



North Uist Community Council

Comhairle Choimhearsnachd Uibhist a Tuath

NUCC Minutes

Meeting held on 21st August 2023 at 7pm at Claddach Kirkibost Centre

Present:

Joan Ferguson (JF) Chair

Conor Lawless (CL) Vice Chair

Fiona MacVicar (FMV) Secretary

John MacDonald (JMD) Treasurer

Peter MacNab (PMN)

Effie Rodgers (ER)

Donald Ewen Morrison (DEM)

Lynda MacLean (LML)

David Downham (DD)

Cllr Mustapha Hocine (MH)

Cllr Uisdean Robertson (UR)

Apologies:

Zara Wilkie (ZW)

Rachel MacLean (RML)

Ragnall Maclain (RMI)

Angus MacLennan (ANGUSML)

Anne MacLellan (ANNEML)

Mairi Claire Ellwood (MCE)

Public:

Kayleigh MacVicar (KMV)

DJ Johnson (DJJ)

Adoption of minutes from previous meeting:

JMD adopted the minutes and LML seconded them.

Matters Arising from previous meeting:***North Uist Internet Provision:***

CL asked if there was any land that would be suitable for masts. Cleatraval ground would be too costly despite the great coverage for North Uist. UR told that Angus intends to erect a mast at Market Stance. A 12m mast would be required. The suggestion of Clachan where the ee masts are was made, possibly near the turbines to be more effective and slightly higher up.

Deer:

JF asked whether people found the Whatsapp Deer Marauding Group was effective. CL said it was useful to see those that report it, ie Claddach Kirkibost and Lochmaddy, but there are still areas effected that are not reported. Scaring them away is not working, as they continue to come back. JF feels that people are being forced to deal with the issue themselves, instead of the estate intervening. The plan has not yet been publicly circulated.

Baleshare Causeway:

UR had a good discussion with officers when down in London, and pushed towards the 'Levelling Up Fund' for the causeway, and has requested a meeting with Hyslop with Baleshare causeway on the agenda. The council does not have the money to repair it, unless they get some sort of one off funding. UR will continue at every opportunity at meetings to raise it as an issue.

School Transport:

JMD had been contacted by upset parents about the council ending DA Travel's contract for Lochmaddy children. Children now have a longer journey, and Council employees who used the bus are no longer permitted to use it, as it is not a public service. MH said that the extra 15 minutes is still within the time scale the council can have children on the bus. LML spoke of fighting for her son to get transport to Sgoil Bhaile a Mhanaich, despite others in North Uist being permitted transport. There is a great lack of public transport

ACTION: MH said he would look into Lynda's issue and chase up about the employees being permitted to use the transport.

Nursery Provision:

Parents had been in contact about concerns of a lack of provision for nursery children, especially of ages 0-3. MH is holding a meeting with Mairi Claire Ferguson, the Early Years Officer and parents who raised their concerns. Spaces are limited for several reasons, space, staffing, ratios and the council are not legally obliged to have age 0-3 provision. The council are going to support those who wish to start childminding. PMN raised the issue of opening the nursery a little bit earlier.

ACTION: MH will look into the nursery opening earlier, and update on the meeting.

Community Council Election:

There wasn't very much information sent out on the detail of the elections. It is a 4 year term, and our term is now over and anyone who wishes to stand again can apply. JF felt that such a large committee hasn't really worked.

New Ferry - Timetable planning:

UR told of the small vessel replacements for the Loch Portain and the Loch Alainn, and arguing that there should be more than two, as the Social economic study suggested there should be two vessels on each. They are the younger vessels. They are in phase 2 which means they will not be replaced until 2030. The Little Minch is on schedule at the moment. JF asked about CMAL allowing the community to choose the names, which UR said they do allow from a shortlisted suggestion.

ACTION: FMV to ask Stewart Maxwell about circulating the date of the Little Minch meeting in Lochmaddy.

Councillor's Report:

The date for the new budget is not available yet. The pier closure plan is to be the same as the last closure. MH said that there were not many complaints, shops and GP Practice were happy with times of delivery. KMV mentioned that those in South Uist struggled with the early times, as the Lochboisdale ferry was off so frequently. JF also mentioned roads not being gritted early enough for traffic on the road so early. UR spoke of the startling cut back in the budget and that gritting would certainly be impacted. Roads are numbered in Priority 1, 2, 3, 4, and that top priority 1 wouldn't be a statutory requirement to grit.

Uig closure:

JF asked the councillors if they knew of any Skye businesses that were compensated by Highland Council at the time of the Uig closure, they knew of none. Some local businesses were heavily impacted and despite councillors fighting for them to be compensated, they have not got anywhere. JF said it would be worthwhile reminding the community to claim back expenses if having to use a different route. JF also spoke of the opening times of the ports, in order for people to speak to staff more frequently.

ACTION: JMD will distribute a list of port opening times once the new timetable has been announced.

Loganair's Change to timetable and the impact on the community:

DD said the timetable was changed two months before they were due to, with no consultation or warning to the community. DD believed that with people's work commitments, etc, people were relying on Loganair as Calmac was so up and down, and with closures. There does not seem to be a consistent service that allows the community to get on and off the island. UR or the council hadn't been told about potential change. He received a lot of correspondence about the timetable change, majority of which were younger people. UR expressed to Mr Eckles that the timetable was not suitable for the islands, and will speak to the Transport Minister. DD said it was a disappointment that the community was not consulted beforehand.

ACTION: UR will discuss further at a meeting with the Transport Minister.

AOCB:

JMD spoke of Kiera MacKenzie e highland dancer and teacher from Lochmaddy going to Colorado going to the Estes Park Tattoo and asked if we could contribute to her expenses. All approved, and councillors also agreed to contribute.

JF mentioned the signage for bins for dog waste. Some areas have the signage now, and JMD said he recieved one for Lochmaddy, but the bins are still hidden.

ACTION: JMD will speak to the harbour master about further signage to point to where the bins are.

DEM mentioned the bank closure. UR has only received correspondence about the ATM. It could be an option to move the ATM to the Calmac office.

PMN mentioned about the low stock on shelves in the Coop, in particular Creagorry Coop. Sourcing products has become more challenging, and Creagorry have also cut down on Cooperative products.

PMN also asked for updates on pest control at graveyards. MH believed that repairs were made, but had not been to Kilmuir to check. JF mentioned that she still has not been told of spaces left at graveyards, and whether there are plans to be extended.

JMD spoke of the masonic buiding in Lochmaddy's roof, and that it is breaking apart and will cause damage elsewhere if not repaired.

ACTION: MH will speak to the estate.