**COMHAIRLE CHOIMHEARSNACHD SHLEITE**

**SLEAT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Minutes of a Meeting of Sleat Community Council held at Ardvasar Hall 4th October 2022

Present:

Rob Ware

Tim Shone

Flora Maclean

Veana Cleland

Absent: Ludwig Appeltans

In Attendance:

Duncan MacInnes, Polly MacInnes, Kate Duffus, David Ashford, Andy Williamson, Ruth Hopkins, Natalia (Rubha Phoil), Hans and Tricia Petrie, Debbie and Gavin Smith, Kathryn Rawlinson, Sgt Graham Cameron.

Apologies: Gordon Matheson

The chair, Tim Shone welcomed those present to the meeting and introduced the present four current full members of the Sleat Community Council. Tim welcomed newly arrived residents at homes in Capisdale and wished them well for the future. He also welcomed Natalie and Ruth from Rubha Phoil. There were no declarations of interest by members.

The chair expressed sincere condolences on behalf of the community for the sad loss in recent weeks of three local people John MacKinnon, Donnie MacKinnon and Peter MacDonald. He added that the events of 10th August have shocked this community and that of Lochalsh.

As is usual practice the meeting will be recorded solely for the use of minute-taking and once approved the recording will be destroyed. The chair added that if anyone was recording the meeting this should be declared at that point.

**Behaviour and Actions Policy**

The chair said that in recent months and with the support of the Highland Council a new Behaviour and Actions policy document had been developed for Sleat Community Councillors and Members of the Public. The new policy was formulated based on an example from Fort William and has had several drafts. The document has been circulated to all community councillors and agreed on, with the exception of Ludwig Appeltans who is not present at the meeting. He added that Mr Appeltans had neither approved or disapproved the document. Rob Ware added that the policy document was not set in stone and if required could be amended at any point in the future. The document was signed by the four members present at the end of the meeting.

**Matters arising from the SCC meeting of 21st June (not already on the agenda)**

Rob said that a majority of agenda items are rolled forward from previous meetings and there are standard agenda items such as roads, housing, and transport. These and others will be updated during the meeting. No specific items were raised.

**Sergeant Graham Cameron from Police Scotland**

Tim Shone welcomed Graham and highlighted the pre-pandemic process of officers attending community council meeting when operations allowed.

Graham thanked the SCC for inviting him to this meeting and said that he was not allowed to speak of any of the events of 10th August but fully recognised the concerns in the community following that period. Graham said that he is happy to answer any questions from the meeting. Andy Williamson asked if there is a review of firearms licensing laws planned. Graham said that this would be part of the Police Independent Review Commission Report (PIRC) of the events of August, and he was confident that no stone would be left unturned during the inquiry, and this would include the relationship between firearms licensing and mental health issues. Rob Ware added that Ian Blackford MP has tabled a request to the Scottish Affairs Committee at the UK parliament to initiate an [Inquiry](https://committees.parliament.uk/work/6915/firearms-licensing-regulations-in-scotland/) into firearms licensing laws in Scotland and this has now been convened and all parties are invited to share their views. Graham added that MPs are there to support communities and outlined the process for individuals to apply for a firearms licence which is very rigorous and comprehensive. Andy Williams added that the initial process is key rather than the five-year review. GPs are consulted on most occasions. Rob Ware added that there appears to be a greater focus on mental health in the firearms sector and noted that the Scottish Association for Country Sports, a membership organisation, had recently published blog posts on their website and referred to a [leaflet](https://www.sacs.org.uk/s/Firearms-and-Mental-Health-leaflet-2022-DIGITAL-8-April-2022.pdf) produced by the Scottish Firearms Licensing Practitioners Group. Graham explained the two forms of firearms and shotgun licences which is a complicated process.

Rob asked Sgt Cameron about scams and concerns of the increasing road accidents in Scotland. Graham said that new area Inspector Ross McCartney is keen to engage with communities via community councils. Scams should still be reported but there have also been some real concerns about road users and particularly the increase in motorhomes. Duncan MacInnes asked if there were any statistics about motorhome accidents this year, but Graham said in his experience this year accidents were largely being caused by British drivers driving too fast.

