



MINUTES

Comhairle Coimhearsnachd Nis/Ness Community Council

Date: 12/03/24 |

In Attendance

David Green Muriel MacLeod Cairstiona Macleod Annie Macsween

Alison MacDonald Mary Duff Donna Maciver Cllr Kenny Macleod

Cllr John Norman Macleod

By invitation: Jemma MacVicar, Executive Manager, Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (UOG),

Alice Murray, Community Learning and Development, CnES

and seven members of the community.

Apologies: Cllr Donald MacSween

Chair: David Green

AGENDA

Point 1. Welcome/ Apologies for Absence

Seven members of the community joined the meeting, which was very warmly welcomed. There were no apologies submitted.

(Items 6 and 10 were selected to be taken before the start of the formal meeting and were set as time-

limited. This was to allow people to have the option to leave once the items of interest to them had been discussed).

Point 2 Declarations of Interest

David Green declared an interest in his role on the Board of An Lanntair. (Discussions re: The Islands Deal Point 6)

Point 3 Minutes of the Meeting of 23rd January 2024

Cairstiona Macleod approved the previous minutes. Muriel Macleod seconded the previous minutes.

Point 4 Matters Arising

- a. Lionel School Swimming Pool

CCN/NCC has posted information regarding training for lifeguards on the Facebook page following discussion with CnES.

Simon Amos reported that in his role as Manager of spòrsnis he was approached during Covid conditions regarding the related issues of janitorial and lifeguard services, and then he approved plans to move forward, and has heard nothing since, perhaps impacted also by the Cyber Attack. Cllr Kenny MacLeod stated that he had been given the impression that it had been dealt with, and indicated that this was at a service level. David Green expressed that the CCN/NCC are happy to support Simon Amos and spòrsnis to build relationships. A response to a Freedom of Information request regarding janitorial services in primary schools may help to progress this issue.

b. Butt of Lewis Lighthouse update provided by Jemma MacVicar of UOG.

Feasibility Plan shared 2022, UOG working with the Northern Lighthouse Board, and we were given a short overview of the origins of the process, and progress to date. The immediate plan is to establish composting toilets at the site by the end of April 2024, as an interim measure. There will also be a cleaner appointed. There is significant footfall to the site and the potential for a refreshment van to support the local economy was raised. There was full support for the aim to encourage tourism to the site positively, with care for the local environment.

Point 5 Financial Report

Cairstiona MacLeod, Treasurer, stated £3179 is in the active account and signatories are now set up. A Challenge Fund exists for which David Green attended a training session.

Point 6 What Next for Ness hall?

Aim: To facilitate a discussion to ascertain interest and consider options

CCN/NCC reported that it would not be taking responsibility for the Ness Hall asset, but would be happy to provide a platform for community discussion. A variety of ideas have been mooted for the hall, the land and the buildings. David Green has spoken with the former Chair of the Ness Hall Committee (formally the Murdo MacAulay Memorial Hall Committee) and Jemma MacVicar of UOG, as well as local councillors and has identified that there is no formal situation currently, so it is open to groups/ individuals to express interest.

Alec John Bell, representing Falmadair stated that they can see a use for the building. Their organisation is looking for a home for six traditional boats (restoration purposes). They would not be able to take on responsibility for the whole building, but would consider a long-term lease of a proportion of the hall. Structural alterations such as creating a large doorway, and strengthening the flooring would be needed. It was noted that it would be positive to provide a place for these boats in Ness, home of the traditional Sgoth.

Annie Macsween identified that some of the land belongs is on North Dell Grazings, and that the Murdo MacAulay Memorial Hall Committee own the building and some of the adjacent land.

Cllr. Kenny Macleod noted that 2016 was the last time the building was able to be in use as the condition of the building is a concern – ceiling damage, signs of historic damp and impaired heating system particularly.

Jemma MacVicar of UOG stated that their Board have no interest in taking on the building; land is shown as within the Estate; they are equipped to assist and would be on board in a supportive role of anyone taking plans forward.

It was noted that the last Murdo MacAulay Memorial Hall Committee had closed their bank account without debts and had ceased to function but it is not known if they were formally dissolved.

Suggestions from Meeting attendees: strong local feeling regarding the Ness Hall was recognized and that the wider community would welcome any future purpose found for this building. The idea of potential funding via the Islands Deal programme was discussed, with a view to providing space for performance artists/creative industries.

Alec John Bell asked that this item be included on the May 14th 2024 Agenda of the Ness Community Council, and this was agreed.

Point 7 Liaison with other west coast community councils in response to offshore windfarm plans.

All local Community Councils are keen to meet to discuss and identify shared interest regarding Northland Power's proposed offshore wind development. The aim is to be as well-informed as possible. It was recognized that location impacts individual outlooks and therefore outcomes of discussions will naturally vary. The hope is for a consensus to be reached. Jemma MacVicar confirmed that a united voice with equivalent landowners was being sought by UOG. Meaningful community benefit is being sought and UOG is not currently engaging with Northland Power at this point. **David Green to liaise with other CCs to arrange a meeting at an appropriate time, probably in May or June.**

Point 8 Spring Clean Scotland: Keep Scotland Beautiful.

To consider this national initiative and whether to take part in it.

Local initiatives sharing this environmental aim were recognized as already being in existence, such as the Transition Project in Barvas and GAIN working with Lionel Primary School. We agreed that CCN/NCC will fully support existing initiatives rather than unnecessarily adding a new one.

Point 9 Annual General Meeting 2024.

The date was set for May 14th 2024, the same date as the next scheduled CCN/NCC meeting.

Point 10 Any Other Competent Business.

- a. Alice Murray, representative of the Community Learning and Development Team, was welcomed and introduced her role to the community. Her area ranges from Uig to Carloway, and Ness to Uig, and her role is to be a support for all appropriate and related groups. Crown Estate Funding can be accessed, and CCN/NCC would be able to apply for funding via the Community Learning and Development

organization. The Duke of Edinburgh Initiative's local progress was shared and Alice Murray was thanked for attending and sharing such positive information.

- b. There was discussion about the stretch of the Cross Skigersta Road leading from the A857 to Cross Stores and Carthannis Nis, in the context of long-term concerns and a road traffic incident that day that required emergency services attendance. **David Green agreed to write to CnES to express concerns.**
- c. There was brief discussion of concerns about provision of housing and care services for the elderly, prompted by a very well expressed paper from a member of the public, sent to some members of CCN/NCC prior to the meeting. There was brief discussion of the Extra Care and related building programme being taken forward by UOG and partners. While this is positive, we understood that it will take much time, and meet only some of the need. **We will make this a discussion item at the May meeting.**