

REPRESENTATIONS

NO	COMMENTS
01	<p>1 We note the Council's Planning Department has received an application submitted by an individual on behalf of Point Community Council (PCC) for permission to create a 3-metre-wide 'footpath' on grazings pastures belonging to the village of Aignish. Our Committee finally received a copy of the application only after PCC was ordered to do so by the Planning Dept.</p> <p>2 On behalf of shareholders, Aignish Grazings Committee rejects this application by non-residents in their audacious attempt to interfere in crofting matters pertaining to the village and over which they have no jurisdiction. The chairman of PCC, at a public meeting, made it clear that if Aignish did not agree with his committee's demands he would submit a planning application which the Planning Dept would automatically approve.</p> <p>3 Members of the public, already, have daily access to the pasture at the Braighe via a gate at each end and the majority behave responsibly.</p> <p>4 The Planning Dept is being asked by a group of non-residents to interfere in crofting matters irrespective of the views of crofters in Aignish and that of the Regulatory body, the Crofting Commission which represents crofters.</p> <p>5 Aignish has one of the smallest Common Grazings in Lewis. The small pasture at the Braighe is probably the best part of the Common Grazings and it's where all young lambs and their mothers are put at the beginning of May to fatten them up on the quality grass.</p> <p>6 Sheep, lambs and cattle cannot survive on tarmacadam or similar surfaces and such a surface on any grazings pasture within the crofting counties would affect subsidies given that there, no longer, would be grassland to feed the animals. It is public knowledge that it is the intention of PCC to use such materials in the construction of a permanent road but tellingly, this is is deliberately withheld in the application.</p> <p>7 Aignish Grazings Committee, for the best part of ten years, has rejected consistent demands (from certain non-resident individuals) to build 3-metre-wide roads on most of its pastures. It is public knowledge that PCC, for its own ends, would wish freedom to access all of the Common Grazings in the district of Point and is, arguably, using the Planning Dept to help them achieve that. PCC announced, publicly that 3-metre-wide roadways would be created on pastures throughout Point for the use of cycling tourists invited to do so via a dedicated website. This is not mentioned in the application.</p> <p>8 The applicants have made it known, publicly, that should the Planning Dept approve this application, this would give them freedom and authority to continue with all future plans with the supposed blessing of the Council.</p> <p>9 The applicants failed, last year, in their attempt to persuade the Council to provide funding for their plans.</p> <p>10 PCC quietly, if not secretly, was granted substantial funding by HITRANS of Inverness about a year ago, to pay for a 'consultant' to provide detailed plans for the creation of a permanent 3-metre-wide road of various materials on Aignish Common Grazings. This is still the plan. This planning application could be regarded as a tactic to gain unfettered, future access to all other common grazings in Point.</p> <p>11 It is known that the Chairman of PCC, in recent times, proposed that all grazings committees relinquish all legal responsibilities over their common grazings and transfer such jurisdiction to PCC.</p>

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	<p data-bbox="240 230 1433 365">12 Once again, our committee rejects this application and any interference in its affairs. Non-residents must not be allowed to interfere in crofting matters which are in the jurisdiction of the Grazings Committee acting within existing crofting laws and under regulatory control of the Crofting Commission.</p> <p data-bbox="240 409 1433 510">13 The fact that PCC should demand and expect that the Planning Dept. interfere in crofting matters on its behalf which might then allow PCC to impose its views and plans on any crofting village could, possibly, be argued by some to be devious, deceitful and shameful.</p> <p data-bbox="240 555 1433 622">14 No fair-minded and responsible Community Council, in any district, would interfere in the affairs of any village against the wishes of its inhabitants especially in crofting matters.</p>