

## **Applecross Community Council**

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[www.applecrosscommunity.org.uk](http://www.applecrosscommunity.org.uk)

### **Minutes of Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

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

**In attendance:** Councillor Audrey Sinclair, 7 members of the public

**Apologies:** Councillor Jean Urquhart

#### **1. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted, proposed by Ali Brown, seconded by Ali Goldthorpe.

**Industrial Units:** Andrew Prendergast, HIE, advised that HIE would not provide industrial units itself, as the policy is to do so only in the places with bigger populations where the demand is strongest, such as Lochcarron and Gairloch. HIE will however consider assisting third party landowners, either private or community, to provide workspace for lease in outlying areas. HIE would require evidence that the demand is real and that interested parties would be able to pay a realistic rent level. They would prefer to have a prospective tenant signed up in advance of building. The design of any such units would have to be as flexible as possible to allow for a range of uses.

A member of the public who is interested in renting such a unit said that he had a map of HC land owned at Toscaig Pier which indicated that there would be room for about three units. Audrey agreed to ask if Highland Council would consider selling that area of land. Alison will ask Andrew how much funding would be available if the project fitted HIE's requirements. It was agreed to invite members of the community who would be interested in renting industrial units in Applecross to let the community council know, so that the level of interest in the community can be assessed.

**Affordable Housing:** Morven Taylor forwarded details of potential sites visited in June, and Ali and Alison M have forwarded details of further potential sites to her. Tim suggested another couple of sites; the details and photographs of these need to be collected.

Ali M explained that Morven had suggested gathering details of potential sites first, without informing the Trust or crofters at this stage. She will then assess the sites for suitability and refer the sites she considers have genuine potential to the planning department to get the planners' views. If the planners agree that some sites appear to have potential, the Applecross Trust and/or crofters will then be approached to see if they would be interested in selling the sites for affordable housing. This means that nobody wastes time discussing sites that it would not be possible to get planning permission to build affordable housing on.

In the meantime all those with housing needs in Applecross should get in touch with Morven to let her know what type of housing they require on [morven.taylor@hscht.co.uk](mailto:morven.taylor@hscht.co.uk), or phone 01463233 549, or speak to a community councillor.

**White lines and Barriers on the Bealach:** Audrey asked about these and was told that the barriers are to be installed in August. The white lines are being treated as a priority but Highland Council have

problems getting the firm who are supposed to do this to do so. The latest problem was a broken down machine.

## 2. Financial Report

The balance is £2175.38, with no transactions taking place. An invoice has been received from John McKeown for the fee for hosting the website. The audited accounts have been sent to Robbie Bain.

## 3. Correspondence

- Letter from Liz Pritchard inviting the Community Council to send two representatives to a meeting on September 17<sup>th</sup> in Achnasheen to discuss the idea of forming a Wester Ross Health Group to monitor and influence wider health care provision. This would continue the work that the OOH group has tackled along with OOH provision over the last few years. It was decided to forward this to the Health Care Association to ask if they want to send a representative.
- Letter from Bob Cameron, Corporate Manager for Ross Skye and Lochaber giving details of the grant awarded to Community Councils, which this year will be £1,120.17 (including £67.10 for insurance).
- An invitation to nominate a Highland Council employee or team who provide a high quality service to our community for a Quality Award. Suggestions for suitable nominees would be welcome.
- Plans for the erection of a multimedia studio in Toscaig for Mr and Mrs D MacLennan.
- In the past copies of plans have been available at the Post Office. As there is no Post Office in Applecross at the moment, it was agreed that we will ask for copies to be sent to the chair's house, and members of the community can ask to see them there if interested. Audrey advised that it is acceptable for the Community Council to let the Planning Department know that they are supportive of plans if they wish to do so.
- **Post Meeting Note:** Robbie Bain forwarded details of a consultation exercise the Scottish Ambulance Service is currently engaged in, with a closing date of 14<sup>th</sup> August. Since ambulance provision has been a recurring issue amongst CCs in the Ward (single manning and patient transport to Raigmore being the main problems) he thought that some may want to make an input to the consultation. The document is available at:  
<http://www.scottishambulance.com/InvolvingPatients/YourQuestions.aspx>

