

Stornoway Community Council

Minute of Meeting held in the Failte Centre, Bayhead Street, Stornoway
on Thu 29 Aug 2024 at 7:00 pm

Present	Robert Doig (Chair) Josh Gibbens (Treasurer) Betty Jappy Cllr Malcolm Macdonald	Kenneth Burns (Vice Chair) Mike Macleod (Secretary) Ian Minty Cllr George Murray
In Attendance	Kirsten MacInnes (Community Development Worker, Newton Ward Community Association)	Sharon Reid (Community Learning Development Officer, CNES)
Also present	6 members of the public	
Apologies	1 Janet Macdonald Cameron Thompson Cllr Angus McCormack Cllr Gordon Murray	Morag Smith Cllr Duncan Macinnes Cllr Frances Murray Hilda Pitcaithly
Minute of Meeting 25 July	2 Adopted, with the correction that Cameron Thompson's surname is spelt with a 'p' and that any names of members of the public should be removed completely. Proposer Josh Gibbens, seconder Kenneth Burns.	
Matters Arising	3 Re item 7, the Secretary reported he had written to the Returning Officer, who had replied explaining that he had noticed the issue himself when he had inspected the Polling Station in question, and the Presiding Officer there had also mentioned it. It would seem that they will ensure the issue does not occur again.	
Appointment of Treasurer	4 Josh Gibbens was appointed Treasurer, proposed by Mike Macleod, seconded by Kenneth Burns.	
Teenage Anti-Social Behaviour	5 The feeling of the meeting was that it had generally been quiet over the summer months. Sharon Reid explained that there had been a number of activities for young people, and the bad weather might have been a factor. The last major bit of anti-social behaviour seems to have been the unfortunate vandalism at the Failte Centre. The Secretary reported that we had written to the Chief Constable of Police Scotland and received an acknowledgement from the Divisional Commander in Inverness. We had also issued two Press Releases.. A member of the public then described how they had visited the Police Station to report a criminal incident, not been happy with the experience, and a week later received a call from a Police Officer who told them they should not visit the station to report such matters, but should instead phone 101. When the member of the public did this, the 101 operator stated that they could not understand why a Police Officer would say such a thing.	

Teenage Anti-Social Behaviour (contd.)

- 5 A retired Police Officer was present and expressed his concern that any serving Police Officer should make a suggestion of this kind. It was agreed that the Secretary should write to Chief Inspector Jane Mackenzie to seek clarification of the situation.

The difference in youth offending in recent years among island communities was discussed (the Western Isles is about twice as high as the Scottish average, Orkney lower and Shetland much lower). Sharon Reid stated that Shetland was a lot better off with the Oil money, there is a lot more staff, and more investment in young people.

The Secretary reported on a meeting with the Children's Reporter Erica Murray. She would welcome approaches from any members of the public who have definite evidence of a teenager committing an offence. At present most of the referrals come from the Police, with some from Social Work and a few from Education, but very few from the public. The Secretary stated that people can refer a child/young person for actions which harm themselves or other people (where the standard of evidence required is balance of probabilities, not beyond reasonable doubt).

Kirsten Macinnes explained that all the Development Workers have access to a Partner Portal, through which information on criminal or inappropriate behaviour can be passed to the Police – this is anonymous, it goes to Inverness, the Police here do not even get to see which Development Worker has entered the information. Cllr George Murray also suggested Crimestoppers – the information is recorded by an independent organisation with the assurance that this will be forwarded to the Police.

A member of the public mentioned how Neighbourhood Watch had been effective in reducing vandalism. It was agreed to put Neighbourhood Watch on the Agenda for a future meeting. Sharon Reid said a 'Campus Cop' was starting in the Nicolson Institute tomorrow, the post is funded through the Education Department. There is the possibility of inviting them to a future meeting, once they have been in the job for some time.

**Road Safety/
Pedestrian Precinct**

- 6 The meeting agreed that the Pedestrian Precinct on Point Street gave serious cause for concern. Betty Jappy related how cars go through there for no reason – she has repeatedly seen elderly people almost getting run over. Parked cars even stop people from going into shops. She mentioned how Cllr Duncan Macinnes had explained how the permit system is badly out of date. Kenneth Burns stated that what we need is 'intelligent bollards', such as in Inverness. Cllr George Murray related how Chief Inspector Jane Mackenzie had explained that unless a Police Officer witnesses a car coming into the precinct, then they cannot take any action.

