

# Applecross Community Council

## Unapproved Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

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

Mark Stewart. (Min Sec)

5 members of the public.

---

### [1] APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE :

None.

### [2] MINUTES OF 10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL MEETING :

Adopted as an accurate record.

**Proposed :** Gerry McPartlin.

**Seconded :** Ishbel Ferguson.

### [3] TREASURER'S REPORT :

The account balance is : **£4,708.91**

( this includes the restoration grant funds of £2920 )

Additional points were noted :

- [a] Separate accounts relating to the restoration funds will be prepared and provided to SNH for their audit purposes.
- [b] Gerry McPartlin passed on two cheques to Jonathan, each in the sum of £100, the first from Strathpuffer Ltd for last years cycle Challenge and the second for the May 2007 event.
- [c] The Chair directed that a copy of last year's Annual Accounts should now be forward to June Forsyth at Highland Council Dingwall Office.
- [d] The meeting noted that the photocopier had now been passed over to Alistair McCowan.

### [4] BEALACH BEAG CYCLE CHALLENGE :

Gerry McPartlin noted the following related points :

- [a] Leaflets providing information about the event would be distributed by the Community Councillors as previously. Additional leaflets would be available at the Post Office/Shop. The road closure information on the leaflets had been highlighted.
- [b] Strathpuffer Web Site ( [www.strathpuffer.co.uk](http://www.strathpuffer.co.uk) ) : the site has provision for providing links to any Applecross business. It is likely to be accessed many thousands of times in the lead up to the Bealach Mor, on 1<sup>st</sup> September. To date only Applecross Estate and Applecross Inn have

used the facility. Interested business may eMail Strathpuffer at [info@bealach-na-ba.co.uk](mailto:info@bealach-na-ba.co.uk) in order to arrange a listing.

- [c] As noted previously a goody-bag is being provided for each event participant. An opportunity exists for any local information to be included in the goody-bags for the event on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

**QUESTION FROM PUBLIC :** In future could the road closure be scheduled thirty minutes later to allow for newspaper delivery and B&B exit over Bealach ?

**ACTION :** Gerry expressed the view that this would appear both desirable and feasible and that he would liaise with the organisers and report back to the meeting.

**QUESTION FROM PUBLIC :** Will there be a repeat of road writing which occurred at the previous event ?

The meeting noted that this had now been prohibited, after strong representation by the Community Council, but had arisen as a traditional practice associated with Tour de France.

## **[5] HIGHLAND COUNCIL ELECTIONS :**

The Chair noted the election results for first preference votes as :

Biz Campbell	LD	1242
Richard Green	Independent	792
Audrey Sinclair	Independent	608
Jean Urghart	SNP	1486

The turnout was 60.5%.

The Council composition is :	Independent	35
	LD	21
	SNP	17
	Labour	7

Other points :

- [a] The Chair has written a letter of congratulations to the new ward councillors and to Robbie Bain, the Ward Manager. Simultaneously an invitation to the next Applecross Community Council meeting was extended.

- [b] It was explained to the meeting that Robbie Bain has a remit of liaison with the new councillors as a full-time employee of Highland Council and that he will deal with issues associated with the ward.

## **[6] COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS :**

The Chair will eMail to Community Councillors the Schedule for Elections in accordance with the Constitution and H.C. Guidelines.

If, as hoped, a ballot is required it is scheduled for **27<sup>th</sup> July 2007**.

Three nominees are suggested for the post of returning officer :

- [1] Ms Liz Pritchard.  
[2] Chair Sheildaig C.C.

[3] Chair Lochcarron C.C.

This is the first occasion where all councillors are required to stand down and where there are no continuing councillors. It was suggested that this lack of continuity is a poor idea and so there is an open question about how in future to proceed.

Two options are available for consideration :

[option 1] all councillors retire every four years.

[option 2] there is a staggered retirement every 2 years providing for continuity by half the number of sitting councillors.

**ACTION :** The Chair will discuss with Highland Council the possibility of returning to the meeting's preference for 'option 2', which is the way things have operated in the past.

Further observations were made by the meeting :

In response to Jonathan's question about whether the Community Council could organise a platform for candidates to explain their reasons for wishing to serve, it was indicated that this could only be organised by candidates themselves and that it would be wholly improper for the CC to be involved in canvassing.

Gerry noted that it would be a good thing if the healthy interest obtaining at the previous election, where there were more candidates than seats, could be encouraged. The meeting agreed and resolved to publicise the forthcoming election using An'Carranch and the Public Notice Boards.

**OBSERVATION FROM PUBLIC :** It was suggested as very important to the future of Applecross that a significant presence of the indigenous population be maintained on the Community Council, thus providing important local knowledge. The speaker noted that where he previously lived the indigenous population became poorly represented on the community council and that this situation operated to the serious detriment of the community.

## [7] HIGHLAND COUNCIL CORE PATH PLAN :

The Chair informed the meeting of two events associated with the core path initiative:

15<sup>th</sup> May 1:30pm – 6:00pm at the Village Hall.

22<sup>nd</sup> May 7:30pm Public Meeting at the Village Hall.

### Background Information :

The identification of core paths follows from the Land Reform Act 2003 which makes a statutory requirement of provision. The first organisational step is the creation of a Core Path Plan in which paths providing for all types of user are identified. These may be to varying degrees of specification, from low to high. It is envisaged that core paths will subsequently be identified on O.S. maps.

