



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

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Minute of Meeting held in Council Offices,
Sandwick Road, Stornoway, on Wednesday 6
December 2023 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT

Mr Kenneth Macleod (Convener)	
Mr Paul Steele (Leader)	
Mr Duncan MacInnes MBE (Depute Leader)	
Mr Kenneth John Maclean	Mr Donald Macsween
Mr Iain A MacNeil	Mr Donald F Crichton
Mr Iain M Macleod	Mr John A Maciver
Ms Susan Thomson	Mr Iain M Macaulay
Mr Mustapha Hocine	Mr Malcolm K Macdonald
Mr Uisdean Robertsons	Mr Gordon Murray
Mr Grant Fulton	Mr Rae Mackenzie
Mr Robert Mackenzie	Mr Angus McCormack
Mr Angus Morrison	Dr Frances Murray
Mr Ranaid Fraser	Mr George Murray
Mr Norman Macdonald	
Mr John Norman Macleod	

APOLOGIES

Mr Paul Finnegan	Mr Finlay M Stewart
Mr Calum Maclean	

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Malcolm Burr	Mr Calum Mackenzie
Mr Calum Iain Maciver	Mr James Mackinnon
Mr Donald A Macleod	Mrs Mary Clare Ferguson
Mr Tim Langley	Mr Derek Mackay
Mrs Emma Macsween	Mrs Marina Macaulay

Prayer

The Meeting was preceded in prayer by Mr Duncan MacInnes

Tribute: Mr
Alasdair Darling
(Lord Darliing of
Roulanish)

The Convener referred to Mr Alistair Darling (Lord Darling of Roulanish), former Chancellor of the Exchequer, who passed away recently following a short illness. Mr Darling served as an MP from 1987-2015, Chancellor of the Exchequer from 2007-2010. He was also Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Secretary of State for Transport. Mr Darling had a strong connection to the Western Isles and spent much of his free time at his home in Great Bernera and left a commendable record of public service.

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, extended sincere condolences to Mr Darling's widow, Maggie, his son Calum, his daughter Anna and the extended family.

Mr Calum Ian Macleod	<p>The Convener referred to Mr Calum Dan Macleod, who had represented the North Lochs Ward between 1978-82, who had passed away recently. The Convener stated that Mr Macleod was very much part of a period of innovation for the Council and he had been a dedicated Councillor for the people of North Lochs.</p> <p>The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, extended sincere condolences to Mr Macleod's widow, Eva, his daughter and three sons and the wider family.</p>
Dr Finlay Macleod	<p>The Convener referred to Dr Finlay Macleod, well known author, broadcaster, teacher and historian, and Assistant Director of Education at the Comhairle, who had passed away recently. Dr Finlay had devoted his life to studying Gaelic life in the Western Isles and preserving the Gaelic language and culture. Among his many works in Gaelic and English were publications on the Norse mills, healing wells and historic temples of Llew. He was one of the founders of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and had been strongly committed to the establishment of Gaelic Medium Education in the Western Isles since its early days. In 2017, Dr Macleod had been presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 5th Scottish Gaelic Awards in Glasgow.</p> <p>The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, extended sincere condolences to Dr Finlay Macleod's widow, Norma, daughters Rachel and Ceit Anna and the extended family.</p>
Mr Donnie MacInnes	<p>The Convener referred to Mr Donnie MacInnes, better known as Donnie Gazette, former Chief Reporter at the Stornoway Gazette, who had passed away recently. Mr MacInnes was a well known and highly respected journalist and was also well known for his acting and singing, as a member of the Gaelic Group, the Lochies, and a member of the Lochs Gaelic Choir.</p> <p>The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, extended sincere condolences to Mr MacInnes' widow, Cathie, his daughter Eilidh and his son Ian and the extended family.</p>
Queen's Nurse Award	<p>The Convener referred to Mairi Smith, Team Leader, who had recently become one of 24 nurses across Scotland to be awarded the Queen's Nurse title. Mairi is a Macmillan Advanced Clinical Nurse specialist and Team Leader at NHS Western Isles.</p> <p>The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated Mairi on this well-deserved Award.</p>
Mod 2023	<p>The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated the many competitors from throughout the Western Isles who had participated in the Royal National Mod in Paisley in October, with particular mention to those who had won Gold Medals, Emma Macleod from Scalpay, who had won the An Comunn Gaidhealach Gold Medal, Iain Beggs from Barra and Catriona Bain from Lewis who had won the Traditional Gold Medals.</p>
MG Alba Scots Trad Music Awards	<p>The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated the following who had won awards at the MG Alba Scots Trad Music Awards:</p> <p>Julie Fowles, from North Uist, who had won Musician of the Year at the recent MG Alba Scots Trad Musc Awards;</p>

Donald Francis MacNeil, from Vatersay, who had wrote and co-sang The Clearances Again and won Original Work of the Year, along with Skippinish, on his recording debut;

Domhnall Bàn Macdonald, from Kyles Flodda, Benbecula, a piping tutor for over 40 years and who had led the Sgoil Lionacleit Pipe Band, won Music Tutor of the Year Award;

John Urquhart, broadcaster, author and poet, from Harris, who won the Award for Services to Gaelic.

Young Musician of the Year Awards

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated Danielle van Niekerk, who had been named overall Champion at the Western Isles Young Musician of the Year Competition and would now go on to represent the Western Isles at the national Scottish Young Musician Finals in May 2024.

Health and Social Care Alliance Awards

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated the Long Terms Conditions Hebrides (LTCH) group who had won the Digital Innovator Self Management Award at the recent Health and Social Care Alliance Awards for their work with people living with long term conditions across the Western Isles.

