

Stornoway Community Council

Minute of Meeting held in the Failte Centre, Bayhead Street, Stornoway
on Thu 27 Feb 2025 at 7:00 pm

Present	Robert Doig (Chair)	Kenneth Burns (Vice Chair)
	Josh Gibbens (Treasurer)	Mike Macleod (Secretary)
	Betty Jappy	Janet Macdonald
	Cameron Thompson	Cllr Duncan Macinnes
	Cllr Angus McCormack	Cllr George Murray
In Attendance	Alex Macleod (Chief Executive, Stornoway Port Authority)	Sharon Reid (Community Learning & Development Officer, CNES)
	Kaleigh Macleod (Development Worker)	Kirsten MacInnes (Development Worker)
	10 members of the public attended in person, 2 by Zoom	
Apologies	1 Ian Minty	Morag Smith
	Cllr Frances Murray	Cllr Gordon Murray
Stornoway Port Authority	2	The Chair welcomed Mr Alex Macleod, Chief Executive, Stornoway Port Authority, to the meeting and invited him to give a brief presentation (accompanied by slides on a projector).

Mr Macleod stated that he was quite happy doing these events, and while he was happy to answer questions, he hoped they would understand that there are always some things which have to be kept confidential. Stornoway Port Authority is tasked with making a profit, which is then reinvested. Legally it sits between the public sector and the private. There are a number of Trust Ports across Scotland. By contrast Forth Ports and Clyde Ports were privatised in the 1980s.

Mr Macleod explained the range of activities which go on in the Port – on Goat Island there is McDuff Shellfish, which employs 40-50 people. There is also Coastal Workboats – building workboats for a Dutch company. On the other side of the Harbour, there is Nevantia at Arnish, which needs the Deep Water Terminal to do load-outs. Stornoway Port is to build a linkspan out there. It is all about the generation of growth – at present our economy is too dependent on the public sector. Stornoway Port has 28 staff. It also has £40 million of debt, so they have to be careful with cash flow.

As regards Cruise Ships – in 2023 Stornoway Port had 14,000 passengers come ashore, and of the visiting cruise ships, only 4 carried over 1,000 passengers each. In 2024 there were 56,000 passengers who came ashore, and there were 27 vessels each carrying over 1,000 passengers. Their aim is to have more busy days rather than flooding the place. Mr Macleod gave the example of Kirkwall – all the shops there are full up. Our experience is that 90% of passengers will go into town. 25% are American – and they spend the most. He explained the steps they took with some German passengers one day – 80 of them wished to go on a bicycle tour of the island – they had given advice on road safety/road behaviour and ensured they were split up into groups.

- 2 Mr Alex Macleod gave the example of Kirkwall who had 7,000 passengers come ashore on one day. He explained how they had arranged the path to the Castle Grounds from the Deep Water Terminal – a number of visitors use this, and it is appreciated as an enhancement to the Grounds by residents. On Cromwell Street – the works there mark the first element of the developments which Stornoway Port has in mind – the Feature Gate, and there will be further developments.

***** Cllr George Murray entered the meeting.*

Mr Macleod discussed the Deep Water Terminal Part 2 – this is a bit South, for the assembly of wind turbine bases – will have a much deeper berth. On an island, the Port is an essential element of driving the economy forward. Improvements to the Arnish Road have gone out to tender – potentially a £4m-£5m project. Work is expected to start April/May. There will be opportunities to develop around the Arnish Road.

Mr Macleod then discussed the difficulties with the Stornoway Passenger Access System. With hindsight, not enough thought had been put in ten years ago. The system turned out to be too complex for our environment. The tidal range here is between 4 and 7 metres, whereas in Lerwick it is one metre. When it broke down, it was CalMac who decided to use the car deck and the linkspan. As it happens 95% of foot passengers use the stairs anyway. CalMac use the linkspan at Tarbert and Lochboisdale, it is the safest method for them.

As regards renewables – a linkspan is to be built at the Deep Water Terminal to give resilience. At present there are around 20 articulated lorries a day, but once renewables construction gets going, most likely in 2028, there might be up to 70 a day. There has to be another freight ferry. Renewables projects are going to provide hundreds of quality jobs for the next fifty years. Mr Macleod mentioned the adverse impact which the Bakkafröst closure had had – it is not just about surviving, but about thriving. He concluded by mentioning the Tall Ships – each year Stornoway Port helps 10-12 young people to go away on these – the hope is that they will be encouraged to take up a career in maritime.

The Chair thanked Mr Macleod for his presentation and opened the floor to questions.

The Plaque commemorating the ruins of the Macleod Castle under No 1 Pier – Mr Macleod knows where the plaque is, the Ferry Terminal would not be an appropriate place for it as it has too many plaques already. Perhaps the Stornoway Shipping building would be appropriate.

Signage – Mr Macleod admitted they hadn't yet progressed improvements in signage – perhaps best to transfer this responsibility from the Cruise Forum to the Stornoway Area Forum.

Battery Energy Storage System – Mr Macleod stated it has been granted Planning Permission, we have to look at all opportunities. The Treasurer took this opportunity to give a report on the Community Council's meeting with Alasdair Allan MSP, who is going to write some letters on our behalf.

