

Applecross Community Council

Minutes of Meeting 14th August 2007 (Unapproved)

Present: Ruaridh Cameron, Ishbel Ferguson, Murdo Finlayson, Ewen Gillies, Alison MacLeod, Gerry McPartlin

In attendance: Richard Green, Highland Councillor

Seven members of the public.

Apologies: Biz Campbell, Highland Councillor

1. Election of Office Bearers

Chair: Murdo Finlayson (proposed Ruaridh Cameron, seconded Ishbel Ferguson)

Secretary: Alison Macleod (proposed Ewen Gillies, seconded Ishbel Ferguson)

Treasurer: Gerry McPartlin (proposed Murdo Finlayson, seconded Ishbel Ferguson)

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 10th July were approved (proposed Ruaridh, seconded Ishbel).

3. Financial report

The account balance on 5th July was £4 738.53. This includes the grant of £2 920 for the restoration of 'The Green'.

A donation of £100 for the restoration of the Clachan Church has been paid into the Community Council account. This will be transferred to the Applecross Trust.

The annual grant of £1002.15 has been paid in.

£3000 has been reinvested in the Guaranteed Reserve Account for the filling station.

Annie Mac Donald has paid the website hosting fee of £23.49 and requires to be re-imbursed. Gerry will arrange to transfer the payment of the web hosting to the Community Council account.

It was agreed to pay Liz Pritchard expenses for her journey to Applecross to deliver the election results, and to buy her a box of chocolates to thank her for her work as returning officer.

4. Community Council Constitution

Bob Cameron, Corporate Manager for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, has asked all Community Councils to adopt a new constitution based on the most recent Highland Council model.

It was decided to revert to the original election arrangement whereby half the community council stands down every two years as this allows for continuity.

Action: Murdo will produce a draft constitution to be referred to all Community Councillors for amendment, if necessary. It should then be possible to adopt it at the next meeting and refer it to the Highland Council for their approval.

5. Conduct of Meetings

Some community councillors felt that the large number of contributions to discussions by members of the public at the meeting in June was not appropriate at a Community Council meeting. Ruaridh suggested that in the future members of the public who wished any matter to be discussed during the meeting should approach a Community Councillor to ask to have it included on the agenda.

Richard Green agreed that this would be helpful, and suggested that the best approach was to allow discussion for a limited amount of time and then move on.

Gerry, Ewen and Alison felt that it was important that members of the public should feel welcome to make contributions at Community Council meetings, as long as this is done in a reasonable way. The Council exists to represent the community.

Members of the public also agreed that they would like to be able to contribute to discussions.

Action: Members of the public who wish specific matters to be discussed at Community Council Meetings are encouraged to approach any of the Community Councillors who will ensure that the matter is included on the agenda of the next meeting. However members of the public are welcome to contribute to discussions at the Community Council when invited to do so.

6. Heritage Lottery Fund

Murdo recently attended a meeting with Robert Hanna and two HLF representatives to discuss the progress of the preliminary planning for the Applecross Landscape Partnership Scheme. The Landscape Character Assessment which is the central item at this stage is still not complete. The Applecross Trust has received £44 500 from the HLF towards the cost of the planning stage. Murdo believes that the Highland Council and HIE Skye and Wester Ross have also contributed.

Community Councillors and members of the public expressed concern that the Applecross community has not, so far, been properly informed, consulted or involved in this scheme. It was felt that community involvement is necessary to ensure that the application is made up of projects beneficial to both the local landscape and our community.

Action: Alison will invite Robert Hanna and Archie McLennan to the next Community Council meeting to discuss the application. A list of questions will be made up and e-mailed to them to give them a chance to prepare their answers. Members of the public will be invited to add their questions to the list.

Post Meeting Note: Archie has confirmed that he and Robert will be able to attend. They have plans to hold a meeting within 2-3 weeks to present the Landscape Character Assessment to the community and it may be that this will answer the questions the community would like to ask.

7. Abandoned Vehicle

Thanks to Ali Brown who towed the abandoned car from the quarry pit on the Camustiel road to Kishorn, and to Ewen who will arrange for its disposal.

8. AOCB

Clachan Church: No progress has been made, as the funding bodies insist that the work on the roof must be complete before work can commence on the windows. As there is not sufficient funding for the roof, work is at a standstill.

Tourist Information: Roger Cundiff of the Strathcarron Tourist Information Centre asked for leaflets about tourist attractions and accommodation in Applecross. Murdo has delivered leaflets about the paths network and the Heritage Centre, and is willing to deliver others.

It was suggested that the Community Council could arrange for the production of a generic Applecross leaflet. It should be possible to obtain a grant to have this designed and printed. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Polling District and Venues: Highland Council had written to ask if the Community Council was happy with present arrangements for polling. No changes were felt necessary.

Planning: Notice has been received of alterations and an extension at Cruary.

Highlands and Islands Local Food Network: The Council are invited to send a representative to one of the Food Network's open days. It was decided that the invitation should be extended to Catie McLennan who is involved in the Local Producer's Market. The Council will offer to cover her travelling expenses.

Highland Councillors: Richard Green explained that he and the other three councillors who serve the ward are sharing attendance of community council meetings and aiming to get to as many as possible. The first full ward forum will take place in Strathpeffer in September on a date which is yet to be confirmed.

Cycle Race: Ewen expressed concern about the number of cyclists who are travelling down the hill so fast that it seems inevitable that there will be a serious accident. They may be training for the next cycle race on 1st September.

Action: Gerry will speak to the race organisers to suggest that they use their website to strongly advise against travelling at such speeds when the road is open to traffic.

Several members of the community have expressed continuing concern over the way the races have been organised. The closure of the road has been advertised in local papers as 10.00am to 14.00, despite the fact that the organisers had apparently agreed to the Community Council's suggestion that the road closure should begin later. Murdo expressed surprise that the Community Council had not been informed of the road closure.

Action: Richard Green will ask Highland Council to ensure that the Community Council is informed in the future.

The Food Station will now be provided by the Campsite, rather than by volunteers. This was welcomed. It is unlikely that the organisers will make any financial contribution to the community. It was felt that although people were generally happy to see the cycle race go ahead, the organisation of the races so far had left a lot to be desired.

Action: Gerry will invite the organisers to send a representative to the next Community Council meeting.

Post Meeting Note: The organisers advise that the road will be closed from 10.30-1.30. The notice in the paper was put in without their knowledge or agreement. They are happy to include advice on safe practice on the Bealach on their website. Leaflets with details of the closure will be available for distribution next week. They are willing to send a representative to the next meeting.

Gerry suggests discussing the cycle race at the next Community Council meeting, to decide what our approach will be and inviting the Strathpuffer representative to the following meeting, if it seems necessary.

Coping Stones at Creag Dharoch: Ruaridh noted that four of the coping stones at the Creag Dharoch had been dislodged.

Post Meeting Note: The coping stones have been replaced.

Builder's Rubble at the Caman: It was noted that builder's rubble had been dumped at a passing place at the Caman.

Post Meeting Note: Donald MacKenzie confirmed that the rubble had been put there with his agreement. The local roadmen plan to use it for infill within two months.

Community Council Website: This is out of date by over a year.

Action: Alison will make enquiries about it.

Post Meeting Note: John McKeown created and maintained the website as a volunteer. At present he is not able to offer his services to continue to do this. The domain name and the web space are the property of the Community Council. The copyright of the site belongs to John.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 11th September at 7.30pm.