The consultation exercise seeks to engage people in path identification. There are issues of path upgrading and the meeting was clear in its wish not to see the creation of signs or upgrading work which would compromise the visual aspect, but that simple improvements would be desirable where required.

It was noted that path identification does not imply adoption. Ownership would remain as present.

Funding is not at present identified. And the question of public liability was raised.

## **[8] SPEEDING/TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT :**

The Chair read a letter from Mr Tony Welwig at Toscaig.

Mr Welwig's letter noted his personal experience of speeding vehicles while walking his dog and carefully detailed his analysis of the problem and associated issues. His letter informed the Council of the matter being raised with the Police and of their suggestion that it be first addressed at Community Council level and he subsequently invited the Council to join his personal crusade to address the problem.

The Chair noted that speeding and traffic management was a concern to a significant number of members of the community and that some of the points made in the letter would be endorsed by them. Moreover, it was stressed that in the case of the characteristic single track roads of Applecross, where there is no provided pavement, roads formally constitute a shared space, between vehicles and pedestrians.

The meeting noted that the Community Council has for some time been concerned about this issue, had taken up detailed discussion with Councillor McKinnon, but all parties had identified the main difficulty as the limitation of remedial options. The meeting also noted that it did not wish Mr Welwig's letter to dominate its own position on this complex matter.

**ACTION :** The issue will be an agenda item for the next Community Council meeting. The police will be invited. The Council will present areas of concern for which it believes solutions can be reasonably implemented : school discharging pupils onto a road with on which the national speed limit applies, the pedestrian difficulties associated with the Milton – Shore Street route, Shore Street parking and speed limit, and, overall review of speed limit for the Peninsula.

## **[9] BROADBAND PROVISION :**

The lack of clarity surrounding the provision of Broadband on the Peninsula remains.

The meeting was advised by the Chair of the following points :

**[a] CORRESPONDANCE:**

No answer concerning ISP's had been received.

**[b] CAPACITY :**

It would require the addition of one or more communications modules to the exchange to increase Broadband subscription numbers. Also, that Applecross is not on the list of twenty exchanges scheduled for complete upgrading. Consequently other upgrading solutions are being considered.

**[c] BUSINESS BROADBAND :**

It would appear that in some cases BT cannot complete its Business Broadband contract and that there is a difficulty in understanding the situation in Applecross between B.T and OpenReach.

[d] **RANGE** : A member of the public pointed out that some areas of the peninsula, eg Cuaig, were not served by Broadband at all.

**ACTION** : A further letter will be written.

## [10] **A.O.C.B** :

### [a] **SKYE BASED CHARITY** :

The Society has requested a donation towards the cost of their planned trip for veterans to the war graves in France.

**ACTION** : A donation of £25 will be made.

### [b] **FRIENDS OF THE EARTH / IMPROVEMENT SERVICE** :

The Scottish Executive is offering free training sessions through these two organisations designed to assist with the new consultation process associated with the Planning & Development processes.

**ACTION** : Given that the provision is aimed more at C.C.'s with large commercial developments in their backyard the offer will be deferred until the new C.C. is elected.

### [c] **APPLECROSS FILLING STATION** :

The facility is insured by Mr Barnes, as the Licensed Operator. A copy of the Minute of Agreement is now on file.

### [d] **CYCLE RACE – POTENTIAL LITTER**:

A member of the public asked of arrangements for the removal of used plastic water bottles.

**ACTION** : Gerry will brief organisers ahead of the event although the matter was discussed early in the planning stages.

### [e] **ABSENTEE CROFT TENANTS** :

Jonathan noted that he considered that absenteeism created a serious opportunity cost for the community. He further noted that he himself was obliged to leave Applecross in an endeavour to obtain a croft elsewhere. He invited councillors to give their own views on absenteeism.

Tim noted that he did not understand the ramifications of crofting and would find it helpful to be better informed.

It was suggested that A.O.C.B was the wrong format for any discussion of Absenteeism and that Jonathan should consider most carefully why it should be discussed in the C.C. arena and what he might hope to achieve by it.

**ACTION** : The Chair terminated the discussion by ruling it inappropriate for AOCB and noting that Jonathan might eMail a request for 'absenteeism' to be an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting, but that he most strongly advised him not to do so.

### [f] **WALLED GARDEN**:

Jon Glover would like a sign for the Walled Garden added to the sign post at the bottom of the Craite.

**ACTION** : Jon to formally bring matter to the Community Council who will subsequently seek to make arrangements with Highland Council.

[g] LITTER:

A massive thanks was expressed by Tim to all those who participated in the recent litter collection and tidy-up exercise.

[h] SMIDDY SITES DEVELOPMENT:

A question was posed over whether the development has found another potential difficulty over archaeological features being uncovered.

**ACTION** : The Chair indicated that he had no news of this and was somewhat sceptical, but would seek to ascertain the facts.

[i] RECYCLING:

Alistair Brown informed the meeting of the plastic bottle recycling initiative at Shieldaig and offered to transport without charge any Applecross collection to the collection point at Shieldaig.

**ACTION** : Tim and Alistair will organise an Applecross collection. The meeting expressed much appreciation to Alister for undertaking this measure.

**[8] NEXT MEETING - 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007.**