

BERNERA COMMUNITY COUNCIL
APPROVED MINUTES
Thursday 11 January 2024
Bernera Community Centre, 7.30pm

Present. Madeleine Macaulay (Chair), Cllr Norman Macdonald, Calum Richings (Treasurer), Robert Mackenzie, Chrissie Macdonald, Rhiannon Teather (Clerk).

Apologies. Ella Macaulay Fraser (Vice Chair), Cllr Ranald Fraser.

1. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 September 2023 approved Madeleine Macaulay and seconded by Chrissie Macdonald.

The inaugural minutes of the meeting were circulated to committee – no need to approve, since CnES minutes rather than our own.

It was noted we did not meet in October as Community Council elections were still running. Our inaugural meeting was held on 29 November 2023. There was no meeting in December due to holidays.

2. Finance Update

CR provided an update. The current balance 16,284.79. £10,000 is Crown Estate funds for Bosta. It was noted that £300 was spent on MacGregor's toilet supplies in November/December and this is too expensive. The money is taken by Direct Debit.

The funds breakdown spent on toilets was discussed:

- For the running of the toilets at the Pier - £1,400 - £900 in wages
- For the running of the toilets at Bosta - £1,100
- £840 goes out for supplies
- £1,100 goes out for wages
- It was noted no wiggle room for maintenance and costs to be reviewed in coming months to ensure a fund exists for this

3. Challenge Fund Update 2022 (Joan's Bench & Garden)

MM provided an update. The bench and flowers all bought. The fencing and two gates to be bought and installed; discussion about whether to hire someone or whether we do this ourselves. It was agreed this project needs to be prioritised as it has been ongoing for some time. RM to measure for wood and get a price for materials. NMD confirmed £1,000 available from Ward Fund to help complete the project.

4. Challenge Fund 2023 (BCA Kitchen Equipment)

CM queried the outstanding funds due to BCA; MM to do a tally of what has been spent so far; £1,800 (£900 matched fund) was the total grant.

5. GBCDT

It was noted the GBCDT AGM is scheduled to be held on Thursday 25 January 2024. It was discussed whether we should prepare questions, some concern that we have not received the information that was requested at our public meeting back in September. MM to compile a list.

CR queried whether the building at the Pier has been completed and there was a discussion about the land ownership. We understand there were discussions about land ownership with the CnES being in progress but status is unclear.

6. Bosta Works Update

It was proposed that we do a group site visit to assess the works done so far – Tuesday 16th afternoon. We are receiving complaints about the septic tank, the smell and the fact it is not buried.

7. MacGregor Supplies for Toilets

This is to be reviewed as above; it appears too expensive in the winter months.

8. Bins at Bosta & Kirkibost

CM queried whether bins can be taken away, there is big problem with excess waste being left outside the bins. NMD confirmed another big bin has been ordered for Bosta, there has just been a delay with the suppliers/them being delivered. NMD will order another green bin with lid for Kirkibost.

9. Bernera Bridge – Safety Changes

CM asked NMD to find out what is happening with the lights at the bridge – they are on/off at strange times of night. There has been no progress to move the stop/giveway sign at the bridge. NMD to follow up.

RT raised the fact the lighthouse at the edge of Carloway is no longer illuminated at night; NMD to report it.

10. Petrol Pumps Shelter

CR/NMD provided an update. The wood has been ordered and the cover is to be installed. Next step is for the wood to go on the shelter and then the plastic to be installed.

11. Tourist Board Signage

NMD noted he has been contacted regarding the signs. RM and MM have put up all of the signs, one remaining ‘no parking’ sign left. It was noted there are significant number of ‘no parking’ signs already on the road to Bosta and there does not appear to be a need.

12. Graveyards / Little Bernera

It was noted that the stones have been shifted to behind the helipad. Bones are appearing once again at Little Bernera, so the job is urgent. MM proposed that we need to go out again and try and organise the stones be taken out. The logistics were discussed, as in order to make a difference, the materials need to be in place and a significant number of people recruited. If the Fish Farm staff have returned, they need to be approached again for assistance. NMD to follow up.

13. N4 - SCOP-0032 – Spiorad na Mara Offshore Windfarm – Isle of Lewis - Consultation Request for Scoping Opinion

We received correspondence from Scottish Government (Marine Directorate) requesting BCC response on the Scoping Report. The initial deadline was 18 November, then postponed to 18 December due to Community Council elections. BCC requested an extension since we were unable to meet the deadlines; they agreed if we responded by end of January, they would aim to incorporate our feedback. It was discussed that ideally we would hold a public meeting, but due to time constraints, we would need to submit something to avoid our response being recorded as 'nil' meantime. We discussed concerns that we were aware of based on discussions with members of community and own reading of report. It was noted the scoping report, and in particular desktop survey, is not accurate in terms of the scale of the waves expected and the conditions; it is more severe than is being reported (over 100m in bad storms, way more than the 60m suggested or 20m recorded; heavy North Atlantic swell is very different than elsewhere). Mackerel landings also not accurately plotted as not in the area; no mention of the lobsters. Likewise the whale sightings are minimised; not realistic that these are in huge numbers on the Minch and hardly any on the West side – not the case. We also discussed lights and noise impact on underwater wildlife, as well as eagles etc. There is widespread concern that the community benefit is tokenistic – this needs to be transformational on the scale of the proposals. The obstacles of drilling into the granite seafloor likewise discussed. It was noted BCC has not been included in discussions held by GBCDT with the other west side Estates or with the Landlord. Generally community has not been adequately consulted or supplied with the information. RT to draft a basic response for amendment/approval by BCC.

14. AOCB

We received a query about the copper broadband and emergency alarms. CM confirmed BT are not proceeding with changes as applied to emergency alarms due to concerns.

The next BCC meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday 8 February 2024

Please contact: berneracomcouncil@gmail.com to make suggestions or raise any issues. The minutes from previous meetings, dating back to 2012, can be found at: Community Associations (e-sgire.org). Great Bernera is currently listed under Ward 6: <https://e-sgire.org/communities/ward6/community-associations/>