

DUNVEGAN AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING ON Tuesday 26th November 2024 at 7:30pm

Present – John Laing (JL), Donna Campbell (DC), Sylvia Meyer (SY), Tim Wallis (TW), Mandy Boswell (MB), Mali MacLennan (MM)

Apologies – Philippa MacRae (PM), Drew Millar (DM)

1	<p>Chairman’s Welcome – JL opened the meeting, greeted those present and noted apologies.</p>
2	<p>Community Council Members – Sarah Macaskill has unfortunately decided to leave the community council due to time constraints and the committee voted to thank her for her sterling work for the community council; she will be sadly missed.</p> <p>JL went on to ask if Christine Brennan could be asked if she’d be coopted on to the council. MB proposed, SY seconded. MB reminded the committee that Sarah was our Facebook administrator and did an excellent job – and that a hand over would be required to keep up our excellent and informative presence there.</p> <p>SY went on to suggest that the community council should seek a younger member to help represent younger residents. This is to be discussed at the January Meeting.</p>
3	<p>Declaration of Interest – MB said that one of her neighbours is the applicant in a planning application for discussion.</p>
4	<p>Minutes of last Meeting – The minutes of the last meeting (31/10/24) were approved by MB and seconded by JL.</p>
5	<p>Matters Arising - Items have their own agenda item.</p>
6	<p>Police Report – none forthcoming. MB has tried to contact PC Reid and will continue to try and make contact. .</p>
7	<p>Treasurer ‘s Report – DC said £3,674.23 in the bank. Donation of £50 to Lucky2BHere. Ailsa had phoned to thank us. No other expenditure.</p> <p>Emergency Financial Assistance – Discussions were held about launching our hardship and fuel fund once again.</p>
8	<p>Council Update – DM was unable to attend, however he’d forwarded an email from Mackenzie Sutherland of Highland Council Roads regarding a short term fix and who agrees wholeheartedly road in Dunvegan village is in dreadful condition. We look forward to this being done ASAP.</p> <p>MB mentioned Sandra Powell from Hebridean Alpacas’ complaint about the state of the road in Dunvegan. JL asked that MB forwarded Mackenzie Sutherland’s email to her.</p> <p>JL said he’d discussed with Angus Macdonald (MP) the state of the roads in Skye. The meeting then went on to discuss the lack of white lines on the main roads and wondered why a man with a hot bucket of paint couldn’t be employed to paint white lines (as lines used to be painted) rather than waiting for an expensive piece of equipment that never arrives!</p>

9	<p>Training - TW feels that the Open University training offered seems to have been designed for PCSO and part time unpaid policemen in another part of the UK. Very little refers to community councils. TW feels that there is no benefit to community council members in this training. The committee agreed that there is no further action.</p>
10	<p>Trust Report – MM said there was a busy AGM last week.</p> <p>Cruachan Woodland – Unanimous vote for asset transfer request. The last few tweaks to the request are being made and the Trust is meeting with the Scottish Landfund caseworker on the 2nd of December.</p> <p>Other Properties - Expressions of Interest have been made in respect of Orbost Farm House and The Police House and they have been accepted. This is for the first stage of funding – drawings, investigating potential for the buildings, surveys, etc. The Community Housing Trust have been to look at Orbost Farm House and for it being used as two homes.</p> <p>MM has emailed the Police Authority Estates and has yet to receive a reply.</p> <p>Housing Needs Survey is live until 6th December. Leaflets asking residents to fill in the survey have been dropped off by MM and SY.</p> <p>The Gaeltec sale should be through at the end of 2024.</p> <p>The Play Park is progressing and is looking good. Some furniture is being ordered and the fence is going to be painted – and replaced near the shops.</p> <p>MM is concerned about a cable on the hill which has come to the surface. It may be an old cable – it’s very much on the surface. It may be a telecoms cable – wires can be seen. MM is to refer to the Hydro. MB mentioned BT cabling had been brought to her attention too.</p> <p>There’s to be an opening event for the park.</p> <p>Public Toilets and Carpark – MM asked what the committee’s thoughts were in this regard. JL said that after comments from Broadford about their toilets we were somewhat put off. Broadford’s toilets are just about covering their costs, but there’s a lot of work and stress.</p> <p>The toilets at Kyle were discussed where a turnstile is used for entry. Someone from the nearby charity shop is frequently having to deal with launderette and toilet problems.</p> <p>Broadford had no choice – Highland Council told them if they didn’t take them over the toilets were going to be closed. Their advice is if we have a choice – do not take on public toilets. JL pointed out Highland Council may not have the money to renovate the public toilets in Dunvegan. TW pointed out that there was soon to be income from the Tourism Levy – and could we hang on until funds from that became available. The meeting discussed the concern over whether the levy collected on Skye would stay on Skye and that the consultation was very vague in this regard. JL hoped that we could progress to the point where there were funds to employ a village officer – and the maintenance of the toilets could be part of their job.</p> <p>Vandalism at Portree toilets was discussed and MM said Broadford had learned that one access point providing entry to multiple stalls is not effective at dealing with vandalism and propping the</p>