Hans Petrie raised the issue of a perceived growth in cyclists visiting the island this year and expressed concerns that facilities for safe cycling are limited, compared with, for example, the Netherlands. He felt that there are many places where cyclists do not have many places for dedicated lanes or areas where they can pull over if large vehicles are close. Rob added about the development of the Skye Cycle Network and the Safe Roads to School initiatives. The former was an agenda item tonight. Tricia Petrie asked Sgt Cameron about police numbers on Skye who advised that this evening there are four officers covering Skye, Raasay, Lochalsh to Lochcarron, Cluanie and Glenelg, Torridon and Applecross. The lowest number could be two officers. He added that police numbers are being included in the PIRC so that will ensure numbers are relevant to the communities that are served. Andy Williams added that it is a huge challenge considering the geography covered, but if numbers are increased to say 20 then that could be overkill because of the reduced crime and incidents in such rural areas. Graham added that it wasn’t just crime but workload in missing persons and mountain rescue to name but two.

The chair thanked Sgt Cameron for his attendance and that this had been a very useful session. Graham responded by saying ‘he looked forward to the tea and biscuits at the end.’

*Note: for ease of reference the SCC secretary had prepared updates for most of the agenda items, and these are reprinted here together with any points for each item raised during the meeting*

**Agenda Item 5 Roads**

HC now have a full complement of operatives and are currently involved in the following areas:

Full restoration of the road service on the A851 north of Kinloch Farm is ongoing. Introduction of two No Entry signs at the north end of Armadale Pier Car Park. Extending the footway from Armadale Stores to Pier Road by acquisition of land from Nigel Grounds Gallery.

White-lining now underway for junctions on the Sleat Road including Torabhaig Distillery and Armadale/Ardvasar junctions.

Hot patching and improvements to drainage ditches continue as and when resources available.

Awaiting update from HC and PS in respect of extending the 40mph zone to a point close to Ostaig House.

SCC has written to HC Bereavement Services regarding the state of the grounds around Sleat War Memorial. CDLT had committed to providing stock fencing but no updates. HC asked to cut grass etc or if allowed the community could propose a working group for maintenance.

Good news for EV owners. After five years of chasing the HC, SSE, and landowner the EV charger at Achnasheen is now operational.

What is the Skye Cycle Network? The Skye Cycle Network (SCN) is a project established under the auspices of Skye Connect to better connect communities through active travel routes. There is also an aspiration to link the key access points to Skye at Armadale, Uig and the Skye Bridge with strategic active travel routes. The Skye Bridge to Uig route is already identified as part of an aspirational NCN route 79 from Invergarry to Uig and then on to link to the Hebridean Way on the Western Isles. The consultant team have surveyed these routes to determine the feasibility of making them into walking, wheeling, cycling paths.

Hans Petrie expressed concern that as a new EV user he is disappointed that some charge points locally such as An Crubh. He had contacted Charge Point Scotland who said it wasn’t their problem. He said that he had spoken to staff there and no progress has been made. The chair agreed that more chargers were needed.

**Item 6 Health Care**

Some minor changes in personnel at Sleat Surgery but no planned changes in service provision

Covid booster/flu jabs programme at this link.

<https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/COVID19/Pages/Vaccination-West.aspx>

If members of the public have issued with service provision in Sleat then they should contact SCC and we will try to help.

**Item 7 Ferries and Public Transport**

Coruisk arrived back in Skye in July and commenced operations on the 18th. Thank you to all those who came down to the pier to welcome the vessel home. Thanks to Decker Forrest, Sam Devries and Seaonaidh Forrest for their piping. Ops going well so far.

Winter timetables for Mallaig-Armadale now published bookings open on 13th October. Similar schedules as in previous winters, minor changes to times and no additional March programme. This is due to constraints on the winter refit programme.

Big changes for the Uig Harbour development. Revised dates as below.

**Monday 16th January 2023 until 13th March 2023**

**Monday 30th October 2023 until 11th December 2023**

Summer 23 timetables will be consulted on in November with key ferry groups, with likely t/t launch and bookings from late January 23

Further delays to the two Fergusons vessels. 801 April-May 2023 earliest, 802 1st Qtr 2024

Publication this week of CalMac’s Socio-Economic Report of CalMac’s west coast ferry services

Sleat Road End ferry information gantry sign is due to be replaced this autumn, years late.

CalMac’s new reservations and ticketing system due October has now been delayed to early 2023.

