

## **Applecross Community Council**

These minutes and past minutes of Community Council meetings are available at

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

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

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

**In attendance:** Councillor Audrey Sinclair, Robbie Bain (ward manager), Alistair Lawton and two other representatives from Hands on Events, 8 members of the public

**Apologies:** PC Joanne MacKinnon

#### **1. Election of Office Bearers**

Audrey offered to chair the meeting until the new chair was in place. She thanked Liz Pritchard for acting as Returning Officer in her usual efficient way.

**Chair:** Ali Macleod (nominated by Janet MacDonald, seconded by Alison Goldthorpe)

**Vice Chair:** Janet MacDonald (nominated by Alison Goldthorpe, seconded by Tim Williams)

**Secretary:** Alison Macleod (nominated by Alison Goldthorpe, seconded by Ewen Gillies)

**Treasurer:** Ewen Gillies (nominated by Tim Williams, seconded by Alison Macleod)

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

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

**Request for new water outlet:** The roadmen intend to put in a drain south of the Street where a new outlet had been requested.

**Signs on Coast Road:** Audrey put a request in to have these sorted or replaced. The signs have already been surveyed, but the result is not known.

**'No Caravans' sign:** A different, clearer sign will be installed in the same place as the existing sign.

**Use Passing Places to allow Overtaking Signs:** Audrey will speak to Ian Hay about getting new signs for the Bealach. The police have already agreed to them.

**New GP:** A new GP has been appointed to share the workload, including out of hours cover, with Dr Cargill on a week about basis, thanks to a campaign during which NHS management were persuaded not to substitute GP cover with a nurse practitioner two days a week.

#### **3. Conduct of Meetings**

It was agreed that the new community council would try to share the workload, including acting as office bearers.

The agenda for each meeting will be publicised well in advance to allow members of the community to be informed, and to give them an opportunity to ask a community councillor to add something to the agenda. The aim is to display the unapproved minutes within a week of each meeting taking place.

A more informal style of meeting was suggested, with members of the public encouraged to contribute to discussions when invited to do so. Members of the community council were encouraged to be as open as possible with each other, with all copied into e-mails and letters sent on behalf of the community council. It was suggested that the community council could follow the example of Shieldaig, where some of the meetings are devoted to discussing a topic of relevance to the community, and experts invited to give information about that subject. It was agreed that this would be worth trying.

#### **4. Financial Report**

Since the last report, £460 has been spent on toilet cleaning (Dec- March), £150.17 on election expenses, £52.50 travel expenses, £250 on the secretary's honorarium. The balance stands at £2,179.91.

The Community Council received a grant from SNH in 2007, to improve the amenity and the biodiversity of 'the Green'. Of this £1,705 has been spent on repairing the wall between the shop and the Inn, £464 on path construction, £440 on accommodation for the waller and £133.41 on trees. This leaves a balance of £177.59 to spend. A bench was suggested. Alison M will price them.

#### **5. Correspondence**

- A letter from a regular visitor to Applecross (passed on by Judith Fish) who is unhappy about the termination of the Postbus service. He enclosed a letter his MP had received from Royal Mail stating that it is not responsible for local passenger transport. Highland Council is still pursuing this issue, but Royal Mail is not interested in discussing it. It was decided to write to Charles Kennedy to express the community council's concern at the loss of this service.
- Response from NHS 24 to the community survey of that service carried out by the Out of Hours Group.
- Certificate of Public Liability Insurance. The cost of the insurance is deducted from the CC grant.
- Invitation to join in the National Spring Clean campaign. Tim agreed to organise this.

#### **6. Applecross Post Office**

The postmaster has resigned and the job of postmaster in Applecross is now advertised on the Post Office website. There has been one application. The Estate has offered that applicant three possible sites for a portacabin in which to base the Post Office, but the planning officer who visited made it clear she would not give permission for the siting of a portacabin. The applicant was told by the Post Office that if a suitable building for the Post Office was not found by the end of June, when the two afternoons a week service kindly provided by the Strathcarron postmaster finishes, then Applecross may lose its Post Office altogether.

Robbie said that the Post Office had told him that there was no risk of that as there are strict rules about the distance a community can be from the next Post Office and Applecross is well outwith that distance. It was suggested that the Post Office may expect the Post Office service to be provided from the present building, which belongs to Dudley Barnes. Ali M agreed to speak to Dudley about that possibility. It was agreed to write a strong letter to the Post Office making it clear that Applecross must keep the level of service provided before February.

**Post Meeting Note:** Dudley confirmed that he was willing to allow the new postmaster to operate from his building.

## **7. Cycle Challenge**

Alastair Lawton and two other representatives of Hands on Events, which organises the Cycle Challenges, attended the meeting to discuss a sizeable number of complaints the community has brought to the community council concerning the Challenges which have not been tackled properly.

The complaints can be split into two types, firstly the organisation of the event and the behaviour of the competitors, and secondly, the problems caused by the increasing number of cyclists on the road year round, who can cause frustration and safety concerns for drivers. Hands on Events cannot be expected to answer for the second, even though many of the cyclists will have been attracted to the area by the coverage their events receive.

They were however expected to address the list of concerns raised about the events and were warned that if they failed to do so successfully the community council would have to consider whether they could continue to agree to the cycle challenges going ahead .