**Stornoway Port
Authority (contd.)**

- 2 Stance on Sunday Working – Mr Alex Macleod explained that Stornoway Port is not allowed to impose Sunday restrictions on leaseholders. We cannot stop a ferry coming in on a Sunday. We do however advise Cruise Ships not to come in on a Sunday, simply because there will not be much open. As regards Coastal Workboats working on a Sunday, he suggested approaching them directly first.

Additional Freight Ferry – Mr Macleod stated that the volume of traffic for renewables construction will fund it. If at all possible we don't want the renewables freight traffic coming into town.

Jobs for Young People – Mr Macleod said the Renewables jobs are electrical, mechanical jobs – good, long-term jobs. The Treasurer mentioned the SSEN 'Meet the Buyer' event.

Renewables – Housing – Mr Macleod said there was a lot of talk about work-camps – Variety of possibilities including barges, shipping for accommodation.

Disabled/Elderly Access via cardeck/linkspan – Suggestion of putting a large notice just inside the terminal, explaining that help is available for those with restricted mobility – Mr Macleod agreed to consider this.

Community Benefit – Mr Macleod stressed they focus on the marine side of things, encouraging young people to take an interest in marine matters. They are happy to pay for buses if schools want to visit the harbour, and will help young people go for a spell on Tall Ships.

Potholes on road to Goat Island – Mr Macleod explained that there is a 5 mph speed limit – they are trying to keep on top of potholes. Could put in a couple of speedhumps/sleeping policemen.

The Chair thanked Mr Macleod.

**** Mr Alex Macleod left the meeting.*

**Minute of Meeting
of 30 Jan**

- 3 With a correction to Sharon Reid's job description – "Community Learning & Development Officer, CNES" – this was adopted, proposed by Kenneth Burns, seconded by Josh Gibbens.

Matters Arising

- 4 *The written report by the Secretary was taken as read:*
4 – Matters Arising – Post Office – update will be given under AOCB. Newton Battery – Kenneth Burns, Josh Gibbens and the Secretary have had a very positive meeting with Alasdair Allan MSP. He had prepared drafts of five letters – we received copies of these – and will progress feedback to him next week.

5 – Appeal for Family of Alex Benga – unfortunately the Secretary failed to meet Leona Rawlinson.

**Stornoway Area
Forum/Parking in
Town**

- 5 The Secretary reported on the meeting of the Stornoway Area Forum and in particular the lolaire Centre planned for Pier No 1. Cllr Duncan Macinnes remarked that the option the developers have chosen, no 3, will cost about 10% more. The costing on the final plans will be £20 million – at least. Getting funding will be extremely challenging. Cllr Macinnes mentioned that SSEN want to leave a legacy behind.

**Stornoway Area
Forum/Parking in
Town (contd.)**

- 5 More generally, population decline is a huge challenge. Housing Strategy was discussed at CNES last night. HHP plan to build 200 new homes. Cllr Macinnes went on to discuss major renewables projects. The Comhairle was aiming to get a 20% investment in turbines. The West Side has negotiated £4.5 million annually, CNES was looking at obtaining a similar level of community benefit for the rest of the island. CNES gets 22% of the total Crown Estate benefit that goes to local authorities in Scotland. Community Renewables – our opportunity for the next generation.

The Secretary explained that we had put forward a suggestion by a resident that lay-bys should be built at the bus-stops near the large Co-op. However on examination it was found that this would cost £70k-£100k, and there was simply no money for this. Thanks to Councillor Frances Murray, the Treasurer, Vice Chair and Secretary had earlier had a very useful meeting with Calum Mackenzie, the responsible officer at CNES. Progress on the installation of Bollards at the Pedestrian Precinct can be expected by the summer. The Vice Chair expressed his concern at the behaviour of road users. A member of the public expressed his concern over the behaviour of bike users on Point Street, and suggested putting pavements on both sides of the road. Bollards won't solve the safety issues for pedestrians entirely – there will still be issues with forklifts and delivery vans. Janet Macdonald mentioned that research had been done in New Zealand – people who drive go for one specific purchase, but people who walk will make more ad hoc purchases.

The concerns regarding deliveries to the small Co-op via Kenneth Street were thoroughly discussed. The Treasurer read out the recent email correspondence with Stornoway Police. It was agreed that the Secretary should write to the small Co-op and suggest they ask DFDS to deliver to the large Co-op, then have their staff decant the relatively modest deliveries for the small Co-op into one of the Co-op's own delivery vans (which presumably are refrigerated) and use that for the delivery to the small Co-op.

AOCB

- 6 Teenage Anti-Social Behaviour – some members of the public stated that there had been a huge improvement – it may be that friendships in the group which was causing trouble have broken up, also that boys who are coming up to 16 now realise that if they are aiming to get an apprenticeship, that a potential criminal conviction would be a problem for them. They expressed their gratitude to the Community Council for drawing attention to the issue

Bank Account – the Treasurer gave a summary of their difficulties with the Royal Bank, confirmed that they have approached the Bank of Scotland and are now hopeful of having an account open by end-March.

Close

- 7 The Chair thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.