

Airidhantuim Community Council

Chair's Report 2024

The last year was positive indeed, with all CC business conducted in a professional manner.

Late last year, much of our focus was on the Community Council election and how it was to be conducted in our area – ultimately, we came top in the whole Western Isles for candidates and had to adjust our constitution to fit everyone in. This was a fantastic achievement for our community, and the fact that so many people came forward to take part in our CC affairs was the envy of many communities throughout the Western Isles.

A new Community Council was formed in Ness, and we agreed to work constructively with them for the benefit of all, especially given that some planned developments threaten to split opinions and communities on this side of our island. We also agreed to work constructively with all community councils on the west of Lewis where appropriate. In my personal correspondence with Alastair Allan MSP, he states that he has been contacted by many in favour of Spiorad Na Mara, providing there were sufficient benefits for the Island - as well as by those against. According to the latest events from Shawbost and Bernera, the proposals are causing concern and anxiety. I expect we will meet with the developers soon to find out more for ourselves.

We met with Council Officers from the CnES Roads Dept to discuss the present state of the roads and ditches. They advised us that financial constraints prevented them from starting any major road improvements and that could only patch-up and repair.

The High Borge and Melbost footpaths have been scraped and cleaned and drains have been cleaned. Our main road is being continuously monitored for potholes and these are being reported, something all residents can do. New side offlets are visible from Ballantrushal to Galson which should take most of the water from the roads. We are grateful for all actions that our local authority team undertake within our community.

At the January meeting we were pleased to have Police Sergeant Robert Shirkie present to update us on the challenges facing Police Scotland. We constantly receive complaints from residents regarding speeding drivers. At present the Police seems to be more proactive in our area and a number of rogue drivers have been cautioned.

Borge Old Bridge and its approaches have been cleaned and new seating has been arranged to help walkers sit and enjoy the view of the Great Atlantic. We thank the sub-committee who undertook this project and carried it out so efficiently.

We are working closely with the community centre representatives to get the SS Clan MacQuarrie Memorial site started. We have received design options and some costings which allow us to start looking at funding options. There is so much involved in a project like this, far more than meets the eye. There was plenty of talk over the years that such a memorial should be built, I can see now why no-one took up the challenge!!

The issue of scrap in and around our villages is an ongoing concern. Our efforts with media publicity, letters and social media campaigning have brought some positive results but many

people still won't take heed and don't seem to care that they are trashing the community by their actions. The community council consider it is high time those in authority acted against the worst offenders and we will continue to highlight the issue.

We have been in dialogue with CnES about their bus policy around accessibility. We are also looking into how to allow opposing traffic to pass by on the Lower Shader Shore Road.

The state of the Barvas cemetery road is also creating concern for many and we are pleased to report that the cemetery committee is already taking steps to improve the road surface.

Other projects are also in the pipeline – more on these in the coming year.

Airidhantuim Community Council is in good shape, financially and otherwise, and with your help and input we hope to continue along these lines. Thank you all for your input and attendance.

Roderick Martin

Chair