

# Castlebay & Vatersay Community Council

**Meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Barra Children's Centre**

## Draft Minutes

### **Names Present:**

Paul McGuire (PMG) – Chair  
Katie Denehy (KD) – Vice Chair  
Sarah Ann MacLean (SAML) – Treasurer  
Donald MacNeil (DMN) - Committee  
Rose MacDougall (RMD) - Committee  
Eileen Frater (EF) - Committee

### **In Attendance:**

Marion MacNeil (Castlebay Parent Council)  
Cllr Kenneth MacLean  
Streets-UK  
Constable Phil Farndell

#### **1) Welcome**

PMG welcomed everyone – meeting started at 19.01.

#### **2) Apologies**

Apologies received from Cllr Iain MacNeil.

#### **3) Minutes of previous meetings**

Proposed – DMN  
Seconded – KD

#### **4) Matters arising from last meeting:**

##### *a) Playpark*

**Action** – No update. Linked in with HUB

##### *b) Streetlights & Roads*

The planned walk around Castlebay has yet to take place as Calum MacKenzie has not been over. Cllr Paul Steele has visited however walk around was not possible. Issues have been highlighted. PMG suggested updating the map of Horve as very few improvements have been changed since the map was last shared with the council. Need to highlight potholes, drains, ditches, flooding areas. Some areas where there is flooding are particularly concerning as it may be sewage.

External matters have delayed the implementation of 20mph signs in Horve. '20 is plenty' signs have never been put in place despite being requested.

Concerns raised with CC again with regards to streetlights. The dangers of them switching off at around 10pm has been highlighted by emergency services but the Council will not change the times they are on. Cllr MacLean advised he would raise the matter at the next council meeting regarding infrastructure. Constable Farndell volunteered his support on the matter and is happy to join in any discussions.

The line markings on roads were meant to have been completed by now but have still to be done. Exhaustive list of reasoning behind the delay. PMG asked KML to raise this again. Constable Farndell advised he attended a meeting recently where he highlighted all road markings have now disappeared. Work is overdue. A list is now being compiled noting the markings that were there originally and any requests for new markings to be added.

**Action** – KD and PMG to work on map of Horve.

**Action** – DMN will speak with Vatersay Association regarding a map for their areas of concern.

**Action** – Cllr MacLean to escalate issue regarding streetlights and line markings.

### *c) Hub Update*

PMG invited Marion MacNeil from Castlebay Parent Council along to share updates regarding the new school build as they have been pursuing the matter recently. Marion advised the Scottish Government have committed to a new school build and leisure facility. Their next meeting is to be held in February. They cannot give a timescale as yet as they are in discussions regarding the funding availability. MSP Jenny Gilruth has reassured the Parent Council it will not be a repair job to the current school building, it will be a new build entirely. The school is currently listed as category D which is the lowest. Unsure what will happen with the hospital or HWEC however the Locality Planning Group are leading on this front.

Marion feels like voices have to be heard and that is why Parent Council are trying to take a lead on the matter of the school build and welcomes any input from CCs. Malcolm Burr welcomed the letter she sent raising concerns and he passed the communication on to the Scottish Government and Civil Servants to highlight the issues and their importance.

At the moment it is concerning as there are areas within the school that are falling apart in the meantime. A plan will have to be put in place to ensure it is safe and can be used.

Iain MacNeil wished to note that if there is no progress made with regards to the purchase of his land within the next few weeks he is officially pulling out of all negotiations. This

would mean the preferred site for the hospital and carehome will no longer be an option. Discussions have been ongoing for 4 years now.

**Action** – Cllr MacLean to ask what the interim plan is for the school while the new build is progressing.

#### *d) Local Health & Social Care*

PMG asked if there were any updates from the latest Locality Planning Group meeting. KD advised the plan is being looked at just now. Patient travel has been highlighted as has dentistry. Cllr MacLean advised the proposed North of Scotland Health Plan was also discussed. Hopeful this will go to review again. Concerns raised with regards to the availability of a dentist on the island at the moment. KD advised she will feedback to LPG.

**Action** – KD will feedback to LPG on the concerns raised regarding availability of dentist.

#### *e) Public Bins*

No update. Hopeful it will be sorted ahead of spring/summer season.

