



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

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Minute of Meeting held in , Council Offices,
Stornoway on Wednesday 19 June 2024 at
4.00pm.

PRESENT

| | |
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| Mr Kenneth Macleod (Convener) | |
| Mr Paul Steele (Leader) | |
| Mr Duncan MacInnes, MBE, Depute Leader | |
| Mr Kenneth John Maclean | Mr John A Maciver |
| Mr Iain A MacNeil | Mr Iain M Macaulay |
| Mr Iain M Macleod | Mr Malcolm K Macdonald |
| Ms Susan Thomson | Mr Gordon Murray |
| Mr Mustapha Hocine | Mr Rae Mackenzie |
| Mr Uisdean Robertson | Mr Angus McCormack |
| Mr Paul Finnegan | Dr Frances Murray |
| Mr Robert Mackenzie | Mr George Murray |
| Mr Angus Morrison | Mr Norrie Macdonald |
| Mr Ranaid Fraser | Mr Finlay M Stewart |
| Mr Norman Macdonald | |

APOLOGIES

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| Mr John N Macleod | Mr Donald F Crichton |
| Mr Donald Macsween | Mr Calum Maclean |

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

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| Mr Malcolm Burr | Mr Graeme Miller |
| Mr Calum Iain Maciver | Mr Nigel Scott |
| Mr Calum Mackenzie | Mr James Mackinnon |
| Mr Donald Macleod | Mrs Marina Macaulay |
| Mr Tim Langley | |

Prayer

The Meeting was preceded in prayer, led by Mr John A Maciver.

The Convener ruled items 1, 4(a)-(e) and item 6 as urgent to allow the Comhairle to consider them prior to the next series of meetings.

Tribute: Mr Callum Iain Macmillan

The Convener referred to Mr Callum Iain Macmillan, former Councillor, who had passed away suddenly on Tuesday 11 June 2024. Mr Macmillan had served as a Councillor for the Aiginish Ward from 1994 to 1999 and was Leader of the Labour Group in the Comhairle at that time.

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, extended condolences to his wife, Christine, his sons John and Andrew, the extended family, colleagues and friends.

Tribute: Rev Iain Morrison

The Convener referred to Rev Iain R Morrison, former teacher at The Nicolson Institute, who had passed away on Thursday 16 May 2024.

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, extended sincere condolences to Rev Morrison's family and friends at this time.

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| Tribute: Mrs Norma Macleod | The Convener referred to Mrs Norma Macleod, former Editor/Manager of Acair Books and Director of Social Work at the Comhairle, who had passed away recently. |
| | The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, extended sincere condolences to Mrs Macleod's family and friends at this time. |
| Tribute: Mr Roddy John Smith | The Convener referred to Mr Roddy John Smith, Stornoway, former Assistant Principal Teacher of Mathematics at The Nicolson Institute, who had passed away recently. |
| | The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, extended sincere condolences to Mr Macleod's family and friends at this time. |
| Tribute: Mr Douglas Leadbitter | The Convener referred to Mr Douglas Leadbitter, former Principal Teacher of Music at The Nicolson Institute, who had passed away recently. |
| | The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, extended sincere condolences to Mr Leadbitter's family and friends at this time. |
| Mr Robin Currie | The Comhairle referred to Mr Robin Currie, who had served as an Argyll and Bute Councillor for almost 40 years, who had passed away suddenly in May 2024. |
| | The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, extended sincere condolences to Mr Currie's family and friends at this time. |
| Mrs Belle Maclean | The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated Mrs Belle Maclean, from Sandwick, now living in Taigh Shìphoirt, Stornoway, on the occasion of her 100 th Birthday. |
| Mrs Ethel Eleanor Smith | The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated Mrs Ethel Eleanor Smith on the occasion of her 100 th Birthday. |
| Local Mods | The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated all the prize-winners and participants in the local Mòds throughout the islands and paid tribute to all the pupils, their tutors, teachers and all those who had helped prepare them for these competitions. |
| Cuach na Cloinne 's Cuach nan Àrd- sgoiltean 2024 | The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, paid tribute to the teams who had participated in this year's Cuach na Cloinne football competition, which took place through the medium of Gàidhlig. Two teams from the Western Isles had made it through to the final rounds – Balivanich Primary and Sgoil an Rubha. Sgoil an Rubha made it to a very tight final. |
| | In Cuach nan Àrd-sgoiltean, eleven teams had participated and the competition was won by Sgoil Lionacleit. |
| | The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated all teams who participated and also congratulated John Maclean from Sir E Scott Secondary School who was the Gaelic player of the competition. |
| Lewis and Harris Macmillan Fundraising Group | The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, paid tribute to the Lewis and Harris Macmillan Fundraising Group who had been awarded the Outstanding Supporter Group at a recent event in Birmingham. From the 1970s, the organisation had raised more than £1.4m for the charity. |

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, congratulated the Lewis and Harris Macmillan Fundraising Group on this national recognition.

Katie Campbell

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, paid tribute to Katie Campbell who was retiring from Sgoil Dhalabroig. Katie started working in the canteen the same year it was formed, 49 years ago, and it was estimated that she has served around 2 million meals in her time there.

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, thanked Katie for her many years of service and wished her a long and happy retirement.

Calum Iain Maciver

The Convener referred to Mr Calum Iain Maciver, who was attending his last meeting of the Comhairle. Calum Iain had joined the Comhairle in November 2003 as Head of Economic Development and Planning and had been promoted to the new post of Director of Development in 2009. In November 2018, Calum Iain became the first Director for Communities and in July 2022 he was appointed Depute Chief Executive.

