COMHAIRLE CHOIMHEARSNACHD SHLEITE

SLEAT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of Sleat Community Council held at Ardvasar Hall

Tuesday 5th February 2019

Present:

Rob Ware

Tim Shone

Flora Maclean

Veana Cleland

Roddy Murray

John Duncan MacInnes

Apologies: Kirsty McGonagall

In Attendance:

Roger Cottis, David Ashford, William Swann, Ruth Swann, Donnie McKinnon,

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting 5th December 2018**

Roddy Murray welcome those present to the first meeting of 2019.

The minutes of the meeting of were moved by Tim Shone and Veana Cleland

**Matters Arising:**

Roddy advised there had been a recent meeting re the Community Council Review and a further consultation will take place this Spring. Roddy added that at that meeting Councillor Laird of Inverness said that he felt Community Councils had been ‘in limbo for 40 years. In Roddy’s view this a contemptuous view and showed how out of touch with rural communities the Councillor is. The minutes of that meeting are due on 1st March. Roddy outlined all of the meetings that Councillors had attended over the recent months demonstrating how much work is done by this Council. There was much criticism of paid Council officials as against volunteers who have no remuneration. Rob said that at that meeting some rural CCs have greater costs than urban Councils. The budget is now around £400 for SCC. Roddy thanked David Ashford for his recent letter to the WHFP.

**Agenda**

**Highland Council Budget Consultation**

Rob had circulated the Budget Booklet that has been produced by Highland Council and one example of increasing income is to introduce parking charges. The booklet demonstrated how dire the Highland Council’s finances are in. There will be a consultation on this issue in due course. Rob read out some of the facts and figures from the booklet. The principal theme of this document is how the Council can become more commercial and look at every opportunity for revenue generation. There was a brief discussion about the proposed consultation on tourism tax (Transient Visitor Levy) and included issues regarding campervans how these may be charged. Last summer the tourism Cabinet Secretary confirmed that the Scottish Government had no plans to introduce such a tax due to the high level of VAT in the UK. Veana Cleland asked about the amount of unpaid Council Tax across the country and how this could be recovered. There was ongoing concern as to how much money is being spent in Inverness. The estimate for year one for tourism tax if approved is possibly between £5-10m, not a significant figure for the whole Council region.

**Roads/Planning and Tourism**

Rob had said that a number of reports had been received about potholes, but work had had to be halted due to the Sconser quarry having to be closed for three weeks to allow staff to use leave up. Some work has taken place to fill the holes in the Aird car park and it is known that Tim Godfrey has done some of the work himself. There is no further word on the Ardvasar and FEI pod accommodation at both hotels. The Ardvasar Hotel has now reopened, and EI will be closed until late March. Rob outlined the project to seek approval for a motor-home service point at Kilbeg that is part of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund and will shortly have the Planning Application submitted to HC. This will be shown on the SCC website when this is with HC. Rob summarised all the recent planning applications and these will again be shown on the website. Armadale Castle will reopen on 4th March, Mon-Friday until end March when normal hours begin. Rob spoke of the Highland Council’s project to install Electric Vehicle Charging points. After a number of conversations, it has been decided to locate these in the Armadale Castle car park, with project initiated by end of March. William Swann asked if a meeting should take place within the community on the motor-home service points. This issue will be raised at the March meeting of the SCC as a separate agenda item.

**Ferries Update**

The STF expects to hear in March as to whether Transport Scotland will agree to additional Mallaig-Armadale services next winter. MV Loch Fyne is undergoing a refurbishment in Glasgow including seating/lighting/tables etc. Rob updated on the ongoing delays to the construction of the two vessels for CalMac. The schedule for the Armadale route will be the same this summer as in 2018. No funds have been allocated in the 19/20 Scottish budget for vessels and so the disruption of last year may be continued thus summer. Roddy updated on the recent site meeting at Armadale to look again at the key road safety issues at the pier. A summary of key points has been collated and we now expect Highland Council to take the lead on this, but we have some doubts as to what can be done for this summer. Rob expressed his concern at the lack of commitment from the public bodies to get work done, having first had this flagged up nearly three years ago. As volunteers it is disheartening to see such intransigence, especially as this was discussed on 27th September 2018 at a meeting with Council officials. Rob said that there will be a public-drop in session at An Crubh hosted by Caledonian Maritime Assets on the STAG project. This will be held on 26th March and look at options for infrastructure for the years ahead. This is because of the condition of the ageing plan. Donnie MacKinnon said that space at the pier for traffic and pedestrians/visitors is at a premium and this the key issue. William Swan expressed his concern at the way that vehicles and people are managed and this has led to abuse of CalMac staff. Roger Cottis asked about the work that would be needed at the Pier area under the STAG and how this would affect operations of the ferry. Whatever happens at Mallaig in respect of infrastructure will have to be replicated at Armadale. This is a long-term project and could take at least five years to initiate.

Deer Management

Tim updated on recent meetings and that the costs proposed of creating a bigger group for south Skye. The document has now been reduced in size and a further meeting will take place on 20thFeb. Rob advised that a new fence is being erected across Sleat replacing the 100-year stock fence and should be completed. Works are being prepared for the harvesting of the Ord Forest and the management team will be joining the deer management group. There is less deer activity in the Tormore Forest.

**AOCB**

Tim raised the issue of the Sleat Surgery and a lack of cover which may include the practice closing. Rob will ask NHS Highland for an update and will report this back at the March meeting. William Swann asked if the college still proposed some form of medical facility. This was not known at this time. Una reminded about the drop-in session for the new hospital that is being held on 6th Feb.

The meeting closed at 2040. The next meeting will be held on 5th March at Ardvasar Hall.