

Applecross Community Council

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Minutes of Meeting 8th June 2010

Present: Ewen Gillies, Janet MacDonald, Donald MacBeath, Ali Macleod, Alison Macleod

Apologies: Councillor Audrey Cameron, Ali Brown, Alison KilBride

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting on 9th March were proposed by Ewen and seconded by Ali M.

Cycle Challenge: Ali M. had asked the organisers why the participants in the Bealach Beag had been told that the road had not been closed because of a last minute objection from Applecross. Alistair Lawton denied that this was the case. In his response to the cyclist who complained that the road had not been closed despite the fact that the website advertised the road closure as a feature of the event, Mr Lawton blamed Highland Council. In fact, the road was not closed because Hands on Events had not submitted the paperwork required.

“Children Playing” signs before the Smiddy: Audrey has spoken to Bryan Stout about this and he has agreed to provide them.

2. Financial Report

Bank balance on 8th June: £2901.75, with the only expenditure being £6.93 to John McKeown who had paid for website hosting.

3. Correspondence

- Core Path Improvement Scheme: There is funding available to provide a programme of Core Path Improvements in the Highlands over the next 3 years. It is understood that the only core path identified in Applecross is at the top of the Bealach. Janet will find out if this is indeed the case.
- The Community Council grant for 2010-11 is £1053.07, after the cost of insurance is subtracted. The audited accounts for 2009-10 must be submitted to Highland Council before the grant will be released.
- Scotland’s Independent Regeneration Network invited the CC to become a member. Information on their website suggests the organisation is largely orientated round the central belt, so possibly not of much relevance to a remote rural area. It’s also fairly expensive to join.
- Arthur Cormack invited Community Councils to object to Highland Council’s proposal to reduce the number of Gaelic medium teachers, leading to an increase in the size of Gaelic medium classes. This will make it more difficult to provide the younger children with full immersion in Gaelic, as they will be in classes with older children who are taught in both languages.
- Notice advertising the Ward Forum to discuss the Highland Council budget on 21st June at 6.30, in Lochcarron Hall. Members of the public welcome.

4. ALPS

Ali M sought legal advice on the draft partnership agreement which the Community Council and other community groups involved on the ALPS management board have been asked to sign. He was advised not to sign the agreement as it will expose signatories to liabilities, if problems arise with the scheme. It was noted that the Applecross Trustees would be protected as members of the Trust. The best way to protect all the partners in the scheme would be to form a limited liability company, or at least a limited liability partnership to manage ALPS. As all the Community Councillors would be individually liable it was unanimously agreed not to sign, even though the risk of anything going wrong is small.

A healthy number of applications have been received for the ALPS development officer and administrative assistant jobs. Ali M and other members of the management board identified a short list of candidates to be interviewed and he was invited to join the interview panel. He has also agreed to attend a scoping meeting about the forestry in Applecross and suggested that Jake Willis of the Community Woodland Association should also attend to advise.

Post Meeting Note: More detailed legal advice given after the meeting stated that the Community Council would still be exposed to risks of liability if Ali M acted as a member of the management board, even though he had not signed the agreement. He decided to withdraw from the recruitment process and the management board until a solution (i.e. the formation of a limited company or a limited liability partnership) could be found.

5. Filling Station

There is still no date set for the commissioning of the credit card reader, although it is hoped it will be by the end of June. The delay is due to the manufacturers, Gilbarco, who are apparently uninterested in the problems they are causing. Gilbarco are used to dealing with large contractors installing new equipment for Tesco and other large companies, and are not concerned about the difficulties of operating a small filling station in a remote rural area.

In the meantime the filling station is being operated by volunteers and sales are healthy during the limited opening hours. George Gilroy has spent a lot of time selling fuel over two weekends; many thanks to him and to the hotel staff who are still selling fuel out with opening hours, despite the fact that the hotel is now much busier.

It is disappointing to note that fuel for the community minibus is very rarely bought at the community filling station, although it is permitted to pay for fuel by cheque in arrears.

Pete and Jacqui are going to replant the area round the filling station in the autumn, improving the appearance and the biodiversity of the area. The Community Council will pay for this using the remainder of the SNH grant.

6. AOB

Sea Wall: Work on the seawall outside one of the houses on the Street had been noted, and other owners of houses there asked if there was any chance of Highland Council funding remedial work, as it is in poor condition. Donald had suggested that they get together to write to the Council, rather than writing as individuals.

West Coast Recycling: The funding application to employ a student over the summer was successful, and Abi KilBride has agreed to accept the job. She will work on raising awareness of the need to reduce, reuse and recycle, and raising the profile of WCR and what it does. She will attend community events, work on the new WCR website, and compile information on what can be recycled and where. It was agreed to help fund her expenses, which are not covered by the grant, as long as the other community councils in the area also agree to do so.

Filming on the Bealach: A film company is filming an advert on the top of the Bealach 10th-12th June, and their vehicles will be parked in the car park there. They phoned to let the Community Council know, and offered a donation to recompense the community for any inconvenience.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 10th August (no meeting in July).