

South Harris Community Council Meeting 18/03/2025 at 7.30pm in South Free Church Hall

Present – Donnie MacDonald – Chair; Stephen MacKinnon – Secretary; Marion Morrison – Treasurer; Julian Saurin; Effie MacLeod; Bob Chaffer; Cllr Paul Finnegan

1. Apologies – Lucy Duff; Caroline Chaffer; Patricia Martin; Cllr Kenny MacLeod
2. Minutes of last meeting 14th January 2024 – Marion proposed, and Julian seconded.
3. Matters Arising –
 - Nursery – Now running 5 days a week. Thank you to everyone who made it happen.
 - Harris Local Place Plan – Response from SHCC submitted. Consultation held in Leverburgh was attended by three members of SHCC.
4. E.coli Luskentyre Estuary –
 - Update from sub-group. Subgroup met Environmental Health Officer from CNES and SEPA Officer to update them on information gathered and issues to be addressed from SHCC. Waiting for report from Glasgow University for any further steps. No further information at the moment.
5. Housing Update –
 - Chair met Site Foreman - First 6 houses in place and finishing being undertaken. Next six foundations in place and brickwork starting.
 - 6 days to a fortnight behinds schedule – waiting on sub-contractors awaiting materials. Expected to catch up.
 - Don't expect houses to be allocated until all houses are complete.
6. Playpark –
 - Chair spoke to Cllr MacLeod before meeting – Chair made him aware that there has been a group meeting who will measure site and identify equipment to go on site. Still waiting on final funding amount from CNES.
 - There is still possibility of community gain – Alex Murray and CNES Technical Department at CNES to identify and work on groundworks for playpark. Talks are ongoing. **SSE could be approached to assist as well – Donnie.**
7. Rodel Broadband –
 - Stephen Passmore approached Donnie about possibly of Rodel houses being connected by fibre broadband. After agreement, Mr Passmore approached all households and has agreement in place to pursue this issue.

- Connection goes from Leverburgh Exchange down to Rodel and through to Lingerbay mast. Green boxes are in place as well. Houses just require to be connected.
- Analogue phones due to be closed in 2026, there has to be provision for elderly people using landlines. Donnie raised this in recent health meeting.
- Last week, Donnie and Mr Passmore met a BT and Scottish Government via Teams. BT say that there must be survey of the line and each individual house checking they all want to go ahead. May be a shortfall per house that requires to be paid or there could be a five year wait. BT said there may be other methods of funding to cover this.
- Donnie will keep interacting with MP and MSP to keep pushing.

8. Shackleton Anniversary Update –

- Draft itinerary in place. Effie waiting for RAF personnel to return from Australia later in week.
- Wednesday 30th April Service at 11am in Leverburgh Free Church.
- Finish at 11.37am for minutes silence
- Midday – Head to Village Hall for refreshments
- 1.45pm – Hebrides People car park for laying of wreaths at memorial/
- Walk up hill for anyone who wishes.
- Effie is compiling of list of invitees. Sub-group will meet at coordinate on invitations.

9. Visitor Levy –

- Updates from Patricia Martin and Cllr Kenny MacLeod circulated.
- Visitor Levy and Cruise Levy being considered.
- Urban Foresight are consultants appointed to investigate feasibility of a Visitor levy scheme for each local authority area.
- Point raised that any monies raised must be used in all tourist areas, not just Stornoway town. Legislation says it must be ringfenced.
- Point raised that infrastructure such as toilets throughout islands need funding, for example SHCC is responsible for running Rodel toilets.

10. Northton Grazings –

- Agreed at last meeting that SHCC should try to address situation of abandoned cars on Northton Machair SSSI.
- **Draft letter prepared – Marion to work with Bob and Julian on spacing and final format.**
- **Effie/Marion to check out Clerk is. Letter will then be posted.**

11. Scarista Scout Bus –

- Chair had phone call about debris flying around village. Discussions over renewals were held back in 2019. **Effie to obtain contact.**

12. Northton Road –

- Definitely still on budget list, waiting for CNES Technical department to get work underway.
- Strond/Borrisdale road being surveyed, this may be done at same time as Northton.

13. Rodel Toilets –

- Will be due to open next month
- New doors and donation boxes in place. Funding for upcoming years will be needed for cleaner and consumables.
- Two possible sources – Scottish Building Society – **Marion and Stephen to have a look.** Crown Estates due to open soon which will be applied for.
- Historic Environment Scotland – Had previously offered to supply consumables, this has never materialised. **Donnie is chasing update.**
- Possibility of rota was mentioned. Every second day, either first thing in morning or last thing at night.
- Advertise for volunteer or group of volunteers.
- Alternative is to close toilets and publicise in media and to Historic Environment Scotland about why it is happening.
- **Cllr Finnegan to ask if free consumables could be provided by CNES, call could also be put out to local businesses. Frustration from SHCC that ancient monument may not have an open toilet.**

14. Community Garden

- Gordon Newman who has been working voluntary on garden for over a year. Gordon has requested a new strimmer, and this will be added to grant applications as well as a small retainer.
- SHCC records its thanks for Gordon's continued work.

15. A.O.C.B –

- Pickleball – Letter from Gordon Newman thanking for donation towards hall fees. Kids pickleball now underway.
- Cal Mac Update – Proposed timetables for new Tarbert/Uig ferries have been circulated – Donnie has a phone call tomorrow morning so needs it before 9am tomorrow.