

Applecross Community Council

Unapproved Minutes of Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Meeting Tuesday 10th April 2007.

Present : Murdo Finlayson Ishbel Ferguson Ruaridh Cameron
Gerry McPartlin Tim Williams Jonathan Hedges

Councillor Ewen McKinnon

Mark Stewart. (Min Sec)

3 members of the public.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

[1] APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

None.

[2] MINUTES OF 13TH MARCH MEETING :

Adopted as an accurate record.

Proposed : Jonathan Hedges.

Seconded : Ishbel Ferguson.

[3] CHAIRMAN'S REPORT :

The Chair made the undernoted report :

APPLECROSS COMMUNITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2006 -2007

Meetings

During the year April 2006 to March 2007, the Community Council held ten meetings.

Other meetings attended by members of the Community Council were:

Joint Wester Ross Community Councils
Meetings on Out of Hours Medical Cover
Applecross Trust meeting
Applecross Rural Conservation Ltd meeting
Community Safety Seminar
Highland Small Communities Housing Trust AGM

Finances

A Statement of Account has been prepared by the Treasurer. This has been audited and will be presented to the AGM for approval following this report.

Affordable Housing Sites

The Community Council has been actively pursuing the issue of affordable housing sites with the Applecross Trust throughout the year. After initial reservations that the suggested location was outwith the Local Area Plan, the Planning Department now appear to be reconciled to the provision of sites at the old Smithy. The Planning Department however, is of the opinion that a single developer should be engaged, to ensure uniformity of design to blend in with existing housing at the site. This would appear to be at odds with the aim of providing affordable sites for individual development and it is unclear what would stop such housing being acquired as second/ holiday homes. This is obviously not the result which the community or the Community Council seek and the Community Council continues to liaise with the Applecross Trust to try and achieve a satisfactory solution with the Planning Department.

Out of Hours Medical Cover

The Community Council continues to be actively involved in the ongoing discussions over the provision of Out of Hours Medical Cover. Our appreciation is extended to Gerry McPartlin who is representing us on this issue and who has covered over 1000 miles in attending meetings. Our thanks are also extended to Drs. Gargill and Barbour and the nursing staff, who continue to provide an excellent service which is much appreciated by the community.

Public Toilets

As in previous years, with the assistance of funding from Councillor MacKinnon's discretionary budget, the Community Council arranged for the Public Toilets to remain open during the winter months. Despite problems encountered, which resulted in restricted opening, the facilities have been well used and the problems have been reported to the appropriate authority. We are grateful to Councillor MacKinnon for the installation of lighting in the toilets, which was also funded through his discretionary budget.

Clachan Church

A sub-committee of the Community Council has been established to liaise with the Applecross Trust over the renovation of the building and to raise funds. At present, funding has been secured which has enabled the windows to be made secure and which will cover the cost of replacement windows. The exact condition of the roof, which is anticipated to be the major restoration cost, is unclear and a further survey is to be undertaken to establish exactly what will require to be done and to provide the basis for further grant applications.

Applecross Woodlands/ Landscape Partnership

Horner and MacLellan, Landscape Architects, have been commissioned by the Applecross Trust to conduct a Landscape Character Assessment which will be used as the basis for an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to fund, amongst other

things, the felling and removal of the conifer plantations on the Estate. A steering group has been established comprising local interest groups and other interested parties and the Chair is representing the Community Council on this.

Cycle Challenge

The first annual Bealach na Ba Cycle Challenge was held during the year, resulting in extensive positive nationwide publicity for Applecross and the surrounding area. Such was the success of the event that it is to be held again this year, together with a second, smaller event later in the year. We thank Gerry McPartlin who has been our liaison with the organisers.

Village Green

Grant funding has been secured by the Community Council which will enable the re-building of the dry stone dyke between the Post Office and the Hotel and the provision of a footpath between the car park and the North end of Shore Street, together with other environmental improvements to the green itself.

We are grateful to Councillor Ewen MacKinnon for his support and advice throughout the year and his attendance at the majority of our meetings. We are also grateful to PC Ian Campbell for his support and, lastly, to the members of the public who attend our meetings or make contact with us.

Murdo Finlayson

10th April 2007

[4] TREASURER'S REPORT :

Jonathan Hedges presented his report for the current financial year.
The following points were noted :

- [a] It was observed by the meeting that the balance brought forward did not correspond with the closing balance of the previous financial year.
- [b] Jonathan explained this inaccuracy in that a cheque issued in the previous financial year was processed outwith that period. In addition, an amount of interest had not been applied to the account.
- [c] The meeting noted that since the audited accounts are supplied to the area office, and used as a basis for determining Community Council grant aid, that a formal amendment would be required.
- [d] The meeting suggested that the previous years closing balance and the current year's opening balance must correspond and that this might be effected by identifying the uncashed cheque of the earlier financial period as expenditure for that year.

Jonathan also noted another point of concern in that the £100 cheque from the organisers of the 2006 cycle event, in favour of the Community Council, had not been deposited.

It was noted that the cheque had been passed to Jonathan by Gerry McPartlin and Jonathan apologised that he likely misplaced it.

However, contact had been made by Jonathan with the event organisers who were happy to issue a fresh cheque.

WITH THE NOTED ACCOUNTING AMENDMENTS :

Accounts Proposed for Adoption : Ruaridh Cameron.

Accounts Seconded for Adoption : Gerry McPartlin.

