unlikely to continue once they retire. All the other GPs in the area have opted out and the OOH meetings discuss ways of providing out of hours cover for the area. So far there has not been much change in the level of service provided and no decisions have been made, but the cost of this will not allow the situation to continue. It is possible that the end result will be one doctor providing cover for the whole area overnight and at weekends, with support from nurse practitioners and paramedics.

12. Road Signage

The signage at the junction at the Applecross side of the Bealach is a mess with a variety of signs of different shapes and colours sitting at different angles. Alison wondered if rationalisation was possible. Murdo suggested that it may be worthwhile pursuing this at the same time as the traffic calming measures on The Street.

The sign to Applecross, via the coast road, at Tornapress reads 7.5 miles instead of 37.5.

11. AOCB

Broadband: There was an announcement on 7th September that the broadband capacity of the Applecross exchange is to be increased by 30 on an unspecified date. A major upgrade for the exchange is scheduled for 2011. Latest information updates on Broadband can be found at

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/BroadbandforScotland/SEBroadbandInitiatives/LatestNewsAnnouncements>

Funding is available for solutions for those who are too far away from the exchange to obtain broadband services by conventional methods. To be included individuals must be registered in the Scottish Government project database, see

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/BroadbandforScotland/Register/broadbandsurvey>

This will be the last opportunity to access public funding for this purpose.

Alaister Nicholson of AN Projects Ltd, 5 Borge, Portree, IV51 9PE (phone 01470 532425, e-mail info@anprojects.co.uk) is happy to assist any individuals or businesses in the area suffering broadband supply issues.

Community Council Bench: A suggestion has been made that the CC should provide a bench overlooking the sea south of Milton. The council will need to look for a suitable site.

Rubble at Ard Dubh: The rubble dumped at Ard Dubh some time ago is still there and appears to be increasing. Alison will chase this up with the local road crew.

Bins at the Bay: The big bins at the Bay are tied to the notice board which is inconvenient for those accessing the board. Would it be possible to secure them in some other way?

Bigger bins are required for the PO car park.

Date of Next Meeting: 13th November at 7.30.