

## **Applecross Community Council**

### **Minutes of Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007 (Unapproved)**

**Present:** Ruaridh Cameron, Ishbel Ferguson, Murdo Finlayson, Ewen Gillies, Alison Macleod, Gerry McPartlin (from 8.40)

**In attendance:** Robbie Bain- Ward Manager, Audrey Sinclair- Highland Councillor, Archie MacLellan- Applecross Trust, Robert Hanna- ALPS

Seventeen members of the public.

**Apologies:** Richard Green, Jean Urquhart

#### **1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> August were approved (proposed Ewen, seconded Ruaridh).

#### **2. Heritage Lottery Fund Application**

No questions for Archie or Robert were received from the public.

Archie thanked the community for the good attendance at the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> September. A focus group has been formed by eight volunteers at the end of the meeting; others are welcome to join this group, but are encouraged to do so soon.

The first draft of the Landscape Character Assessment will be finished next week, and the British Geological Society report has already been handed in. Robert is arranging with the web manager of the Trust web site to have these documents made available on a separate page. The Trust plans to host a visit for members of the focus group and the steering group to the Nadair Trust, whose Landscape Partnership scheme is already well underway. It was agreed that this offer should be taken up and should also include representatives from Grazing committees, and possibly local businesses.

The Focus Group has met and produced a statement, as follows:

- *Due to time constraints the group must start work as a 'focus group', but would like to investigate further the advantages and disadvantages involved in setting up a Community Interest Company or something similar, before deciding whether or not to proceed down this route. Several members of the group felt that doing so was likely to lead to greater success.*
- *The group hopes that the groups involved in the Steering Group would continue to be involved, and suggests that other community groups could be invited to participate, for example; Grazing Committees.*
- *The main objective of the group will be to concentrate on informing and communicating with the local community. We are keen to convince people in Applecross that the scheme is relevant to them and worth participating in. We would like to be involved in organising the Community Survey.*
- *The group wishes to become as well informed as possible about the scheme so that we will be better able to inform the community, and will have a better understanding of what will be required of us as the scheme proceeds. To this end we would like to meet with Robert as suggested, as well as visiting the Nadair Trust projects. We would also like access to as much documentation as possible, including the Landscape Character Assessment.*

- *The Group would like to acknowledge the initiative of the Applecross Trust in identifying the potential funding source and congratulate them on their success with the initial application. We feel that the delay in getting the community informed and involved is unfortunate, but that there is still time to recover from this.*

HLF has advised Archie that it sees no advantage in a community interest company being formed at this stage, however if the application gets through to the next stage it may be appropriate to have a community company of some kind managing the project.

Robert welcomes participation in the Community Survey.

### **3. Community Council Constitution**

Murdo produced a draft constitution, which it was agreed should be adopted after a few changes are made. Robbie Bain suggested that the sentence beginning 'To maintain ownership of Applecross Filling Station' should be reworded to make a different kind of community ownership possible if it was decided that this is advisable. Community Councils are avoiding ownership of community assets as councillors are not protected in the way the directors of a company limited by guarantee are. It was agreed to alter the sentence. Murdo will consult the insurance expert at Highland Council to find out if the Community Council is insured as owner of the filling station.

The new constitution will be displayed on the public notice board for 14 days, before a Special General Meeting is held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October to approve it. Highland Council will then ratify it.

### **4. Correspondence**

- Invitation from the Association of Scottish Community Councils to join their organisation at the cost of £15 per annum. It was agreed to join for a year.
- Notice of Marine Renewable Energy meetings from Lloyd Gudgeon, Wester Ross Alliance.
- Participation invited in an HIE survey on the demand for commercial and industrial premises.
- Notice received of the first ward forum, to be held on 29<sup>th</sup> September in Strathpeffer. The main business will be to discuss with Community Councillors how ward forums should be run. Two representatives from each CC are invited. Members of the public may also attend but are not permitted to join in the initial discussion. Murdo will attend and either Alison or Ewen, if other commitments permit. Information about the ward and minutes of ward forums can be found on the HC website; [www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/yourward/](http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/yourward/)
- An invitation to attend the Scottish Water Annual Consultation has been received; questions must be submitted in advance. Murdo will attend. The obvious question to ask is whether water capacity will have an impact on future housing provision. It was suggested that it would also be worth asking whether the required level of water capacity was based on the total number of houses, or on the number of permanently occupied houses.
- Planning notice received of a deviation of the electricity line at Mains of Applecross to allow archaeological work.

