

Applecross Community Council

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www.applecrosscommunity.org.uk

Minutes of Meeting 12th May 2009

Present: Ali Brown, Ewen Gillies, Alison Goldthorpe, Janet MacDonald, Ali Macleod, Alison Macleod

In attendance: Councillor Audrey Sinclair, Councillor Jean Urquhart, 5 members of the public

Apologies: Tim Williams

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted. Proposed by Ewen, seconded by Ali M.

Bench for the Green: It was agreed to ask Sam Easson to make a bench for the Green. Alison M will contact Archie MacLellan to ask if the Trust is able to donate suitable wood for it.

Post Office: There was no response to a letter to the Post Office asking for news on the future of the PO. The sub postmaster vacancy has not been advertised as yet.

Sand: There are now two bins at Sand. Archie MacLellan is 'keeping an eye' on the situation at Sand. On his last visit there he was pleased that there was no rubbish or damage to the bothy.

School Bus: Highland Council has asked that the 5 year old in Milton, who was having to walk to school, should be given a lift to school on the bus as long as there is room in the vehicle being used.

2. Financial Report

The balance on 15th April was £2175.19. The only expenditure since then was £20 for a book token to thank the returning officer.

The former chair has recently forwarded a copy of the application form for a grant from SNH made in 2007 to restore and enhance the "village green". This indicates that the grant of £2,920 was intended to be 49% of total costs of £5,870 to be spent on the area. No information is given in the form of where the match funding was to come from, or what the scheme was to include. Past minutes of the Community Council do not record any discussion on match funding, but suggest that the plan was for the area to be fenced off to allow planting, and that members of the public had objected to the fencing.

As discussed in April, Alison had in the absence of any information about the grant, contacted Mary Gibson of SNH to sort out how much of the grant remained and what it should be spent on. Mary accepted that £177.59 remained and did not raise the question of match funding. Archie MacLellan was also in agreement.

It was agreed that once this has been spent, there is no need to spend any more money on "the Green", and that the CC does not have £2,950 to spare anyway.

3. Correspondence

- Tim Daplyn of Coilliegillie wrote to express his concern about the effects of the increasing number of visitors to Ard Ban and Coilliegillie and to suggest ways of helping to deal with these. He emphasised

that he is happy to see people enjoying the area, but would like to encourage more responsible behaviour.

It was agreed to get a larger, more permanent sign asking people to park at the Caman and a sign asking people to take their litter home, clean up after their dogs etc to be erected at the start of the path. Many of those visiting the area are attracted there by the walks leaflet issued by the Applecross Trust, so it was agreed to ask Archie to include a section in that leaflet asking people to behave responsibly.

In the longer term the CC will investigate the possibility of a more permanent sign including information about Colliehillie and Ard Bain, as well as advice on how to behave. HC discretionary funding may be available towards this, and the Trust may contribute.

- Notification from SNH of the review of the site notification documents and management statement for Beinn Bhan, which is an SSSI.
- A letter from David Stewart MSP inviting comment on his proposals to create a Victim's Commissioner for Scotland. The document is available on www.davidstewart.co.uk .
- A consultation draft from HC planning on Housing in the Countryside. This can be viewed online at www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/consultations.htm . Closing date for responses May 22nd .

4. Affordable Housing

Morven Taylor of the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust suggested that she should attend the Community Council meeting in June so that she would have time to deal with issues arising from the visit to the potential site at Applecross Mains beforehand. She will also speak to Albyn Housing and Highland Council planners on our behalf, to get their views before attending the meeting.

Morven and Ronnie MacRae, HSCHT's project implementation manager, met with three members of the Community Council at the potential site. Cruden's has priced a replacement bridge at £60-80,000, and although this doesn't totally rule this site out, it does make it less likely. There were also concerns that some of the land nearest the river was reclaimed, and there were signs of contamination.

Morven suggested that before the June meeting, the Community Council should think about all the possible sites for affordable housing in Applecross. HSCHT will then do a desktop study on these sites to work out which have real potential. It was agreed to write to the Grazings Committees to ask for their agreement in principle to allowing this to happen, emphasising that any houses built on such land would have conditions imposed on them meaning that they would always remain in the affordable sector.

Morven also suggested that the CC should ask the community for an update on current housing needs, as it is 18 months since the surgery they carried out. This includes people who are currently in satisfactory rented housing, but would like a chance to move on to ownership or part ownership. Anybody with housing needs is encouraged to attend the next CC meeting, where Morven will outline the different options HSCHT can offer.

5. LEADER funding and Wester Ross Alliance

LEADER funding is European money available until 2013, for a wide variety of community based projects. It will provide up to 40% of the funding for projects in the following categories:

- Local Development Strategies
- Culture and Heritage
- Training and Learning Opportunities
- Access to Activities, Facilities and Services
- Land, Environment and Access to the Countryside
- Renewables
- Tourism
- Social Enterprise and Micro-Businesses

The minimum grant is £1,000, and applications go to Liz Whiteford, Development Officer, at liz.whiteford@highland.gov.uk or phone 0134 855217. More information is available at www.highlandleader.com . Any suggestions for projects that the Community Council could apply for LEADER funding for are welcome.

