

North Uist Community Council

Comhairle Choimhearsnachd Uibhist a Tuath

NUCC Minutes

Meeting held on Monday 27th March 2023 at 7pm at Claddach Kirkibost Centre

Present:

Joan Ferguson (JF) Chair

Conor Lawless (CL) Vice Chair

Fiona MacVicar (FMV) Secretary

Lynda MacLean (LML)

Angus MacLennan (ANGUSML)

Rachel MacLean (RML)

Mairi Claire Ellwood (MCE)

Zara Wilkie (ZW)

Anne MacLellan (ANNEML)

Ragnall Maclain (RMI)

Cllr Uisdean Robertson (UR)

Public:

Paul Wilkie (PW)

Donald Norman MacDonald (DNMD)

Andy Dick (AD)

Apologies:

Peter MacNab (PMN)

Effie Rodger (ER)

John MacDonald (Treasurer)

David Downham (DD)

Cllr Mustapha Hocine (MH)

Donald Ewen Morrison (DEM)

1. Adoption of Minutes:

LML adopted the minutes and Rachel MacLean seconded.

2. Matters Arising:

- *Crofting Questionnaire;*

ZW has received permission from the school, so we can now share the survey results she received. JF will share with Amanda Levenson Gower, North Uist Estate, Murdo MacKay at CNES, Stòras, Crofters Commission, SGRIPID. ZW will e-mail the survey to NUCC to circulate.

- *Tracks;*

So far there has been one response, (Clachan Sands). We are waiting further interest, and see if it would be worthwhile looking into even more funding for track maintenance. CL will update NUCC at our next meeting.

- *Website;*

We were unfortunately turned down for the pilot scheme, They were massively over-subscribed. CL is willing to still set up a website, which will at no cost, and FMV and PMN will also work on this alongside.

- *First Aid;*

We are still awaiting a response on this. An evening session is possibly what will be most suitable. It may be best to do a Google poll vote to verify who and when it would suit. ANGUSML will enquire further at the hospital.

- *Spaceport;*

The Councillors approached them regarding a 'community money pot' that was mentioned at one of their first meetings. We wanted to know who this was going to benefit. Councillors were told it would be split, approximately 75% to North Uist Community, and 25% elsewhere. UR will find out the figures.

3. North Uist Deer Management Plan:

AD and DNMD from Newton Estate are present to update NUCC. North Uist Estate were not available to discuss. They have received a provisional deer count from the helicopter.

2002-804

2014-998

2018 (foot count) -1043

2023-1145

These numbers are across all of North Uist. We need to use this helicopter count as the base line. The number of deer has escalated all over due to Covid. Joanne Ferguson and Neil Grandville were both present on the helicopter. It could be anything between a few weeks, or possibly months before we know the maps. There was some speculation that some areas were not covered, but this will become clear when we see the maps.

The DSE1 Qualification would allow people to sort the issue themselves if deer are on their land, and would also be able to sell your own venison. This course costs around £300.

We would like to be consulted on the High Protected Areas, and the community should absolutely have a say in this. JF will look into discussing the matter further with Lynsey at Nature Scot. Another count will take place in around 5 years.

UR asked DNMD about Sea Eagles, as this has been a previous discussion, and there was concern from some with lambing season approaching. DNMD fears that they are going to be a massive problem in the next few years with numbers vastly on the rise. We will discuss this further at our next NUCC meeting.

4. Ferries:

There has been some complications with the ferry returning to the UIG-LMA route. Lorries and larger vehicles are struggling to get on from Uig. A meeting is being held with Roddy MacDonald tomorrow. FMV and JF will update NUCC on the outcome at our next meeting. A discussion will be had over the impact on individuals, employers and employees. They have been approached many times by Councillors on whether they intend to compensate, but this is no further forward.

5. Marine Protected Areas:

This is a huge worry for the islands. All members have agreed to send individual responses against the proposal.

A new Fish farm site off Benbecula:

The shore base will be at Kallin. There has been a big issue with parking, as it is very over crowded. There is the possibility of some buildings being knocked down to create more space for parking.

There has been some concern raised over fish farm vehicles speeding. RMI will raise this issue with Robert Currie (Area Manager).

6. Lochmaddy Strategic Visioning Plan:

There are detailed visioning plans for Balivanich and Lochboisdale. JF met with Alison Cropper at CLLD. JF will circulate these plans with members, and see what could be done in Lochmaddy; improved parking/pavements/amenities/bus shelter. The community need to be prepared and with ideas for the consultants coming.

7. Bayhead Playpark:

We had contact from Rachel Witt in Bayhead regarding the playpark, and the removal of all the equipment. This site is still owned by CNES but Donald MacLellan stated that they would not be replacing the equipment. However, CNES would be happy to hand this over to a smaller organisation. CL suggests they set up a focus group, as already they are coming up with ideas, e.g crazy golf, low risk equipment. If a group was set up and started a bank account, they could be eligible for funding such as, The Coop Divi Fund. CL will feedback.

8. Baleshare Causeway:

A sub-group was formed withing the Baleshare township. They met with Alasdair Allan, but not much has come of this, and also met with Angus Brendan who had a few ideas. A meeting is going to be held with local councillors , and LML will update at our next meeting. AA mentioned the Bridges Fund, but this was a one off fund which was used for Berneray Causeway. LML says it is imperative that something is done with the causeway. UR would write again, but would really need to know who the next Finance Minister is, as that is where the money would be coming from. Neil Ingram should have been there by now. An engineer has not looked or assessed it yet, so CNES cannot say with fact that the structure is safe. If ever suck or in difficulty on the causeway, always phone 999, instead of phoning someone in the township for assistance. Things are now slowly progressing, and things are working better as a focus group.

9. AOCB:

ANGUSML raised on behalf of Rhoda Trusswell at Lochportan Polygrub Group that they are seeking funding for the upkeep and maintenance, i.e benches, raised beds, deer proof fence, painting,. They are looking for £1000.

UR agreed to £600, (£300 from each of them).

Social Fund – We need to discuss what this should be used for. It should be community based, in ways to help improve the entire community. Sign posts to state where the nearest defibrillators are could be considered.

Ann MacLean (Lucky2Bhere) is looking into getting another 20 defibrillators over the next few years.

The fund could also go towards first aid training withing the community, which people feel will be a much better way of spending it. ZW will ask in school if any North Uist children would be willing to do training.

Project Neptune – Angus Campbell. How can they improve the ferry services? JF will send this to everyone.

Next meeting will be held on the 15th of May at 7pm at Claddach Kirkibost Centre.