Gaelic Literature Awards 2023

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated Acair, who had five titles shortlisted for Awards, at the recent Gaelic Literature Awards.

2023 Loganair Gaelic Debate

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated Ellie Kate Johnson and Isla Scott, Sir E Scott School, who had been winners of the 2023 Loganair Gaelic Debate, which had taken place at the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 29 November. The Convener also paid tribute to all the competitors who had taken part in the competition.

Highland and Islands Hospitality Awards

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated Marion MacNeil, Heathbank Hotel, Isle of Barra, who had won a Highlands and Islands Thistle Hospitality Hero Award for her drive to ensuring high quality hospitality within the Outer Hebrides.

Lewis and Harris Sports Council Awards

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated the following who had received awards at the recent Lewis and Harris Sports Council AGM:

- Ken Galloway, Services to Sport
- Island Games Ladies Football Team, Team of the Year Award;
- Jay Moran, Community Coach of the Year Award;
- Kyla McMurdo, Youth Coach of the Year Award;
- Abbie Stewart, U18 Sportsperson of the Year Award;
- Lewis McAlpine, Over 18 Sportsperson of the Year Award.

Eat Safe Awards

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated Western Isles Hospital, who had recently been awarded an Eat Safe Award by the Environmental Health Service of the Comhairle, in conjunction with Food Standards Scotland.

Social Enterprise Awards Scotland

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated Macaulay College, who had been winners of one of the first place Awards at the Social Enterprise Scotland Awards Scotland. The Macaulay College Team had won the Health and Social Care Award, which

recognised organisations that delivered excellent support to their users and customers through the promotion of physical and mental health as well as wellbeing.

Comhairle Winter
Safety Campaign

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated all those who had been involved in the Comhairle's Keep Safe this Winter campaign, which had received national recognition and had been held up as an example of good practice by the Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN).

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting
of 27 September
2023

1

The Minute of Meeting of 27 September 2023 was **approved**.

Declaration of
Interest

2

There were no declarations of interest.

Written Questions
to the Convener
and Chairmen of
Committees

3

The following written question, to the Convener, was submitted by Mr John Norman Macleod:

The Western Isles schools have had a fair amount of sporting achievements over the years. This is mainly down to the voluntary sector. Would the Convener agree with free school lets for all sporting groups?

The Convener responded as follows:

We have always recognised and encouraged sporting achievement across the Western Isles, and this is supported by both the voluntary sector and the Comhairle. School let charging is determined by the adopted policy of the Comhairle and is consistently applied. Charges are in place to cover the costs of making lets available. Any change to that policy would require to be reviewed as part of the 2024-25 budget setting process to identify equivalent savings and equality impact assessments would need to be considered in terms of providing different arrangements for different types of group.

The Convener asked Mr John Norman Macleod if he had a supplementary question.

Mr John Norman Macleod responded as follows:

At public meetings for communities, during the Western Isles Schools Projects building phase, parents were given assurances that children would have free use of facilities, pitches, community halls, etc. When did this change and why?

The Convener informed Mr John Norman Macleod that he would get back to him, in due course, with a response to his supplementary question.

The following written question, to the Convener, was submitted by Mr Rae Mackenzie: Could we have details of the latest progress on the extension to the gym at the Stornoway Primary. Is the promised delivery still on schedule?

The Convener responded as follows:

All external consultant appointments for the project have been made (Quantity Surveyor, Building Services Engineer and Structural Engineer) and on-site survey work of the ground conditions have been conducted and are being compiled and analysed. The tender for the tensile structure is under consideration and detailed full cost planning is being undertaken in conjunction with the appointed consultants. Presently estimated costs are significantly higher than budget provision with the result that the design team have scaled down the initial proposals in an attempt to bring the project within budget. Revised costs are awaited from consultants which, if within budget, could enable completion by late 2024.

The Convener asked Mr Rae Mackenzie if he had a supplementary question.

Mr Rae Mackenzie asked the following supplementary question:

Would you agree that investment in sport is important for the community as well as parents? Can you explain what “scaled down” referred to above means?

The Convener informed Mr Rae Mackenzie that he would get back to him, in due course, with a response to his supplementary question.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of External Organisations 4

The Chief Executive submitted a Report which sought the appointment of Comhairle Members to serve on Hebridean Housing Partnership and the Western Isles Integration Joint Board, following the resignation of Mr Donald Macsween.

It was agreed to appoint:

- (1) Mr Norman Misty Macdonald to serve on Hebridean Housing Partnership; and
- (2) Mr Norman Misty Macdonald to serve on the Western Isles Integration Joint Board.

COMMITTEES

Committee Decision Reports 5

The following Committee Decision Reports were approved:

- (a) Education, Sport and Children’s Services Committee – 28 November 2023
- (b) Sustainable Development Committee – 28 November 2023
- (c) Transportation and Infrastructure Committee – 29 November 2023
- (d) Policy and Resources Committee – 29 November 2023
- (e) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 30 November 2023

NOTICE OF MOTION

Submitted by Cllr Gordon Murray, seconded by Cllr Rae Mackenzie 6

The following Notice of Motion was submitted by Cllr Gordon Murray, seconded by Cllr Rae Mackenzie:

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar serves a very large area and it is important that the Comhairle gives the opportunity to members of the public to view at first hand its decision making procedures.

Equally important is that members of the Comhairle can see projects sponsored by the Comhairle.

Therefore, the Council is invited to agree that the Education, Sport and Children’s Services, Sustainable Development, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee be held at a location determined by the Chief Executive in North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist, Barra or Vatersay and that members are given the opportunity to visit Comhairle sponsored projects including the Spaceport.

The Comhairle agreed to approve the Notice of Motion.

