

North Uist Community Council

Comhairle Choimhearsnachd Uibhist a Tuath



NUCC Minutes

Meeting held on Monday 26th June 2023 at 7pm at Claddach Kirkibost Centre

Present:

Joan Ferguson (JF) Chair

John MacDonald (JMD) Treasurer

Fiona MacVicar (FMV) Secretary

Lynda MacLean (LML)

Angus MacLennan (ANGUSML)

Cllr Uisdean Robertson (UR)

Cllr Mustapha Hocine (MH)

Anne MacLellan (ANNEML)

Effie Rodgers (ER) – on the phone

Apologies:

Donald Ewen Morrison (DEM)

Conor Lawless (CL) Vice Chair

Raghnall Maclain (RMI)

Rachel MacLean (RML)

David Downham (DD)

Zara Wilkie (ZW)

Mairi-Claire Ellwood (MCE)

Peter MacNab (PMN)

Public:

Emily Durie – UCVO (ED)

1. Adoption of minutes:

JMD adopted the minutes, and ANGUSML seconded them.

2. Matters Arising from previous meeting

- **Eagles/Deer** – We put up a post on our Facebook, to see whether people had any issues, but we got no feedback. We also put a request to Andy Dick about having a public meeting about the deer so that it involved all the community, but there was no response on that. The WhatsApp Group says there are many issues with deer, and we are told by the estate that they are shooting them or scaring them off. MH feared that a community meeting would only cause more animosity. JF clarified that it was to ensure people knew what their rights were with deer on their croft, and to discuss with the estate and Nature Scot.
ACTION: FMV to e-mail Andy again.
- **Dog Fowling** – ED is present at the meeting on behalf of UCVO to discuss. ED got in touch with Marion Finlayson to request signage for areas of North Uist, and we agreed that signs would be enough to begin with. Langass Woodland already has dog fowling signage. JF had already spoken to ED about areas badly effected, and ED had been in contact with Rachel Witt from Bayhead to discuss whether there is an issue there, but there is not. Sollas and Lochmaddy have requested signage. JMD had today alone picked up 4 bags that had been abandoned. There are not sufficient bins supplied for them. ANNEML asked whether bins could be supplied for these effected areas, but JF and UR confirmed that they were previously trialled in Balavanich, but people were reluctant to uplift them. Langass woodland has been struggling to get a dog waste bin. Lochmaddy seems to be the worst effected area, especially Uig Pier, as not only are there no dog waste bins, but the main bins are not easy to find. Signage could be helpful to alert people to where bins are.
ACTION: Get a list of where public bins are, and publicise it on our Facebook page.
ACTION: LML to ask which areas are needing the signage, and get in touch with ED about requesting some.
- **Housing** – CL brought this up in regard to the survey that is to be submitted by the 11th of July. It was in reference to second homes /part time residents/holiday homes. Everybody looks at this from a personal perspective, ie been left a second home. MH told that it is aimed mainly at holiday homes that lie empty nine months of the year, as it creates a shortage of available housing. There is not enough HHP houses available and for a lot of people it is also where they are sighted. People look for a big garden, privacy, etc. Young people are struggling to afford housing. MH said that HHP are the only ones that can use the available money from the government for housing, and there is a lot of money, which they will probably struggle to use it all. Sustain & Development offer around 30/40million still left to spend, which is easier to spend in Stornoway, as there is no waiting list for housing in North Uist. MH says that the community are more interested in smaller schemes such as, Clachan, but HHP are not interested. The possibility of Shared Equity would be beneficial to young families in Uist, as it would see them on to the property ladder. ANNEML has offered HHP land in the past, but there was never any response from them.
- **First Aid Training** – ANGUSML confirmed the price for the training; £620 without certificates, and £1360 with a certificate. This would be for 17 people. The training could be done in one day, which those around the table were happy to do, but there was speculation whether a certificate was needed, as it was not for a place of work. An attendance list with name, e-mail and signature could be used to prove who did it on this date. Could it be a possibility that those who request a certificate pay £10 extra? ANGUSML will get back in touch with them, as it was decided that the end of September/beginning of October for all day

Saturday would be most suitable. ANGUSML also confirmed that Cheesebay have an AED, however there was no signage for it. Mowi are happy to test and maintain it.

ACTION: ANGUSML will e-mail UCVO for signage at the Mowi AED.