**Item 8 Tourism/Short Term Lets/Non-Domestic Rates**

There is palpable concern for the Scottish tourism industry with energy prices rising, a shortage of hospitality staff, licensing fees and no sign of a reduction in VAT for hospitality sector.

Short Term Let Licence applications opened 1st October, with existing operators required to apply 31st March. HC has the online form, documentation required and declarations. Fees, as example, or three years for a let for 5 people £470. Full info at

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20021/short_term_lets/1021/short_term_lets_licensing>

Non-domestic rates applications for the 3 years from April 2023 still being processed. We have asked for an update from Scottish Assessors

This has been a very divisive issue with the industry bodies noting this is not the time to introduce such a scheme when the industry is still recovering from the pandemic.

Scottish Government still considering the introduction of a tourism tax also known as the Transient Visitor Levy.

**Item 9 Planning inc. Planning Control Areas**

19 Turbine Wind Farm proposed for FEI land at Upper Breakish by Lomond Energy and Swedish company Arise. It is planned that 3 public meetings will take place this autumn, one for Sleat at An Crubh. It has been suggested that due grid upgrades across Skye it may not be until 2028 before this scheme is operational. Not in SCC boundary but community benefits will be discussed.

An Crùbh being on the 9th, 2pm to 7pm.

No major planning applications of note.

There have been no further discussions, to our knowledge, about a Planning Control Area for Skye

No decisions on FEI Car Park and Clay Pigeon ground

**Item 10 An Crubh update**

From Sheila Dick, Chair CDI

‘Our campervan project is expected to go ahead but there have been delays because of increased costs. We are currently working on that. It is disappointing as we had hoped to have the spaces in place before this summer but it is evident that it will be well after that. Our funders appear to be supportive.

CDI is working on Paths for All in the hope that eventually we will have a footpath from Camuscross to An Crubh. The Nature Restoration funding has allowed us to erect deer fencing around the property and to begin planting - many trees so far and fruit trees to come once the deer grid is in. We put in a pedestrian gate at the far end of the property to connect in due course with the old road as part of the pathway plan to Camuscross. We were hoping to have our campervan contractor install the deer grid which we have so there is a wee delay with that.

There are new thermal blinds installed throughout the An Crubh building as part of the drive for improved building efficiency.’

**Item 10 SMO, Housing and School**

**Kilbeg Village Phase 2 Housing**- Dr Donnie Munro. I am very happy to inform you that work will be starting on -site imminently and will be the subject of a detailed Press Release very shortly. The site was visited by the Cabinet Sec for Education and Skills, and, as a former Housing Consultant and Housing Policy Adviser, she took a special interest in the plans for Kilbeg and commended us on initiating such an important and exciting initiative and for having put together an innovative and creative delivery partnership.

**Motorhome Service Point**- happy to report that work on the Campervan Service Point will begin at the same time as the housing

**Fas building** – we have now just taken receipts of the Report from Currie and Brown our external consultants and from Structural Engineers HGA and WSP and we are now interrogating the very detailed findings of the Report(300+ pages in all) and once we are satisfied with the detail and recommendations we will then be entering into discussions with our various Stakeholder/ Funding Bodies in order to make progress towards making all the necessary repairs which will allow for the recommissioning of the building as soon as possible  This is a key major priority for us currently.

**Sports Centre facilities**- now that Kilbeg is underway we will be turning our attention once more to our joint proposal with SCT for the development of this important resource for SMO Staff, Students and the local community.

**New SMO Library** this is at an early stage of consideration which will replace the existing library at the College.

**Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association**

‘We are still on course for a January 2023 completion at the Garden Site, Armadale- all things being equal and the issues we have been experiencing on other sites with power meters being installed resolved.

Our Housing Services Manager considers applications for tenancies via the Highland Housing Register about six weeks prior to hand over.  My biggest frustration is people in housing need not applying though, so if you were to assist by emphasising this on your website and face book, I would be extremely grateful.’

