

Applecross Community Council

Minutes of Meeting 13th November 2007 (Unapproved)

Present: Ruairidh Cameron, Ishbel Ferguson, Murdo Finlayson, Ewen Gillies, Alison Macleod, Gerry McPartlin

In attendance: Di Alexander, Highland Small Communities Housing Trust. Nine members of the public.

Apologies: Richard Green, Audrey Sinclair, PC Joanne MacKinnon (Lochcarron)

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 9th October were approved (proposed Gerry, seconded Ishbel) with an amendment requested to the information on equity required by HSCHT.

2. Matters Arising

Playground: A new playground is to be installed in the next two weeks.

Speed Limit Reduction: Murdo has written to Mr Tolmie, Area Roads and Community Works Manager, outlining the case for making installation of a 20mph limit outside the school a priority. Sue Grocock will write a similar letter on behalf of the Parents' Council, which all parents will sign.

Winter Opening of Toilets: Anna has now begun as cleaner. She has pointed out that it is impossible to fill a mop bucket from the existing taps. Gerry will see if it's possible to resolve this, possibly by getting a hose attachment. Hot water would also be useful, but this would be expensive to install and run.

Community Council Bench: There are plenty of possible sites between Milton and the Hall. Permission would have to be given by crofters. It may be possible to ask the local roadmen to install it. A recycled plastic bench was suggested as it would require less maintenance.

Rubble at Ard Dubh: Has been removed for infill.

Bins at the Bay and PO car park: TEC Services has agreed to supply another small bin at the PO car park, and bins on stands at the Bay. However Archie has suggested that a corral could be built at the Bay to accommodate the bins, so it was agreed to ask for replacements for the existing bins, which are in poor condition.

Community Council website: John McKeown has agreed to take the website on again and has redesigned it, and updated it including all the missing past minutes. Thanks very much to John for all his hard work, which is done voluntarily. The website can be accessed at www.applecrosscommunity.org.uk . Minutes will be available on it shortly after they have been issued.

Murdo asked if it would be possible to find out how many access the site.

Road Signage: No reply had been received to a letter to Jim Yuill.

Post Meeting Note: Jim's reply arrived the following day. He has asked a member of his staff to meet with CC representatives in Applecross to discuss the signage. He is arranging to have the sign at Tornapress to be corrected.

Leader Funding: There is no need for the CC to be involved at this stage.

3. Treasurers report

The balance in the treasurer's account is £5,293. (£3,000 of this total is ring fenced for improvements to the 'Village Green.')

The filling station account balance is £306.

4. Correspondence

- Notes from Lochcarron CC meeting
- Newly signed CC constitution
- Information on a Flying Exercise
- Weekly Planning lists included applications for planning permission for a new house at Callakille for Andy and Sue Grocock and alterations to two houses on The Street for Murdo Finlayson. These were noted. Murdo left the room for this item.

Post Meeting Note: Planning permission has been requested for a new oven for Annie MacDonald in Culduie. This was also noted.

- Minutes from the Ward Forum in Strathpeffer. These can be accessed at <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/yourward/ward06/wardforum/>
Each community council in the ward has now been allocated to one or two councillors. The Highland Councillors for Applecross will be Audrey Sinclair and Richard Green.
The next ward forum is in Poolewe on 26th November. The AGM of Wester Ross Alliance will take place immediately after. Alison will attend both.
- Notice of meetings re the changes in the planning and development service. Murdo plans to attend the meeting in Lochcarron.

5. Affordable Housing

Di Alexander, Secretary and Development Manager of the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust, spoke about the work of the Trust and in particular what it could do to help with the housing situation in Applecross. The Trust is a charity which works closely with Community Councils. It can sell land to housing associations to build houses, mainly for rent (as in the Craite Barn development) or sell affordable plots to individuals to build houses on. Di explained how the Trust has adopted various ways of ensuring that the houses resulting from their work remain in the affordable sector, so that people on ordinary incomes in the Highlands can get a chance to own their own homes.

The Trust now runs surgeries in order to assess housing needs in a particular area. These usually take place over an afternoon and evening and all those with housing needs are invited to discuss their needs and to have the various options available explained to them on a confidential basis. The Trust then reports back to the CC and the CC discusses what should be done next.

It was agreed that HSCHT should run a surgery in Applecross to assess housing needs; this is likely to take place early in the New Year.

Morven Taylor, the HSCHT representative for this area, will serve on the CC housing sub committee.

6. Heritage Lottery Fund Application

Robert Hanna is no longer employed by the Trust to work on the application. Brian Burns, who has worked in Applecross before, will be available to start work on the bid in January.

7. Traffic Issues

The Street is increasingly congested, with cars parked outside all the houses meaning that there is very little room for manoeuvre and no provision for pedestrians. A recent accident caused by the congested conditions resulted in damage to a vehicle. There are no markings at the edge of the hotel car park, meaning that some customers appear to be unaware that they are on a main road.

Traffic calming measures (including a 20 mph limit) were requested over two years ago, and resurfacing has been requested for four years, but no apparent progress has been made.

Murdo will ask Audrey and Richard for support in pursuing this matter.

Post Meeting Note: The letter from Jim Yuill states that there is no intention of introducing a 20mph limit in the Street; present Highland Council policy is that the 20mph limit will only be introduced outside schools. A speed survey a few years ago indicated that there was no justification for other traffic calming measures. The Street will be resurfaced sometime during this financial year and this may provide opportunities to improve the parking situation.

A member of the public pointed out that some people are driving on the beach at Sand. It was agreed that this must be prevented if possible. Murdo will speak to the estates manager at BUTEC to ask if QinetiQ can help, as the road beyond the gate is MOD property.

8. Tourist Brochure

A sub committee will be formed to progress this before the end of the year. It appears that some funding may be available to assist with costs.

9. Flooding Survey

Peter Peacock MSP is seeking responses on questions relating to Scotland's vulnerability to flooding. The CC will respond asking for the need for improvement to sea defences to be taken into consideration.

10. AOCB

Hearing: A member of the public had asked if Councillors could speak up after having been unable to hear much of the discussion at the last meeting. It may be possible to install equipment in the Hall which would enable the hard of hearing to benefit. Ruaridh agreed to bring this up at the next Hall committee meeting.

Cycle Race: A letter has been received from Muirne Buchanan stating her total opposition to the cycle races, which affect both her work as relief post woman and running her small business. Gerry will reply.

Bealach DVD: The DVD which 'Bealach' has created to mark Highland 2007 will be launched at the Hall on November 30th. All are welcome to attend.

Fuel Supply: There is no fuel for sale in Applecross at the moment owing to cash flow difficulties at the shop. The CC discussed various options with the hope of resolving the situation and decided to seek advice.

Date of Next Meeting: 11th December

Post Meeting Note: This meeting will now be a Public Meeting to discuss the fuel situation.