3. Patient Survey:

3-4 years ago, ER and the late Flora MacDonald started gaining information on the views of those who went away for cancer treatment, and whether they were given a choice on where they went/whether they were allowed an escort. ER and FMD put together a questionnaire to draw attention and find ways to proceed, yet being very careful not to breach individuals confidentiality. Since then, we had Covid and FMD unfortunately passed away suddenly. ANNEML asked if there was an issue with people receiving an escort in general, that it was quite difficult and disressing as if you were having to justify how poorly the patient was. The system could be much simpler. Should there be certain conditions? ANGUSML informed the group that it was changed around 4 years ago, as the NHS felt the system was being abused, in particular in Uist. There were sadly a few examples of this. The group at that time were telling ER they suffered with nausea after treatment and would have benefited from an escort. Someone ill/immobile/mental health issues could not travel alone, despite MH given us an instance of this, and it was still refused. It has stopped some people receiving potentially life-saving treatment. ER's survey has not yet been distributed, and this is only experiential information as it was very difficult to approach individuals directly. We need people to volunteer their stories, and putting them down on paper as data, as everyone will have been effected somehow. We could approach Am Paipear for holding podcasts and hearing these stories.

ACTION: All councillors/CC's send a letter to Health Secretary.

ACTION: Mention to Mel about podcast and speak to Donald John.

4. North Uist Internet Provision:

We have been approached by Angus Doyle at Voove, that they are looking at a new internet system, where they would be supplying areas with connection wirelessly, especially areas that do not currently have a great internet provision at the moment, ie Baleshare, Locheport, Bayhead. This would not be for another few years, but Voove are looking for areas to build masts. UR had a meeting with and commented on how knowledgeable he was, and a lot of it made sense to UR. UR had suggested the land at Carinish Hall which cover Baleshare and Locheport too, AD had provided excellent mappings, and stated figures. There is £5000 vouchers for properties. Scottish Government stated that every house should have fast speed internet. However to qualify you need less than 30MB. The concept was good, and finding out more would be worthwhile, as AD at this stage is only looking if people are expressing interest.

5. CNES Budgets:

ER has been approached by members of the community, asking what is happening with the councils budgets, where is the money going? ER told that it would of course be on the highest priority issues, to which people expressed concern with the roads and pot holes, The real question ER was asked was what is the 'divvy' between Uist and Barra, and Lewis and Harris? UR expressed that there was no divvy as such, it was dependant on the conditions of the roads. The council use to receive £100,000,000 in Capital Funding, and this time

around, it is only £25,000,000, so the allocation for roads over the next 5 years is £5.5,000,000, so the conclusion is, if you have 100m of bad road, you pick out the worst 20m of that 100m stretch. It is not looking good for the budget at all;

50% goes on education

25% goes on health and social care

And the other 25% goes on roads, waste collection, burial grounds, etc, and because quite a lot of the funding that comes from the Scottish Government, it is their priorities, such as education, so it is ring-fenced, it is not money that the council can use on what they consider the priorities, it's the government's priorities. Next year, the council will probably only do what is statutory. MH expressed that they have only started discussing this, and it is not available yet. Ideally, the council want flexibility for choosing their own priorities.

6. Councillors Report:

The only other thing not mentioned in this meeting is the PSO. A discussion has been had with all councillors, etc and also at UACC, and potentially from the 1st April 2024, the service could disappear entirely. Currently, they were going for rotations, one on a Tuesday and one on a Thursday. The council have had to spend money from their reserves to pay for the PSO. Previously, the money from the government was covering it, it was only the last two years it has exceeded £200,000 over and above the £400,000. Barra, Campbeltown and Tiree are under one contract, which is out to tender at the moment. Over the 4 years, the maximum grant paid was a few pence short of £21,000,000. Other PSO's are Dundee – London, and Wick – Aberdeen. JF expressed the concern that we seem to be going back in time, with patient travel being the biggest concern. MH told NUCC that the NHS are not willing to contribute, and the council cannot afford to keep the Stornoway flight going. A bigger plane now being supplied will be even more of a cost.

7. Correspondence:

JF brought to attention Kilmuir Cemetery. Darren Laing had complained to NUCC about the condition of his grandparents grave, after rabbits digging. MH told us that the council has started gassing, putting extra netting in place, etc and are trying their best to keep the rabbits out. JF has personally felt exhausted discussing this, as things have not improved, and there are some graveyards in a terrible state, particularly in one area of the cemetery. Once they are gassed, there should not be any rabbits, but it does need to be kept secure. MH assured NUCC that the wall at the cemetery will be completed this time.

8. Baleshare Causeway:

UR will raise the causeway funding at a meeting in London, the Friday after this meeting. JF also mentioned the bridge in Truimisgarry needing a structural report on it. It ideally needs to be surveyed by Angus Gillies. UR at the moment wants to focus on Baleshare causeway. North-Bay received the one-off funding a few years ago.

9. UACC name change:

Barra are now joining the UACC so there will be a name change to UBACC.

10. AOCB:

The Spaceport has been approved. The bins are still an on-going issue which the community are still expressing concern about. Two big green bins were removed from Sollas, opposite the Coop, and were replaced by two little black ones, which are frequently full, and people

are leaving their rubbish beside them. It does seem to be only tourists, but locals are also responsible for this.

11. Date of next meeting:

End of August. A date will be confirmed later.