Many complaints have been received about participants who fail to stick to the rules of the road, riding three or four abreast, not allowing following traffic to pass. The organisers had been asked to expand and make more prominent the advice about this on their website on two occasions and had not done so. They explained that they believed that entrants did not return to the website after their initial visit to enter the event so there was little point in adding to the website information. They had decided to give them safety advice individually in the form of an e-mail shortly before the event, outlining the way they should behave. The community council felt that the advice the organisers planned to give was far too general and should be much more specific. The organisers were asked to refer the amended version to the community council before the next challenge, to make sure they are happy with it. They were also asked to include advice to those practising to limit their speed descending the Bealach.

The organisers have arranged for extra signage on the coast road to remind cyclists not to ride in a group. It was suggested that the cyclists should be asked to wear bigger numbers, so that they can be identified by road users who have seen them breaking the rules of the road. Any cyclist reported to the organiser could then be warned about his behaviour, or banned from taking part again if it had been particularly poor. The organisers said that they would not be able to increase the size of the numbers by much, as they were on the bikes, rather than the people.

The standard of marshalling is often poor. The complex junction at the bottom of the hill was manned by one person last year; this was not enough to allow traffic to be directed safely. He was allowing cyclists coming off the hill to carry on along the bay when cars were waiting, even though the cyclists did not have right of way. The marshals at the north end of the coast road had prevented several vehicles from going down the road, telling them it was closed, when they knew it was not. The organisers agreed that this was not good enough.

A promised motor cycle escort for the postwoman had failed to find her last year as he had not understood that she would leave the main road to deliver mail. Her round took more than an hour longer

than usual as a result of the cyclists on the road. The organisers agreed that they would arrange for the escort to meet the postman or woman in Shieldaig in the future.

The organisers were asked if they made a profit. They make a modest profit (£2-£3,000) but do not pay themselves for the time involved.

There is a possibility of more TV coverage of the event this year and the organisers asked if the community council would prefer that not to be filmed in Applecross. The community will have to be asked their views on that before a decision is made. The organisers also suggested that it would be possible to start and finish the shorter challenge in Applecross if the community would prefer that.

Anybody who experiences difficulty of the road because of unreasonable behaviour from cyclists, either during an event or at any other time, is encouraged to report such incidents to the police in Lochcarron.

So far no incidents have been reported.

**The next Cycle Challenge takes place on 9<sup>th</sup> May. The Bealach will be closed from 10.30 – 13.30.**

## **8. Affordable Housing**

The Applecross Trust offered some land opposite Applecross Mains as a potential site for affordable housing, but a report on the bridge over which it is accessed suggested that a new bridge would be required. Morven Taylor of Highland Small Communities Housing Trust is concerned that the cost of this may make the site too expensive to develop.

Morven is willing to attend a community council meeting to discuss the situation and explore other options. It was decided to invite her to the next meeting as affordable housing is one of the most important issues for the community council to pursue. If she is able to attend, invitations should also go to Archie MacLellan, Albyn Housing and possibly someone from Highland Council to speak about planning issues involved in getting affordable housing underway.

## **9. Applecross Landscape Partnership Scheme**

The application is now in its second stage, with a development officer appointed to finalise the details of the projects and to apply for match funding. The application has to be submitted by November 2<sup>nd</sup>. A group made up of members of the steering and focus groups meets Archie and the development officer about once a month, and the development officer also meets with groups who are developing projects. The community council wishes to be represented but very few members are available to attend a day time meeting during the week. The next meeting is on 11<sup>th</sup> May at 4.30.

## **10. AOB**

**Wild Camping:** Two wild camping incidents have already been reported by members of the community, one involving a large bonfire. There is concern that these may be the first of many this year, as a result of the Monty Halls programme. It was decided to ask the Applecross Trust if they had any plans to cope with the 'Monty effect' if need be.

**Next Ward Forum:** 27<sup>th</sup> April at Kinlochewe Hall at 2.00pm. The subject for discussion will be waste management, and ROWAN and Colin Clark, Head of Waste Management, will attend.

**Plastic Bottle Recycling:** Several volunteers agreed to help take the bags of plastic bottles over to Fergusons. Ali Brown has been taking them all (more than 300) over himself until now.

**Bin at Sand Car Park:** A bin is required at Sand due to the large numbers of visitors. Robbie will arrange for this.

**School Bus:** A five year old living in Milton is having to walk to school as he is not allowed a place on the bus. He lives just under the required two mile limit. He had been allowed a place over the winter because of the weather and dark evenings. Highland Council believed that there was now no seat for him, although the community bus is being used at the moment which has plenty of room. Audrey suggested that his mother should write to Highland Council to request a concession again.

**Date of AGM:** The Community Council AGM is normally held in April, but it did not make sense for a new council to hold it so soon. September or October would be more appropriate. Robbie pointed out that the audited accounts would have to be approved before the next Highland Council grant would be paid, and this is normally done at the AGM. He will find out if it's acceptable to approve them at an ordinary meeting.

**Cheque Signatories:** Ewen, Ali M and Alison M will be cheque signatories. Cheques must be signed by two people.

**Thanks:** Thanks were given to the previous Community Council, particularly Ishbel Ferguson, who was a community councillor for so many years. It was decided to send a book token to Liz Pritchard to thank her for being returning officer.

**Date of Next Meeting:** 12<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30.