The Secretary suggested a cheap solution would be installing permanent bollards at all of the entrances into the precinct, except at the junction of Point Street and Kenneth Street, which could be left open for commercial vehicles and access policed by CCTV – this would require relocating the seating near the Town Hall to allow commercial vehicles access to the Crit and the chip shops towards the end of Point Street.

**Road Safety/
Pedestrian
Precinct (contd.)**

- 6 However this was thought unworkable since emergency vehicles would require access. Kirsten Macinnes explained that CCTV to Police standards is incredibly expensive – costing thousands of pounds per camera. On the recommendation of the Vice-Chair, it was agreed to investigate ‘intelligent bollards’ as used in Inverness City Centre. The Secretary will write to Highland Council regarding this.

It was also agreed to raise this issue at the Stornoway Area Forum which has £100k of special Crown Estate funding, to be used to enhance the town. The Secretary will attend the meeting of Stornoway Area Forum next Thursday. Cllr Malcolm Macdonald gave the name of a transport officer at CNES who could provide information. The Secretary will contact this officer. It was also noted that the speed of traffic on Kennedy Terrace gave cause for concern.

**Point & Sandwick
Trust – Proposed
Development at
Battery, Newton**

- 7 The Secretary confirmed that the Community Council had sent a further Submission to CNES planning, which has been acknowledged. The development will go for consideration in October. We have offered to hold a special meeting with Point & Sandwick Trust, but have heard nothing back. Cllr Malcolm Macdonald pointed out that there is an appeals process. Kirsten Macinnes mentioned that she has had discussions with Calum Macdonald, the PST lead, who is apparently preparing a statement to try and address the safety concerns. A member of the public said that nothing is coming across properly in their plans, there is not enough detail. The Vice-Chair stated that he was shocked that it has even been given clearance for a planning decision. The Chair said that we have to trust that the Council will be aware of the issues, and that there is an appeals process. It was not clear there was anything further we can do.

**SSEN Convertor
Station, Arnish**

- 8 The background to this was discussed. It was agreed that should the Council refuse planning permission, it was virtually certain that the Scottish Government will call the proposal in and approve it. Although the development will apparently only be visible from the higher properties in town, the HDVC convertor station itself will be a massive building. It is likely to be visually intrusive when viewed from the Castle Grounds. Inevitably there will be massive disruption during construction and perhaps a continuing level of noise pollution afterwards.

All this realistically may result in some permanent impairment of the amenity Stornoway residents currently enjoy when walking near the Creed. There are also legitimate and significant environmental concerns, as to how exactly SSEN will dispose of the estimated 300,000 cubic meters of peat which will be excavated during the development.

The Vice-Chair expressed his very deep concerns about the industrialisation of our island. Tourists come here to see wilderness, not a concrete plinth. We need to be very measured in our decision.

The Secretary encouraged everyone to attend the SSEN presentation at the Cabarfeidh on Thursday 5 September. The meeting agreed to consider how best the community could approach SSEN regarding redress for the harm this project will undoubtedly cause.

**Spiorad na Mara
Windfarm
Development**

- 9 The Secretary has had another meeting with Northland Power, the developers of the Spiorad na Mara windfarm project. Now that SSEN has finalised the site for the Converter Station, Northland can move forward with their sequence of community meetings in September and October. Unfortunately their community engagement team will be in Shawbost on the evening of Thursday 26 September and will therefore be unable to attend our meeting then. Northland would still very much like to meet with us, and perhaps we will have to arrange a one-off meeting.

Ominously, the Scoping Report for Spiorad na Mara has one piece of information which has a direct bearing on the SSEN project. Northland has to build an onshore grid substation near the SSEN facility. This will probably be north of the A859, be much smaller than the HDVC converter station, and further away from the Castle Grounds. Nevertheless their Scoping Report indicates their substation and cabling could directly impact the Castle Grounds. This begs the question of exactly what damage the SSEN project will cause.

There was some general discussion of the Spiorad na Mara project. It was noted that the 385-metre high wind turbines will be visible from the middle of the Barvas Moor Road, also from the North of Point. The wide track left by the underground cables will itself present a planning blight.

**Weeds on
Pavements**

- 10 Betty Jappy expressed her concerns at the amount of weeds she sees on pavements throughout the town. There does not seem to be any programme of treatment for this issue. It was agreed to discuss this issue at a later meeting.

Close

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