## 4. Cycle Challenge

Calum Campbell of the ambulance service reported that the service was 'dismayed' at the attitude of many of the cyclists during the Cycle Challenge in May, who impeded the progress of an ambulance which was proceeding under priorities to a casualty on the coast road. He contrasted this with the Highland Cross, which has been run successfully for over 20 years and presented the emergency services with no problems of this type. As a public agency the ambulance service does not take a stand on events so no official complaint has been made.

Ian Hay, Highland Council roads department had been disturbed to hear about the problems the ambulance had experienced and local medical personnel are unhappy with the situation.

After discussion, it was decided that the Community Council should withdraw its support for the event because of the concern felt about the way the ambulance had been impeded, and write to Robbie Bain, the police and Ian Hay to this effect. A copy will be sent to the other Community Councils on the route of the events. Alison will draft a letter and refer it to the rest of the Community Council.

The letter will make it clear that cyclists are still welcome to come to Applecross.

Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council has invited the police, Calum Campbell and the event organisers to their next meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> August at 7.30 to discuss the issues. Members of the other communities involved are welcome to attend this meeting.

## **5. Applecross Post Office**

It was agreed to write to Roger Cundiff to thank him for providing six hours a week service from March until the end of June.

Ali and Seonag Brown are the only applicants for the sub postmaster vacancy.

Ali M made it clear that the Community Council's priority in this situation is to ensure that Applecross retains as good a PO service as possible, not to support an individual in developing his business. He asked if any of the community councillors would prefer Ali Brown to leave the room while the Post Office was discussed, but nobody thought this was necessary.

John Farquhar Munro replied to the letter requesting his support to persuade the Post Office to offer more than ten hours service a week. He had heard from Colin Neely, Assistant Consultation Team Leader, who confirmed that the PO was hoping to make a new appointment soon. Unfortunately Mr Neely gave no commitment as to opening hours but says these will be based on actual customer usage. Once the appointment has been agreed in principal a period of public consultation will follow and Mr Munro is happy to make further representations on our behalf to try to secure more hours of service a week.

**Post Meeting Note:** Charles Kennedy wrote later in the week to pass on a letter announcing the public consultation. This letter clearly states that the PO will be open 10 hours a week. Mr Kennedy says he will do his best to state the case for the opening hours to remain at 17 a week. He encourages all affected to respond to the consultation, which can be done by writing to:

**Post Office Ltd  
c/o National Consultation Team,  
PO Box 2060,  
WATFORD,  
WD18 8ZW**

or e-mailing:

[consultation@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:consultation@postoffice.co.uk)

The closing date for the consultation is **27<sup>th</sup> August**.

As the PO suggests that the new service will not open until early October, Mr Kennedy also offers to try to persuade the PO to do all they can to provide a temporary service in the interim. He asks anyone facing difficulty because of the lack of a postal service to contact him with details at:

**The Constituency Office  
5 MacGregor's Court**

## **Dingwall**

### **IV15 9HS**

Audrey has also received the notice of public consultation and will write on our behalf. She suggests that the Community Council encourages as many people as possible to write as it will only be with a large response that the PO will take any notice

#### **6. ALPS**

A Steering Group meeting took place on 6<sup>th</sup> July.

