

Applecross Community Council

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Minutes of Meeting 8th April 2008 (Revised)

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

Apologies: Richard Green, Robbie Bain

In attendance: Audrey Sinclair, PC Joanna MacKinnon, 13 members of the public

1. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings (Minutes approved at AGM)

Playground: Douglas Miles of Highland Council explained that although the playground had been laid out in a way which would allow for additional equipment to be added, there is no money in this year's HC budget to pay for additional equipment.

Barriers on the Bealach: No response has been received from Bryan Stout to the letters on this subject. Audrey confirmed that Bryan has replaced Jim Yuill as principal engineer. The Highland Councillors have also drawn the attention of the Roads Department to this matter.

PC MacKinnon said that she would be able to submit a form to Highland Council now that the accident had been drawn to her attention. She agreed to do this.

2. PC MacKinnon

PC MacKinnon was welcomed to the meeting; the first she has attended in Applecross since she moved to Lochcarron. She explained that she is happy to attend Community Council meetings, although she is often on call for a large area in the evenings. She urged anyone who has any police matters they wish to discuss with her to do so, either through the police station in Kyle, by phoning 722 222, or by knocking on her door in Lochcarron.

Ewen raised the issue of cyclists on the Bealach who appear to be practising for the Cycle Challenge travelling at speeds which mean they are unable to stop if they meet a vehicle. One cyclist had recently hit the wing mirror of a vehicle which had to take emergency action to try to get out of his way. PC MacKinnon suggested that all those experiencing such incidents should report them to the police as soon as possible afterwards. The police can then try to trace the cyclists.

A member of the public asked why cyclists are allowed to travel four abreast on the coast road (which is not shut to traffic) during the race. PC MacKinnon explained that the maximum that is allowed is two abreast. Gerry pointed out that this rule is explained on the website for the race. The organisers suggest that drivers coming up behind cyclists should sound the horn about 50 yards before reaching them to warn them of their approach. The organisers have offered to provide a motor cycle escort for the post woman on the coast road.

3. Correspondence

- Planning
 1. Ewen Gillies has applied for planning permission for a boatbuilding and general manufacturing shed at Kishorn. Noted. (Ewen left the room while this was discussed).
 2. Duncan and Sarah McCowan have applied for planning permission for the erection of a house at Lonbain. Noted. (Gerry and Murdo left the room while this was discussed).
- Liz Pritchard asked for a community councillor representative to be available to attend the NHS visit to explain the delivery of Health Services between May 20th and 29th. Gerry will be available 20th-23rd. Alison will be available 24th -28th. Liz also asked for comments on the options offered for the future OOH service. Murdo agreed to provide this.
- Douglas Miles asked if the Culduie cattle grid, which is in poor condition, should be replaced or scrapped. The inhabitants of Culduie would like it to be replaced.
- The Post Office replied to a letter from Gerry asking for an assurance that they would not close the Post Office in Applecross. The reply stated that while there were no current changes planned to the service in Applecross, they could not guarantee that this situation would continue.

4. Transfer of Applecross Filling Station to Applecross Community Company

As the ballot result showed that a Community Company with LRA powers is the preferred option, the Community Council formally voted to transfer the Filling Station to Applecross Community Company.

However Alison stated that the Community Company was not in a position at this point to agree to take on the filling station.

Firstly, the Community Company is not incorporated, as the process had been put on hold until after the ballot result was known by Douglas Graham, who was concerned that he was in a conflict of interest situation; he was advising both the Community Council and the Community Company. Incorporation will take at least another two weeks.

Secondly, the interim board of the Company exists to gather a membership and to progress the incorporation of the Company, and cannot make major decisions about other matters. An elected board will not be in place until the first General Meeting of the Company.

Thirdly, the elected board of the Community Company will not be able to agree to take on the ownership of the filling station until a Feasibility Study has been carried out as to the condition of the pumps and tanks and the viability of the filling station. Some funding had been offered for this study by HIE SWR in December, and Lorne Macleod began to organise the commissioning of the study. However the decision of the Community Council to hold a ballot had resulted in concern at HIE SWR that there may be a split in the community, so they asked for the funding application to be postponed until after the ballot result. HIE has in this new financial year stopped providing funding for such studies, but has agreed to allow an application as the study has been in the pipeline for so

long. Match funding will come from the Lottery's Investing in Ideas programme, and this scheme has an eight week delay from application to award of funding.

Fourthly, it seems unlikely that the funding which was available for refurbishment of the filling station in the last financial year will still be available. The proportion of Rural Petrol Scheme funding awarded by the Scottish Government to the Highlands and Islands has been dramatically reduced and HIE has been undergoing substantial changes, including a considerable reduction in its budget in this new financial year. This news is of great concern to those involved with the Community Company, which will need time to seek alternative funding for refurbishment to ensure that it can still take on the Filling Station and run it as a going concern.

Audrey expressed surprise at the need for such a long delay by the Community Company; after all the Company had been set up specifically to take on the filling station and remove individual liability for the Filling Station from the Community Councillors. Murdo asked why the interim board was unable to take major decisions; was this on advice from Douglas Graham, or was it included in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company. Alison replied that it was on advice from the Community Land Unit; the interim board has not been elected by anyone and so cannot claim to be representative of the Company members and therefore should not be making decisions on their behalf.

5. Affordable Housing

Archie McLellan and the trustees of the Applecross Trust have seen the HSCHT housing needs report and agreed in principle to help by providing a suitable site. It is hoped that details will be available at the next Community Council meeting.

The HSCHT are holding a conference in Inverness on 11th and 12th April. Murdo and Gerry may attend.

6. Bealach Cycle Challenge

The Bealach will be closed from 10.30 until 1.00 on the Applecross side for the next race which is on 10th May. The road on the Tornapress side will be closed from 10.30 until 12.30.

The organisers have offered a donation of £250, plus the price of ingredients, to anybody willing to supply baking for the cyclists. Alternatively they are willing to give £250, to be matched by £250 provided by the Community Council for a community project of the Community Council's choice.

Murdo suggested approaching Sue Grocock, secretary of the Parent's Council, to ask her if parents of primary school pupils would be interested in providing baking.

A long discussion ensued during which some members of the public expressed concern about the safety of cyclists and drivers alike. They also questioned whether the races brought any great benefit to the area.

Gerry asked for suggestions for solutions to these problems with the following results:

- Get in touch with the HC roads department to ask for permanent signs at the bottom of the hill explaining the potential dangers for cyclists.
- Ishbel emphasised the need to report any incidents involving cyclists to the police.
- Audrey suggested that the organisers should be informed of the increase in incidents involving cyclists apparently practicing for the race. She also suggested that the HC Road Safety department would be able to provide advice.
- Suggest to the organisers that leaflets should be provided with advice to participants about safety issues.

7. AOCB

Finance for the Feasibility Study: A member of the public suggested that the £3,000 in the Community Council Filling Station account could be used to help finance the Feasibility Study to speed things up a bit. Alison suggested that it could be used as a stop gap measure until the funding from Investing in Ideas was received, and then paid back. Murdo suggested Alison consider whether she had an interest to declare and that the money should be used directly on the Filling Station; e.g. for fuel or match funding for refurbishment.

Date of Next Meeting: 13th May at 7.30pm.