- HC quality awards scheme invites nominations in recognition of the commitment and /or achievements of HC staff working locally. It was agreed to nominate the roadmen, who work hard in difficult conditions to keep the Bealach open.

### **5. Winter Opening of Toilets**

It was agreed to keep the public toilets open over the winter if possible. Audrey Sinclair indicated that it may be possible to fund this from the discretionary budget. The CC will apply to the fund and advertise for a new cleaner. The present cleaner finishes this month.

### **6. Applecross Leaflet/Brochure**

It appears that funding may be available for this from a scheme run by the Highland Council's Tourism Development department. It was agreed to form a sub committee to pursue this further. Alison and Ruaridh will lead this and invite representatives of local businesses involved in tourism to join.

It was also agreed to investigate further the possibility of involvement in a Wester Ross website.

### **7. Community Council website**

John McKeown, who created and maintained the CC website until February 2006, sent a statement to the secretary explaining why he had stopped doing so. He felt that the CC members elected in 2005 had shown no interest in having an internet presence, and that it was therefore not worth his time voluntarily maintaining and updating it.

All agreed that it is important to have a community council website. The secretary would make an effort to include the address of the website on all minutes, notices and letters sent by the council so that it would be well used. However at the moment it is not possible to do this as the site is out of date. It was hoped that John might reconsider his decision.

### **8. Treasurer's Report**

The balance on 28<sup>th</sup> August was £5,515. The filling station account balance was £305, with £3000 in the interest bearing account.

### **9. Housing Needs**

Gerry suggested setting up a sub committee, which he is willing to chair, to tackle the issue of housing needs in Applecross. This group would assess the current housing needs and pursue a variety of ways of meeting these. All agreed that this was an excellent idea which should be discussed further at the CC meeting in November (some councillors will not be able to attend the October meeting.) Gerry will get in touch with Di Alexander of the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust and invite her to the November meeting.

### **10. Cycle Challenge**

Gerry (who is the local community link with the organisers, but not involved in the organisation himself) reported that the event on 1<sup>st</sup> September appeared to run without problems. He received no negative

feedback and discussions with the Walled Garden, the Campsite, the Hotel and the shop showed that all but the shop felt that it benefited their businesses. The organisers of the race argue that it provides a lot of free publicity to the area, attracting more tourists to Applecross. Gerry is not willing to ask the organisers for a donation to the community in recognition of the inconvenience of having the road closed. None of the other communities involved has asked for one. Gerry confirmed that the organisers do not intend to run any more than two races a year. A member of the public suggested that the organisers could provide cycle training to the local school children; this would win them a lot of goodwill. It was concluded that the Cycle events will inevitably bring a certain amount of disruption to the area. It is up to the community to decide whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. We should also bear in mind the impact on the other communities involved in the events if Applecross decides not to support it. It was suggested that a question about the cycle events should be included in the community survey and the answers would provide guidance on how to proceed.

## **11. AOCB**

**Playground Maintenance:** The playground at the Community Hall is in need of maintenance. This is the responsibility of Highland Council and has been reported to them.

**Reply from Crofters' Commission:** The Crofters' Commission's reply to the CC's letter re absentee crofters suggested that we await the report of the Commission of Inquiry on the future of crofting.

**Wester Ross out of hours group:** Gerry attends regular meetings of this group. His travelling expenses were covered by a fund which has now been spent. The Community Health Partnership may agree to pay, but if not, it was agreed that the CC would cover Gerry's expenses. Two members of the group have visited Nicola Sturgeon, who has agreed to visit this area.

**Community Minibus:** Ewen asked if the community would be eligible for funding to replace the bus. Murdo explained that although the scheme was still running and the community was eligible to apply, an application was unlikely to be successful because the use of the bus has fallen, and funding will be awarded according to the demand for the service.

Anyone over 24 with a clean licence can drive the bus.

Questions on bus use could also be included in the community survey.

**Speed Limit Reduction at School:** This was promised by October; is it likely to be in place by then? Speed recording cables have recently been installed just south of the school; why has this been done when the decision to install the speed limit reduction has already been made? Audrey and Robbie both assured the CC that the speed limit reduction would go ahead.

**Post Meeting Note:** Theresa Kemp of the road safety unit has let Robbie know that this is now unlikely to happen until the middle of 2008. The traffic counter has been installed by the Council and is nothing to do with the school, but is to gather background data in respect of full time speed restrictions.

**White Lines on the Bealach:** These require to be repainted. This is a job done in the summer and therefore not likely to be done this year.

**Date of Next Meeting:** 9<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30.