**Action** – KD will forward all photos highlighting issues with bins to Cllr MacLean so he can escalate the matter (previously collated by former committee member Micheal Galbraith).

#### *f) Castle*

SAML provided an update from the most recent meeting with HES. It was advised they have secured £350k for works. Estimated cost is currently £600k if they are going to rebuild all the parts that require extensive works. SAML confirmed those in attendance were quite irate with HES. They stated a high level masonry team is required but must be put out to tender. SAML asked for a timescale but they were unable to provide one. HES confirmed updates would be provided via John Fountain who will then share with the community. They did advise they want to improve the visitor experience onshore in the meantime. They discussed a virtual reality simulator experience that could be offered but they have to find premises. They are hoping the boat trips around the castle will commence in March.

**Action** – SAML to request an update from HES for next CC meeting.

**Action** – PMG to contact MP AB MacNeil to see if he can escalate the matter with HES.

#### *g) Area Forum*

CCs met recently to discuss the Area Forum. Marion MacNeil has been asked to assist with updating the Island Plan. Will reconvene shortly to progress further and hopefully reach the point where a job can be advertised.

#### *h) Transport Committee*

PMG advised given all the issues with Calmac at the moment the CC will reach out to Northbay CC in an effort to try and re-establish a transport committee. Hoping to get more representatives from the community (particularly businesses) to contribute. Issues with ferries, flights, inter-island connections and so on must be highlighted.

The new resident air fare scheme seems to be causing issues as well. Various pieces of feedback received regarding the wait to receive the document, difficulties applying the information online when booking, as well as the impact of non-resident visiting family.

**Action** – PMG to highlight concerns with resident air fare with Cllr Uisdean Robertson and MP AB MacNeil.

#### *i) EE Signal*

No update. Cllr MacNeil normally updates however he was unable to attend this evening. Concerns raised with regards to powercuts and the inability to then make an emergency call if required. Cllr MacLean advised FARA alarms will not work either in a powercut.

**Action** – CC to write to MSP AB MacNeil highlighting the issue with emergency calls during a powercut.

### **Other Items for the Agenda**

#### **5) Herring Walk**

Streets UK delivered an update following their day of local consultation in the Learning Centre. Focus is currently on the Herring Walk although there is potential for future phases to expand on what is currently available. Artist impression of route shown at the Learning Centre all day and also available to view online. Welcomed any feedback. Main issue highlighted is the walk is currently not accessible by all and is in a poor condition. The plan is to upgrade the route by using a surface similar to gravel but it is combined in a resin so looks natural but firm. Good for walkers, bikes, prams etc. The footbridge will be marine timber decking. They are really eager to get any feedback from the community in the meantime via the online survey. The idea is to enhance what is currently in place. Around 40 people dropped in to the consultation in the Learning Centre. Streets-UK also welcomed a response from the CC for their formal position on the plans.

They will write up a report to CBAB regarding the local issues raised and anything that might need to be addressed. The main sentiment from the consultation was everyone seemed to be keen for the work to progress quickly. The timeline will depend on the feedback received online as well as CBAB giving the greenlight for the next stage to

commence which is to seek capital funding. The project may be split between the pathway and the bridge.

EF feels it would be beneficial for the community to have the work completed in one phase however it may come down to funding.

**6) Financial Report**

SAML advised there is currently £25,200.98 in CC's account. £3k of that is ringfenced for the bus shelter. £10k for maintenance works via the Area Forum. Also holding some donations received specifically for the over 60s and emergency services christmas party.

**7) AOCB**

Constable Farndell provided an update on the Calmac parking issue. Recently met with Fiona Galbraith and Mona from Calmac as well as the Captain of the Isle of Lewis. They were aware of the issue but were not aware of the impact they were having. Fiona was in complete agreement that something would have to change so the area behind the Calmac Office will be resurfaced and marked parking places created for Calmac staff parking only. They will advise staff that the new designated area must be used in the first instance. CC thanked Constable Farndell for sorting the issue.

PMG advised the next Council Committee Meeting is to be held on Vatersay so hopefully there are lots of opportunities for engagement there.

CC wished to note thanks to MacLennan Contractors for loaning a cherrypicker and driver to assist with putting up the Christmas lights.

**8) Date of Next Meeting**

26<sup>th</sup> March.

Meeting ended at 21.03.