- Historic Scotland confirmed that it will not provide match funding for the Clachan Church, meaning that applications will have to be submitted to other bodies.
- The chapel in the grounds is likely to be included in the Highland Building Preservation Trust's graveyard buildings project, for which the HBPT have applied to LEADER for funding.
- The Bardic summer school is likely to attract match funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig but as the Bòrd doesn't meet until the end of August it will be some time before this can be confirmed.
- The creation of a website to contain all the information on the Heritage of Applecross gathered as a result of ALPS was discussed, but there were no suggestions as to how it would be maintained after the three years of HLF funding is finished.
- The HLF is now viewing more positively the idea of including a new south deer fence as part of the application, having advised earlier that it should be left out (though agreement has not yet been confirmed). The plan is to fund 50% of this with crofting grants, with the Trust contributing another 20% or so. A new fence would allow land improvement, with habitat management following on from that. Without a new fence no crofting landscape based projects can take place.
- It has been decided to decrease the area of woodland in the Glen which was to have been felled. Some of the funding for this will be diverted to destumping more of Smiddy wood and some for the deer fence. The details are still to be worked out.
- A group of Applecross residents visited Abriachan to see what has been achieved by the community there and which ideas could be included in the ALPS application.

#### **7. Wild Camping**

Concern had been expressed by some members of the community about the number of wild campers at Applecross Bay. The Community Council agreed that this is an issue that is very difficult to influence. The sign erected by the Trust advising against camping is usually ignored as people know that they can't legally be prevented from doing so, as long as they cause no damage.

Toilet facilities could be provided at the Bay to try to limit the mess made, but providing facilities is likely to attract even more campers.

The Community Council will write to Archie MacLellan suggesting a meeting to discuss ways of working together to discourage wild camping.

#### **7. AOB**

**Ward Forum:** Ali M attended this meeting at which the subject was planning. Tim Stott, Principal Planner

at the Highland Council, explained that there would be no more detailed crofting township plans as there is not enough staff to provide them. The planning area has been enlarged to include Skye, Lochaber and South Lochalsh.

Dafydd Jones, Area Planning and Building Standards Manager, explained the new planning procedure. A member of the audience suggested that there is no 'human face' to the planning procedure; that decisions are not based on what's happening in communities. It was suggested that the Highland Councillors provided the human aspect, but it appeared that applicants were not able to speak to Councillors about applications, so how were they to learn what the problems were. Audrey explained that applicants are entitled to send Councillors information on the background to applications, but that the Councillors are not able to enter a dialogue with an applicant during the planning procedure.

**Visit from Rannoch Community Council:** Four members of Rannoch Community Council visited Applecross to meet with Dr Cargill, Alistair McCowan and Alison Macleod, to discuss how the Applecross community has managed to retain the OOH service it has, where all the OOH cover is provided by our own GPs. OOH cover in Rannoch (a remote community in Highland Perthshire) is provided from a considerable distance away, despite strenuous attempts by the community to have local OOH cover restored. For details see <http://www.sundayexpress.co.uk/posts/view/113408/Villagers-fear-for-lives-in-GP-exodus> .

They have submitted an e-petition to the Scottish Parliament's official website "*Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that there is adequate provision for out of hours GP cover in all remote and rural areas in Scotland*". They have deliberately made the statement a broad one which applies to all remote and rural areas, so that they can gather a wide level of support.

Details regarding the issue can be viewed by going to:

[http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/view\\_petition.asp?PetitionID=333](http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/view_petition.asp?PetitionID=333). They asked members of the Applecross community to please sign the petition if they support this statement (and make a comment) and forward on to any and all who would be interested. The petition can be signed until 7th September and the Parliament's Scrutiny Committee will examine the petition during the autumn session.

Alison agreed to forward the details to other community councils in the Highland Council area.

**Emergency Transport Meeting at Achnasheen:** Marie Claude Joly attended this meeting on behalf of the Community Council. The meeting was held to consult on a report written on the provision of emergency transport in Highland. Marie Claude would like to hear from any members of the community who have experienced problems with ambulances or other emergency transport. She is also seeking the views of the local GPs.

**Poor Visibility at Exit from Surgery:** Tall bracken is affecting the view of drivers coming out of the surgery car park.

**Date of Next Meeting:** 8<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30pm (no meeting in August).