



Minutes of Caithness West Community Council 7.30pm, Tuesday 18th January 2022 via MS Teams

1. Present

Jillian Bundy Chairperson), Patricia Groves (Secretary), David Craig, Matthew Reiss (Councillor, Highland Council), Heather Thompson,

2. Apologies

George MacDougall, Donald Omand

3. Adoption of Minutes

Proposed Heather Thompson

Seconded David Craig, with the alteration from “will be built” to “would be required”

4. Correspondence

Ian Kelly had contacted Jillian to say that the grid connection had been approved and that the approval notification indicated that there was no representation from the public or CWCC. This was incorrect – an objection had been submitted by CWCC. Jillian had written to William Black, Energy Consents Unit, expressing concern and had received an explanation and apology.

There was ongoing correspondence for Drum Hollistan.

5. Police Matters

Craig Sutherland had submitted a report with a small number of incidents – 1 intoxication, 1 drink driver, livestock on the road, speeding issues, theft of cut out policeman and speeding issues.

6. Planning and Licensing Updates

Nothing to report on licensing but planning applications for renovations to Mariner’s Cottage at Reay Harbour and to Isauld Hill farmhouse.

7. Treasurer’s Report

Credit balance £5783.25

Cheque of £10.00 to Pat for photocopying, JA Mackay £150.00 for hamper

Uncashed cheque for £927.62 from Forss Wind Farm

Assuming cheques cashed leaves a balance of £5623.25

8. Village Officer

Hamper had been delivered to James McAdie as agreed and it was hoped he would continue with the excellent work he had undertaken around the village. Mr Mackay at Hill of Forss does ground maintenance and Jillian will contact him to see if he will do the path work previously discussed.

9. Renewables Developments

Limekiln variation has been approved and Limekiln extension will be next.

The logging lorries are still working.

Tormsdale objection had been submitted.

The Scottish Government has issued a consultative document about the future of onshore wind power and the public has been invited to comment. David has completed a form and will also fill one in on behalf of the CWCC and circulate it for comments. The closing date is 31st January 2022.

100 mw offshore turbines northwest of Reay might affect whether any more onshore wind farms are built. The Crown Estate off Strathy could have offshore turbines. 200 m tall turbines could be built at Strathy South in the future. Perhaps the 2 km buffer zone from turbines to settlements should be increased?

John Campbell QC, on behalf of Aberdeenshire council, took a wind farm to court over noise abatement and won the case. Is this an argument for the future? Perhaps the noise will increase with age?

10. Dounreay Stakeholder's Group

David emailed the 8th December minutes to the Community Council on the 18th January 2022. The next sub group meeting is the 26th January 2022 and the next whole group 23rd March 2022. There is a worry about several tonnes of Uranium being stored as it has a half-life of 10,000 years. DSRL has become part of the Magnox Group, with one managing director.

11. Association of Community Councils

There has been no update to date.

12. Community Shop

Rebecca and Pat visited the community shop in Embo on the 5th November 2021 and received excellent advice from Jim McGillivray about how the shop was set up and run. On the 10th December 2021 they met with Helen Allan from Thurso Community Development Trust to ask about setting up a Development Trust in Reay. She recommended that we set up a SCIO alongside the Development Trust. Jillian, Rebecca and Pat met on the 17th January 2022 to discuss the way forward. It was decided to contact Reay Golf Club to discuss whether a shop could be sited there. Jillian, Heather, Rebecca and Pat had already spoken with Chris Bain and Rita Leavesley about siting the shop at Reay Hall. A date was to be arranged with Committee members of Reay Golf Club. A meeting will be held on the 7th February 2022 at 7.30 in Reay Golf Club to set up a

working committee. A member of the Hall Committee would be invited to join and the Development Trust Association in Scotland contacted.

13. AOB

Matthew said there had been a £3.9 million reduction in real terms due to inflation, pay awards, NI etc. There would be a budget gap of £39 million. Roads budget for next two years is £20 million but need £26 million to stand still and £200 million to repair all the roads in the Highland Region. A press release from HC had made no mention of the roads. The Revenue Budget to be used for mending potholes, drainage etc. The A9 and A96 dualling will go ahead.

Forss - Accident statistics, speeding data etc. sent to the MSP and the roads department in HC. Mark Rowse from Dounreay was approached to fund radar speed cameras, however it had been confirmed that Dounreay was unable to assist.

“Smiley Faces” in Reay – Heather finding it difficult to obtain funding.

Trudi Morris thought HC should be funding them. The Community Fund Meeting on Thursday will be asked if funding the signs will meet their criteria. Jillian will also check if funding from Halsary would be available.

The noticeboard has still not been erected so Pat will email Matthew to forward request on to HC Roads Department. If they are still unable to do it, perhaps a local odd job person could be paid to do it?

Information on the Brown tourist sign – accommodation, beach, harbour, James Braid golf course, historic church, shop, toilets, walks. The signs can be ordered as the funding is now available.

Community Infrastructure Support Programme (CISP) allows claims of up to £1000 to be made. Pat thought that perhaps it would be worth asking for funding for improving the football pitch in the village. It was thought that Chris Bain should be contacted as he has been looking at this also.

Matthew thought that an invitation to Ariane Burgess (MSP for the Green Party) to attend a meeting and see around the village might be worthwhile as she has said that no more onshore wind farms should be built in Caithness.

14. Date of next meeting

Monday 21st March 2022 at 7.30pm in Reay Golf Club

15. Actions

Jillian to contact Mr Mackay at Hill of Forss about ground maintenance

Jillian to see if funding available from Halsary

David to follow up on Forss signage

David to complete onshore wind farm consultative document

Heather to continue to source funding for “smiley faces”

Pat to request noticeboard to be erected by HC

Pat to order brown tourist sign

Pat to speak to Chris Bain about football pitch

Matthew to contact Ariane Burgess