Wester Ross Alliance is the Local Area Partnership, administering LEADER funding for Ward 6, which has a £825,702 funding allocation from LEADER. There are 15 directors, four of these are the Highland Councillors for the ward. It was agreed that the Community Council would apply for membership of the WRA.

6. Cycle Challenge

The most recent challenge took place three days before the meeting, which did not allow much time for feedback, but the general feeling was that there had been some improvement in the way the event was organised. Marshalling at the bottom of the hill was much better. Muirne, who was delivering the mail on the day, reported that the event had not started until the Shieldaig postman had reached the village, which helped. She had received a motor cycle escort but didn't find it had helped cope with cyclists who were still refusing to stop for oncoming traffic.

A separate complaint was also received about supporters of the cyclists parking in all the available passing places along a length of the road.

The safety advice given to participants was much improved, though Hands on Events forgot to refer it to the CC for comment before issuing it. Further improvements have now been suggested.

It was suggested that the road closure notices issued by Hands on Events could also be improved, with less irrelevant information included. They also need to make clear that access is permitted to Keppoch, the Campsite and Craite Barn despite the road closure.

Audrey had heard in Lochcarron that the ambulance, which had been called for a cyclist who had a heart attack on the coast road, had had difficulty with some cyclists who did not get out of the way. Ali M will speak to the local doctor and the ambulance driver to establish exactly what happened.

7. Applecross Landscape Partnership Scheme

Helen Smith and Hazel Bews have been meeting with various groups to discuss their projects, including Bealach, who are planning a Bardic school and the Heritage Society who hope to employ a full time archivist for three years, and have a number of smaller projects planned.

Geoff Walker of Highland Council is going to carry out a survey of the dry stone dykes on the Bealach and from the junction to the white gate, to help establish which areas would be most appropriate for restoration.

Help is sought from the community to help develop themes which are as yet not very well detailed and with this in mind a series of meetings is planned as follows;

Drystone Dykes: A meeting to look in more details at how these projects could be implemented, training and community involvement, will be held at the Trust's Offices on Thursday 21st May, 7pm

Sea Lochs and Rivers: aims to carry out one or two small projects in the Applecross area aimed at improving habitats for freshwater and/or sea fishing locally, improving angling/sea angling in the area, providing environmental education about fish and fishing etc. An open meeting to discuss ideas and projects will be held at the Trust's Offices on Monday 25th May, 4pm

An open meeting to discuss various crofting-related projects linked to traditional land management, crofting dykes and croftland wildlife habitats will be held at the Hall on Monday 8th June, 8.00pm.

Part of the funding is allocated to dealing with areas of forestry which are badly windblown. The plan is to fell these areas and chip the trees. Various ideas were suggested at the latest ALPS steering group meeting to make this project more worthwhile, including creating a 'food forest' and a fuel resource. A date for a woodlands meeting to discuss the possibilities will be set soon.

Helen and Hazel will be keeping the community informed by issuing updates by e-mail. These will also be available in paper form. Anybody wishing to receive ALPS e-mails should ask Helen at

Helen@applecross.org.uk

8. Ward Forum

The April Ward Forum was in Kinlochewe and focussed on Waste Management, including a presentation from HC's head of Waste Management. The West coast from Strathcarron to Assynt is the only area in Highland where the blue bin recycling service has not been introduced. This is due to the shortage of facilities at which the recycled goods can be stored, and HC plans buildings at Gairloch and Ullapool to fill the gap, but is unable to say when this will happen. A constituted group, West Coast Recycling (Highland), has evolved from the group of volunteers which has been collecting plastic bottles in the area for a number of years and sending them to Invergordon. Claire Munday, who convenes this group, gave a presentation to the Forum explaining that this group would like to create a social enterprise based on plastic and cardboard recycling, but is handicapped by the lack of knowledge about when the blue bin collection would start in this area. The group is still exploring options with HC. Anyone wishing to join the group can get a membership form from Alison Macleod.

9. AOB

Water Quality: One complaint has been received of water tasting horrible. If anyone has recent experience of water tasting worse than usual, please let the CC know.

Plastic Bottle Recycling: Thanks to the volunteers who have been taking bottles over to Kishorn. Volunteers are still needed to take the full bags off the stands and replace them with empty bags.

Industrial Units: There has been a number of enquiries about the possibility of small industrial units in Applecross. Toscaig pier, which belongs to HC, was suggested as a potential site for these. Audrey will find out exactly what area of land the Council owns there.

Out of Hours Group: This is a group which has been working very successfully to ensure as good a level as possible of out of hours cover for those communities where OOH cover is not provided by their own GPs. Gerry has served on the group for a number of years, and offered to continue to do so. It was agreed to ask him to do this, although Applecross is very lucky to have OOH cover provided by our two GPs.

Culduie: A Culduie resident complained about the abandoned cars and mess on croft land there. This is preventing easy access to other crofts. It was suggested that this is a grazings committee matter.

Date of AGM: Audrey will remind Robbie that he was going to find out if we could accept the accounts at an ordinary meeting. This would allow us to postpone the AGM until autumn without affecting receipt of the HC grant.

Post Meeting Note: The accounts can be accepted without holding the AGM, as long as they are signed off by an independent auditor, which is already the case.

Date of Next Meeting: 9th June at 7.30pm.