ORDINARY MEETING :

[1] VILLAGE GREEN UPDATE :

The Council received notification from WREN, to whom it made a funding application for reinstatement works to the village green, stating that while it would very much like to support the application it was not able to because funds had already been exhausted.

However, the application was viewed in such favour by WREN that it was passed to SNH and SEPA for their consideration, both bodies indicated their approval and willingness to contribute and a formal application was made to SNH, resulting in the award of a grant of £2920, of which, £1600 will be earmarked for wall rebuilding and the balance for footpath construction.

The meeting noted that the amount of the award is much greater than the amount which would have been available through WREN.

Councillor McKinnon advised that the Community Council may also apply for funding assistance from Highland Council Land Fill Tax Credit Scheme.

[2] HOUSE SITE UPDATE :

[a] The Applecross Trust has been in discussion with the Planning Department over the possibility of providing house sites at the Old Smithy.

[b] The Planning Department were initially concerned that the proposed development site was outwith the Local Plan Development Area. It is hoped that this difficulty has now been resolved.

[c] The Planning Department have indicated a preference for sympathetic development in a continuation of the existing house design, also, that construction should be undertaken by a single developer.

[d] While the meeting endorsed the idea of sympathetic design it felt that, since the sites are intended for the development of affordable houses, a developer led initiative may compromise this objective and lead to a more commercially based initiative.

ACTION : Councillor MacKinnon suggested that the Trust might consider submitting a formal application for outline planning permission, which would go directly to Committee for consideration. The meeting agreed that this suggestion should be raised with The Applecross Trust.

[3] HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND UPDATE:

The Chair attended the Steering Group meeting and carried forward the views for additional community involvement expressed at the last meeting.

The other suggestions arising from the last meeting were noted by Horner and McLennan and will be followed up by them.

[4] CLACHAN CHURCH :

Alistair McCowan and Murdo Finlayson met at the church with Andrew Wright, an accredited Architect with SNH and the Church Charity Commission.

[a] CHURCH FEATURES :

The architect identified features of the building which he classified as outstanding.

[b] WINDOWS :

The architect suggested that what the community view as the 'original' window design, would in fact have been Victorian replacements. However, since there is no record of what the actual originals would have looked like he would be amenable to reinstatement of the Victorian design, with the probable proviso that the coloured element be incorporated.

ACTION : further research into the original window design will be undertaken by the architect, and in the meantime the ordering of the replacement windows will be put on hold in order not to jeopardise further grant applications.

[c] ROOF :

The architect suggested that it may be better to simultaneously replace the windows and repair the roof and suggested that a further survey of the roof be undertaken to determine the extent of work required.

ACTION : Tain Slaters are to undertake a roof survey and prepare a report. The restoration plan will focus on the worst case scenario where there is any uncertainty about the degree of remedial work required.

[5] JOINT WESTER ROSS COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING :

[a] BUS SERVICE :

The additional service will be scheduled in accordance with public response. Response sheets are still available at the Post Office.

[b] HIGHLAND COUNCIL ELECTIONS :

It was noted that the administrative structure which will support the new Council will consist of 22 wards served by 16 managers.

Our ward is the largest geographically and the second largest in terms of population.

Bob Cameron has been appointed as Corporate Manager.

Robbie Bain has been appointed as our Ward Manager.

It remains unclear how the new system will operate with much detail remaining to be determined once the new Councillors are elected and assume their responsibilities.

The Chair noted that the appointment of Bob Cameron and Robbie Bain should be seen as a positive step, the Community Council having dealt with them in the past and found them very helpful.

Councillor MacKinnon noted that although some people tend to see the new developments as a backward step for local government, he would strongly recommend that the Community Council adopt a positive posture and endeavour to involve all four new Councillors in Community Council business and keep them in the information loop.

[6] PUBLIC TOILETS UPDATE :

New lighting is now operating.

The Chair extended thanks to Councillor MacKinnon for using his discretionary budget in this regard.

[7] A.O.C.B :

[a] AGM PROCEDURES :

A query was raised about the scheduling of adoption of the previous AGM minutes and it was explained that these were approved at the subsequent ordinary meeting.

[b] BROADBAND :

There is no response to the current enquiry of B.T.

Councillor MacKinnon noted that HIE has a special unit which deals with Broadband and that contact should be made with Christine at Strathcarron or with Robbie Bain.

[c] HOUSING OPTION LEAFLETS :

Gerry McPartlin has copies of these which are available to anyone interested.

[d] QINETTIQ :

It was noted that none of the applicants from Applecross were invited for interview in connection with the recent vacancy. It was suggested that employees living outside the area may have

difficulty reaching the site in times of adverse weather and road conditions.

ACTION : The Chair will write to express concern, noting the geographical issues associated with the post, and, also, to enquire if training is, or could be, associated with the post, ensuring maximum local job opportunity.

[8] NEXT MEETING - 8th May 2007.

APPENDIX.

The Chair presented Councillor MacKinnon with a gift of thanks for his help and support to the Community and expressed Very Best Wishes for his 'retirement'.

Councillor MacKinnon in reply thanked the community for a most unexpected gift and noted that while it had not always been a pleasure journeying to Applecross over the Bealach but he had very much enjoyed working with the Council and in being involved with work for such a beautiful part of Scotland.

Councillor MacKinnon expressed Best Wishes to the Council in its future work.