**Item 11 Climate Change/Environment**

Hans Petrie, as an immediate nearby homeowner raised the issue of the human waste system at the Stables, Armadale Castle and Gardens. This had been brought to the attention of CDLT around 5 years ago and from that time remedial works had been undertaken but the problems of a fractured pipe had continued. In July Mr Petrie and his wife met with the CEO Alex Stoddart to understand the current issues and potential options for resolution. Mr Petrie understood that regular inspections of the facility take place and the septic tank is emptied as appropriate and has ongoing concerns about the coastline in the vicinity. He added that if the Stables reopened in 2023 that increased footfall from a food and beverage facility would be a significant impact on the current system. Mr and Mrs Petrie have spoken to representatives of SEPA several times. Mrs Petrie asked if Sleat Community Council could progress this with the Trust given the extended period of the issue. Tim Shone said that he believed that the COVID pandemic had delayed the permanent solution and at the Petries’ request the community Council would write to the Trust for an update. This was agreed unanimously by members of the public present.

Duncan MacInnes advised that the yellow market buoy marking the outflow from SMO has now been detached from its mooring and has been washed up on a nearby beach.

**Item 11 Community Resilience-Ludwig Appeltans**

It had been hoped that Mr Appeltans would be able to follow up on his intention at the June meeting that he looked at community resilience for Sleat which he believed was important for the area.

Andy Williamson said that he thought this was an important thing for the community to consider.

With ever changing weather patterns, energy resilience and local issues the community needs to respond to such changes and added that where he used to live there is a ‘civil defence’ group. A short discussion followed between those present and it was recognised that there are already processes in place but key local stakeholders such as SCC and SCT need to collaborate more effectively in such circumstances. All local authorities have Resilience Plans and Sgt Cameron offered to send what he had from Highland Council.

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/72/resilience>

<https://www.highlandtsi.org.uk/>

Flora Maclean advised that there are only believed to be two First Responders in Sleat that being an example of a lack of a coordinated approach to incident. Graham Cameron said although there is nothing formal laid down officers at Police Scotland will help community councils as required. It would take a lot of effort to get it off the ground. Duncan MacInnes said that there is much already in place, such as recent trees down, shopping delivery and the key thing is letting people know.

Andy Williams said he would prepare a briefing to kick start this and Tim Shone would speak to Ludwig. Polly MacInnes raised the issue of the single water supply from Scottish Water. Rob outlined the history of dialogue with the company that was revisited in 2021 following the pandemic. Flora added that there are two pumps serving Tarskavaig and Stonefield and if there is a power loss water supply is lost. This is a key issue in respect of community resilience.

Andy will produce that paper and forward it for later discussion. Tricia Petrie added that water conservation is key in rural communities. Rob added that there is a useful page on Scottish Water’s website including a ‘how much water do you use’ calculator.

<https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Your-Home/Save-Water>

**Item 12 Community Council Elections 2023**

Rob reminded that the term of office for this Community Council will end in autumn 2023. In Scotland the term is four years with this current council which was formed in January 2020. Up to 8 full members are permitted for this area with options for youth members and co-opted associate members. Elections take place in the October and this community council would like to encourage more and younger people to stand for office as it is likely that existing members may wish to stand down at that time and ideally there needs to be a handover period given the amount of information held including websites, social media, agendas, minutes and countless documents on record.

A campaign will begin in 2023 to attract potential members for the new term and if residents might wish to consider becoming a community council the Highland Council Scheme of Establishment can be found at this link.

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4456/scheme_of_establishment_for_community_councils.pdf>

**Item 13 AOCB**

Andy Williamson wished to update on the Fas Mor facility that has had to be relocated due to the closure of the SMO Fas building for some time. Significant efforts are being made to return the building for reuse but this will take some time, probably years, given the complexity of the structural work and gaining funding. Thanks to Highland Council a new venue was achieved for the Gaelic early years school at the vacant portakabins at the primary school which were to be removed. Remedial works are being undertaken and hopefully will be ready after the October holidays. A permanent solution does need to be found, SMO and HC are keen to support but there are a number of issues including acquisition of land. Andy and the FAS board are keen to engage with key stakeholders including SCT, SCC, SMO, CDLT and others so that a permanent location can be found for this hugely important community asset.

David Ashford raised that some road signs have been left in a ditch in Camuscross. Rob agreed to report this to the Council’s roads team.

Kate Duffus raised issues about the amount of Japanese Knotweed on the verges between the Ord Road end and the Teangue turnoff, probably around 10 major plants. Rob will contact the Council which has a responsibility for three metres in from the carriageway to ascertain an update. Duncan MacInnes that SCTEAG and CDLT have undertaken significant works already.

**Date of Next Meeting**

There will be a meeting of Sleat Community Council on Tuesday 8th November at 1930 in Tarskavaig Communities Hall.