	<p>door open to allow free entry is a constant problem. The possibility of using debit/credit card for entry to make people accountable for their visit.</p> <p>A decision was made to wait until the tourism levy is in place before further consideration is made.</p> <p>MM mentioned a volunteer day to tidy the car park would be help beautify the area.</p> <p>MB mentioned that if the bottle bank was altered/moved (as discussed last month in regard to the Misty’s licensing application) then a few more car parking spaces would be created. SY reminded that the intention should be for two bottle bank locations.</p> <p>The land opposite Gaeltec was discussed and MM said the Community Action Plan was a good way to introduce community use of the land. Macleod Estate have suggested that this land would be a good piece of community land – but they want a plan. It was then discussed that it could be used to develop community transport and also enhanced recycling facilities (including bottle banks).</p> <p>The possibility of park and ride with a shuttle bus to The Coral Beach – this could provide an income and ease up traffic on the Claigan Road. JL agreed that this was a splendid idea. MB said that if we could use the Coral Beach, which isn’t too far, would be very handy to use as a trial and proof of concept then it could be expanded for Neist Point too.</p> <p>Another thought was a residents’ rent an e-bike scheme and again this would be a useful carpark area for that.</p> <p>JL went on to confirm that Dunvegan Trust have a new chair. MM agreed, Katie Lawrence who’d hoped to attend the meeting but had been unable to. SY confirmed that there were two new trustees.</p>
11	<p>Bottle Banks and Recycling – The meeting then went on to discuss recycling and MB reminded the group that earlier in the year she’d contacted Highland Council about a recycling facility in Dunvegan but that it has been refused on the grounds that any enhanced facility would have to be manned like the centre in Portree and that we couldn’t simply have bins for cardboard (as available outside Highland Council area).</p> <p>The meeting discussed that it seems every layby along the shore of Loch Ness has not just a bin – but a recycling bin. We need facilities like that here.</p> <p>The meeting discussed that in the new year residents will be getting a third bin – for non-recycling waste and the existing would be one for paper and cardboard and the other for plastic and tins. MM asked about food waste bins and MB said she understood we are not going to get a food waste bin and suggested another project might be a green waste recycling point where compost could be made. MM mentioned cardboard may also be able to be included in the composting. TW and MB both mentioned that they’d lived in places where compost makers were used to turn waste in to compost which was then available for purchase at a nominal fee.</p> <p>We need to keep on at HC and DM to ensure we get additional bottle banks.</p>
12	<p>Community Action Plan – MM said there had been a number of meetings – approximately 150 residents engaged. Drop ins and meetings in the hall. Survey launch on 18th of January. The survey</p>

	<p>will be long – divided in to topics, there will be drop in sessions to help residents complete the survey. The survey will include suggested projects and respondents will be able to rank projects in order of importance to them.</p> <p>MM would like to hear from other groups and stakeholders who may be able to provide input into the Action Plan.</p> <p>One of the many suggestions for improvement is the village hall and roads. MM has been photographing the current state of the roads and then comparing that with photos from earliest Google Street View available and there has been significant deterioration.</p> <p>MM asked if there was anything else that the community council would like to have covered in the Community Action Plan.</p> <p>Signage – it was agreed that signposts were needed for places like Roag, Vatten, Harlosh, Feorlig, Claigan – townships need signposts. JL said a programme for road signage is vital. MB said it would be nice if signage paid for by Dunvegan Trust was “Dunveganised” – rather than being made to look like Highland Council signage. MB pointed out that informational signage (like when you get to the Coral Beach car park you still need to walk a mile before you get to the beach would perhaps cut down on journeys for those who don’t want to walk).</p>
13	<p>Transport Strategy – SY said she’d been through the 109 pages of the strategy from 2023 and additional pages from the follow up document to cover 2025 to 2035 and completed the survey as best she could. Especially improved smaller more frequent busses to Portree. The meeting thanked SY for her hard work.</p>
14	<p>Planning Applications –The meeting discussed concerns in regard to the use of quality croft land for development.</p> <p>24/04484/FUL Land 130 m South of Cape Breton Atavaid Harlosh Dunvegan – The meeting discussed this application and the significant number of other applications made in this area.</p> <p>The community council are to respond to the application that “Concerns have been raised with the Community Council regarding the above application namely that the proposed development is an unwelcome intensification of housing in this area which is largely a Crofting environment.</p> <p>In considering this application it should be noted that there has already been considerable housing development on croft ground in this area by this applicant.”</p> <p>24/04582/PIP Land 50m SW of Njord House Claigan Dunvegan – The meeting discussed this application and others made by the applicant.</p> <p>The community council are to respond to the application “Concerns have been raised with the Community Council over this proposed development. Issues of concern are, Siting, drainage and water supply also over provision of housing in what is a remote crofting locality and in an area of significant landscape beauty.”</p> <p>24/04573/FUL Refurbishment & Extension of Ground & Upper Floors of The Misty – The meeting discussed this application and are to respond that there is no objection to this application. The meeting agreed having the Misty returned to its former glory can only be good for Dunvegan.</p>