The Convener, on behalf of the Comhairle, thanked Calum Iain for his dedicated service to the Comhairle and the communities of the Western Isles and wished him a long and happy retirement.

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of

1

The Minute of Meeting of 1 May 2004 was **approved**.

Declaration of Interest

2

There were no declarations of interest.

QUESTIONS

Written Questions to the Convener and Chairmen of Committees

3

There were no written questions.

COMMITTEES

Committee Decision Reports

4

The following Committee Decision Reports were approved:

- (a) Education, Sport and Children's Services Committee – 18 June 2024
- (b) Audit and Scrutiny Committee – 18 June 2024
- (c) Sustainable Development Committee – 18 June 2024
- (d) Transportation and Infrastructure Committee – 19 June 2024
- (e) Policy and Resources Committee – 19 June 2024

Cllr Gordon Murray, seconded by Cllr Rae Mackenzie, had indicated that he wished to raise a Notice of Motion, which related to Item 8 of the Policy and Resources Committee Decision Report. The Convener ruled that the Notice of Motion would be considered at this time as an amendment to item 8 of the Policy and Resources Decision Report.

Cllr Paul Steele, seconded by Cllr Duncan MacInnes, MBE, moved approval of the Policy and Decisions Committee Decision Report of 19 June 2024.

Mr Gordon Murray, seconded by Mr Rae Mackenzie, moved the following amendment in respect of item 8 of the Policy and Resources Committee Decision Report of 19 June 2024:

Following the announcement of the allocation of Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Funding for 2024/25 from the Scottish Government to support additional island costs, that the Comhairle recognising that one in six people are currently experiencing mental ill health and the devastating consequences this can have not only for individuals but their families, friends and communities. The Comhairle agrees to support people facing the challenges of mental ill health throughout the Western Isles, and to help achieve that end agrees to allocate £50,000 from the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Funding (£25k from the allocations for Winter Maintenance, £25k from the allocation for Building Maintenance) to Western Isles Association for Mental Health, a community based organisation committed to providing a support service known as Catch 23 to those suffering from mental ill health, and their families, friends and carers, for 2024/25, subject to the confirmation of the level of funding and any conditions which the Comhairle may determine.

The Committee then proceeded to debate the Motion against the Amendment.

The Comhairle then proceeded to vote on the matter.

The matter was taken by roll call, as follows:

MOTION

Mr Kenneth Macleod
Mr Paul Steele
Mr Duncan MacInnes, MBE
Mr Kenneth John Maclean
Mr Iain A MacNeil
Mr Iain M Macleod
Mr Mustapha Hocine
Mr Uisdean Robertson
Mr Robert Mackenzie
Mr Angus Morrison
Mr Ranald Fraser
Mr Norman Macdonald
Mr Malcolm K Macdonald
Mr Angus McCormack
Mr George Murray
Mr Finlay M Stewart

AMENDMENT

Ms Susan Thomson
Mr Paul Finnegan
Mr John A Maciver
Mr Iain M Macaulay
Mr Gordon Murray
Mr Rae Mackenzie
Dr Frances Murray
Mr Norrie Macdonald

The Motion having received the majority of the votes cast became the finding of the meeting.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Submitted by Cllr 5
Gordon Murray,
seconded by Cllr
Rae Mackenzie

The Notice of Motion was considered at Item 4(e).

Submitted by Cllr 6
Susan Thomson,
seconded by Cllr
Frances Murray

The following Notice of Motion was submitted by Cllr Susan Thomson, seconded by Cllr Frances Murray:

The Comhairle notes that:

In the 1995 Pensions Act, the Government increased State Pension age for women from 60 to 65, with a further increase to 66 in the 2011 Pensions Act.

The change was not properly communicated to 3.8m women born in the 1950s until 2012, giving some only one year's notice of a six-year increase in their anticipated retirement age. Almost 2000 of the affected women are in the Western Isles.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has found the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to have committed maladministration through its failure to adequately communicate State Pension age increases to women born in the 1950s.

The PHSO has concluded the DWP should apologise to women affected and pay compensation as a result.

The DWP has refused to accept the findings of the PHSO, which has now led the independent watchdog to lay its findings before Parliament, encouraging MPs to intervene to deliver a remedy to affected women.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality for Women has concluded that "the impact of DWP maladministration on 1950s-born women has been as devastating as it is widespread. The APPG believes that the case for category 6 injustice (£10,000) is overwhelming and clear. Women have had their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances totally obliterated by a lack of reasonable notice."

As of April 2024, more than 275,000 women have died waiting for justice since the campaign began in 2015.

Comhairle believes this injustice has not only had a profound effect on the individuals involved but on the wider community in the Western Isles and on local government. Our local economy is negatively affected by the reduced spending power and disposable income the uncommunicated State Pension Age changes has brought about among women born in the 1950s.

Comhairle supports a swift resolution to this ongoing injustice and the WASPI campaign and All-Party Parliamentary Group's calls for an immediate one-off compensation payment at category 6 injustice on the PHSO's financial remedy scale (£10,000) to those affected.

Comhairle asks the Leader of the Comhairle to write to local Member of Parliament; the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions; and Leader of the House of Commons; to outline the effects of the injustice to 1950s women on the community in the Western Isles and to seek:

Urgent proposals from the DWP, outlining how they will deliver compensation for affected women.

For all MPs to be given an opportunity to debate and vote on these proposals.

The Convener asked the Comhairle if they were willing to accept the Notice of Motion submitted by Ms Susan Thomson, seconded by Dr Frances Murray.

The Comhairle indicated that they were happy to accept the Notice of Motion submitted by Ms Susan Thomson, seconded by Dr Frances Murray.

