

BERNERA COMMUNITY COUNCIL
APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING
held on Thursday 16 May 2024
Bernera Community Centre, 7.30pm - 9.00pm

In attendance. Cllr Norman Macdonald (NM), Madeleine Macaulay (Chair, MM), Rob Mackenzie (RM), Rhiannon Teather (Secretary, RT), Ella Macaulay Fraser (Vice Chair, EMF), Chrissie Macdonald (CM), Calum Richings (Treasurer, CR).
Helen Strong (Bernera Bulletin).

Apologies. Neil James Macaulay, Cllr Ranald Fraser.

1. Previous Minutes

The previous minutes were approved by Chrissie Macdonald and seconded by Ella Macaulay Fraser.

2. Matters arising

It was noted the BCC minutes have not been uploaded by CnES in recent months despite having been sent to them as usual. We were notified this week CnEs no longer use E-Sgìre for the publication of minutes and they are in the process of setting up a page on the new Comhairle website to host these. It was agreed meantime we would put a physical copy of minutes on noticeboard downstairs. RT to scan minutes and make a PDF; these will be forwarded to Bernera Bulletin. It was also noted residents are welcome to contact at us at any time if they wish to receive a copy of the minutes.

3. Finance Update

CM provided an update. The current balance is 19,989.09. £10,000 is for Bosta toilets, rest is allocated to finish the garden at the end of the bridge and for toilet maintenance etc.

MM e-mailed Shona Hadwen (new CC contact, CnES) regarding what the standard wages are for clerk/secretary as not reviewed for many years; Hadwen responded that there are no set wages but some CCs pay by meeting or annually up to £500. After discussion about work involved £500 approved as new annual wages for Secretary. RT paid £400 already in between meetings and it was agreed will be paid the additional £100.

CR to action ordering a replacement CHQ from SSE.

4. Spiorad na Mara Off-shore Wind Farm – Meeting Request from Northland

RT update. Northland have proposed w/c 27 May, Wednesday or Thursday evening; it was noted our next BCC meeting is scheduled for 13 June. All agreed we would go back to them and propose they attend our next Community Council meeting on 13 June 2024. Assuming they agree, it was agreed we book the hall and do leaflet drop to ensure residents are informed.

5. Bins at Bosta & Kirkibost / Fly tipping issues

MM provided a report of the ongoing issue with the bins, previously overflowing at Kirkibost Pier. MM followed up with CnES and requested a green bin for Kirkibost; no response.

It was noted a camper van had dumped toilet waste at the quarry toward Bernera road end. The lack of facilities was discussed; there are a few emptying points but not sufficient for the numbers.

There was a discussion about the septic tank at Kirkibost; it was noted there are a number of newer facilities but concern that the septic tank is not the adequate type to cope with capacity. The fly tipped bath was discussed and what to do with it. We had a volunteer offer to take it for use on croft. 'A Keep Bernera' Tidy campaign/signage proposed. It was noted we had previously discussed signage drawing attention to the recycling points and that this is to be actioned.

6. Bosta Works / Toilets Update

The old septic tank at Bosta requires to be emptied. SSE need to be contacted to arrange this. RM to action. The new septic tank needs to be buried and the pipes covered adequately. CR has acquired the disabled facilities, new rails etc. It was agreed one toilet will be closed off for materials; then we will have one ladies toilet, one gents and one disabled toilet.

7. Challenge Fund 2022 (Joan's Bench & Garden) & 2023 (BCA Kitchen Equipment) Updates

RM to pick up gate and install them in the coming week.

8. Crown Estate Funding & Other Avenues

NM update. Deadline for applications is 7 June 2024. £18,750 is allocated for Bernera. It was noted no suggestions have been submitted in call for ideas as yet. There was a discussion about previous grant applications and where the money has been spent, i.e. development officer roles. It was noted there is a proposal from GBCDT to spend this year's fund finishing the project at Kirkibost Pier and some frustration was expressed that this project has not been finished with the funding granted previously; also concern that there is not a consensus for a new long term project / adequate long term planning for community (a responsibility of all three committees and community).

There was a discussion about ongoing issue acquiring land which has thwarted previous projects. It was noted one way around it would be gift crofts and there was some discussion about contacting individuals to see if they would supply land. There was a discussion of other funding projects previously discussed, including upgrading the playpark and the polytunnels. It was suggested we approach the other committees to arrange a cross-committee meeting to discuss applications for funding; MM/RT to send out an e-mail invite for next week.

NM noted there is a new PAN Challenge Fund. £150,000 to apply for.

This year's Challenge Fund is for £700 only.

9. Bernera Bridge – Safety Changes

Cllr NM confirmed he had followed this up with CnES and they do not agree there is a problem with safety but agreed they would switch the giveaway. It was noted CnES were supposed to be conducting annual review/survey of the bridge but this does not appear to have been done; to be followed up.

10. Petrol Pumps Shelter

Petrol Pump Shelter is now finished! Committee expressed thanks that this work is now completed.

11. Signage

Helen queried whether a future project could be a Bernera sign at Bernera road end (specifying what is here/for benefit of tourists – Bosta, Iron Age, Museum, Fuel, Shop etc.). MM to follow up signs for recycling.

12. Graveyards / Little Bernera

RT queried fieldtrip to Little Bernera which was postponed for the winter season. RM suggested NJM may be able to facilitate when he returns; to be followed up.

13. AOCB

- Deer on Bernera
- Spread of Gunnera
- Bernera School Septic Tank – It was noted we received an e-mail reporting septic tank smells. Cllr MacDonald will contact CnES and arrange for the septic tank at the school to be emptied.

The next Bernera Community Council meeting will be held on 13 June 2024.