15	<p>Tourism Levy – The community council need to respond in regard to the Highland Council’s tourism levy survey (although the feeling is it’s a done deal). Many accommodation providers are concerned about the 5% increase on prices adversely affecting their business. There was concern in regard to wild campers and motorhomes not paying a penny. MB went on to explain that Skye would be better served by ULEZ style technology to collect a fee for all visitors the fees for which would be kept entirely on Skye.</p> <p>There are concerns whether the full or fair proceeds of the levy collected on Skye would make its way back to Skye to fund urgently needed visitor facilities (like toilets, lay-bys with picnic tables and rubbish and recycling points), etc. The meeting is concerned that Skye is a “honeypot” and our levy income needs to be ring fenced. It was discussed that many visitors to Skye are day trippers and therefore won’t be providing a penny attributable to Skye’s levy.</p> <p>It was agreed that the community council need to promote the survey on FaceBook for businesses and individuals to respond but that the community council needs to prepare its own response. The committee are deeply concerned about the management of initiative and that we are determined that money raised in Skye stays in Skye. Additionally committee are concerned that the money the levy provides will not turn in to “additional” funding but simply used to relieve the pressure on existing Highland Council budgets so we, and our visitors, are no better off. The members are to consider further and this will be discussed again at the January meeting.</p>
16	<p>25 Year Celebration Durinish Stone – The meeting agreed that a celebration is needed and we will discussed at the January meeting.</p>
17	<p>St Mary’s Bench - JL it’s actually a picnic table and is in need of repair not replacement. JL hopes to be able to repair it himself.</p> <p>Churchyard – JL also asked that the committee’s thanks were given to Paul Boswell for his hard work strimming St. Mary’s Church.</p>
18	<p>Christmas Lights – are to go up next week. The Community Council may apply to Dunvegan Trust for funds to assist with the cost. Only nine of the initial 12 lights are currently working.</p>
19	<p>School – The project is moving on well. SSE have come up with a reasonable figure for connection. TW mentioned use of solar panels on the roof, but that was turned down because the fire brigade apparently won’t put out fires on buildings with solar panels on the roof.</p> <p>SY mentioned about passive house standard in use at a school in regard to doors and windows remaining closed.</p>
20	<p>Any Other Council Business</p> <p>Deer Management – JL has received an email from Hugh Macleod at Dunvegan Estate. The email is shown below.</p> <p><i>“I hear complaints about there being too many deer in the Dunvegan area every so often, so I wanted to let you know that the estate has been culling in the Dunvegan area for the last 8yrs and Glenbrittle for the last 14yrs. Our deer manager recently secured a night shooting license which will make a material difference to increasing the Dunvegan deer cull numbers this winter. We have also</i></p>

	<p><i>enlarged the scope of the culling area. Can you relay this to community groups as and when it is raised.</i></p> <p><i>As you know, the problem with deer management in Skye is that there is little or no effective deer management across vast areas of the island. If you only cull in one area, you just get more deer moving across from a neighbouring area where may be no culling. The post-war forestry plantations running along the spine of the island provide them with cover from north to south. In Dunvegan, some of the issues have arisen from the deer being disrupted by clear felling in the Loch Bay plantation, and the fact that that forestry is not deer fenced. I hear that the new owner of that plantation has plans to replace the non-native spruce with native trees and deer fence the new woodland which should help improve matters.”</i></p> <p>Grit Bins – MB mentioned grit bins and she’d been approached by a neighbour about their provision. She said she appreciated grit had been left on the Claigan Road during the recent cold spell. DC confirmed that bins are still going to be provided.</p> <p>Exposed BT Cable - MB was also asked to highlight that many places along the Claigan Road the BT cable is exposed by visitors driving, parking and camping on the verges. MB is to write to BT on the community council’s behalf.</p> <p>Locked Cattle Grid Gate - MB has also been asked to bring to the council’s attention that the gate alongside the cattle grid just south of Loch Suardal has been padlocked. MB is to write to Mackenzie Sutherland at Highland Council to ask for it to be removed.</p>
21	<p>Next Meeting – 28th January 2025 at 7:30pm. There will be no meeting in December.</p>