**COMHAIRLE CHOIMHEARSNACHD SHLEITE**

**SLEAT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Minutes of a Meeting of Sleat Community Council held at Tarskavaig Hall 12th September 2023

Present:

Rob Ware

Tim Shone

Flora Maclean

Andy Williamson

Gordon Matheson

Apologies: Kate Duffus

**In Attendance:** Kathryn Rawlinson, John Weir, Vivian Murphy, Pam Jones, Kevin and Janni Williams, Paddy MacKay, Janet MacDonald, Roddy Murray and Gary Mahon.

**Welcome/Declaration of Interests/Recording of the Meeting**

The chair Tim Shone welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the members of the community council. He added that the meeting will be recorded for the purpose of minute taking and will be destroyed afterwards. There were no declarations of interest.

**Item 1 Minutes arising from the June Meeting**

There were no items arising not covered in tonight’s agenda. Flora MacLean said that the HC grant is £521.33. Several donations have been made including the Broadford Youth Club tour to Spain in October. Donations were also made in 2022 to the families affected by events that August.

**Item 2 Sleat Community Council Elections**

Tim Shone advised that this will be the final meeting of the 2020-23 term of office for the community council. A process to form a new council has already begun which is permitted 8 full members. Members of the public can self-nominate to stand in a simple process available on the HC website but do have the opportunity to withdraw within 7 days. If 8 or less candidates are accepted, then a new council can be established but less than 4 will result in no council. If more than 8 names are proposed a postal ballot will take place in November. Any new councils will serve from January 2024. Rob Ware added that it would be preferable if more than 8 people applied which would require a postal ballot and urged residents to apply. The SCC is required to hold a minimum of 6 meetings per year plus an AGM. For those attending Rob outlined what the role of a community council is. Further information please see [www.highland.gov.uk/ccelections](http://www.highland.gov.uk/ccelections) Rob recalled briefly the difficulties experienced by the presence of a former councillor. Rob encouraged residents to consider becoming a councillor with a new term due to commence in January 2024. There was a short discussion about the role of the aligned member from the Highland Council and how disappointing the lack of support from that individual had been. Flora confirmed that she will not be standing again for the SCC and Rob said that he plans to stand again. Gordon Matheson is leaving the area and so will leave SCC at this meeting. Flora and Gordon were thanked for their service. Rob outlined that there is significant work ahead including Local Place Plans. Tim indicated that he would stand again, and Andy said the same. There was a discussion about roles and responsibilities and what the scope of a community council in Highland. He spoke briefly about the four elected members and their own roles and scope of coverage.

**Item 3 Roads and Planning**

Rob updated on proposals to consider an application for funds to refurbish of the Ardvasar play area. He is also chasing up the so-called ‘Quiet Route’ from Ardvasar to Tormore, an initiative from HITRANS. Work is still planned for the Kinloch Farm stretch and the extension of the pavement at the Armadale junction. Council resources are still determined by funding and staff availability and the situation is getting worse. Pam Jones reminded of the need to report road faults through the Highland Council. Gordon expressed major concern at the delay on getting the pavement done at Armadale, especially as it is ‘Safe Routes to School’ project. (This was eventually completed in March 2024, more than two years after approval to do the work was given).

Changes have been requested for amendments for the 20mph flashing signs to allow for after school classes at Fas Mor. There have been speed cameras deployed recently at the school. ‘You have been warned!’

There have been a few planning applications for holiday let accommodation and Rob outlined the significant issues of the planning application at Upper Teangue with a house, pods and extension of two unauthorised caravans. This is ongoing and in Rob’s view quite the most controversial planning application he has ever see for a domestic site.

**Item 4 Skye Windfarm Developments**

Rob briefly updated on the latest situation in respect of wind farm developments which includes surveys being done at the CDLT estate where a company has engaged with the Trust with to seek options for a wind farm in Sleat. This is all tied up with the Skye Reinforcement Project from SSEN which is very controversial. In respect of the Sleat project there has been no consultation with either the Community Trust or Community Council. Andy Williamson said that he felt that currently SCC does not have a position on the Sleat proposals and what community options may be available. The wider issue needs to be looked at collectively island-wide and not separately. Rob Ware read out the statements issued by Sleat Community Council in July following the press release on behalf of CDLT, Galileo Energy and crofting representatives. Gordon Matheson spoke about community windfarms in Lewis and the Western Isles. It is also believed that the WHFP has the view that a united approach for the Skye projects, that is a clear strategy and wider community benefit. Andy said that there should be collaboration with all other community councils in Skye.

The new session of the SCC will include involvement about windfarms and it will be imperative that any position statement must be impartial when commenting on topics such as this.

**Item 5 Tourism and CalMac Ferries**

Rob spoke about the current consultation on Transient Visitor Levy which will be very contentious but at present motorhomes are planned to be exempt. The planned legislation will mean the tax is applicable to all visitors even those who are resident in Scotland. SkyeConnect has stated that such funds raised in Skye should stay in Skye and that the City Region Deal. All Short Term Licences need to be submitted by 1st October.

CalMac winter timetable is published this week. Uig harbour will be closed in the autumn. No update on the new CalMac vessels from Fergusons. CalMac are consulting for a new ‘Route Prioritisation Framework’ which is a masterplan for when there is significant disruption on the network caused by breakdowns and the winter overhaul programme. Two routes have been designated low priority on the matrix Ardrossan-Campbeltown and Mallaig-Armadale due to their having fixed links, i.e. a road and a bridge. Information on SCC website. There is a second phase of development in the parking area at Armadale which will commence on 8th January 2024 and be completed by end of February. There will be a new bus shelter for the stance and an area of around 30m to make an oversize vehicle facility with five bays. Bins and the bottle banks will be placed in that area as well.

**Item 6 Local Place Plans/Development Plans/Democracy Matters 2**

It was agreed that discussion on these topics would be delayed until the new community council takes office.

Gordon advised that Highland Council have declined an application for funding resources to undertake Local Place Plan work by Sleat Community Trust as the two trust development managers have had their own funding cut. As a result, both employees are leaving the Trust’s employment. The work required will be reviewed when a new community council is formed in collaboration with the Trust. As it stands it will have to be undertaken by volunteers. Rob explained the rationale behind community aspirations for Local Place Plans and Andy Williamson expanded on that as part of the Development Plan process and requires whole community engagement and has a deadline of September 2024.

**AOCB**

The chair paid tribute to Gordon Matheson for his significant contribution to the SCC since he was co-opted in 2022 and wished him and his family all the very best for his new life and job in Lewis. He described Gordon as a ‘breath of fresh air’ who came to the rescue in our hour of need, has given wise counsel and supported the community at difficult times.

Tim said that Flora has been a member of the Sleat Community Council for over 37 years and will be standing down at this meeting. She has undertaken all the office bearer roles across those years including chair, secretary and for many years treasure. He added that she has been a tremendous supporter of the community council and the wider community and will be missed by all. She has all done this with a smile and thanked her for everything she has done in the role. Rob thanked all those who have come to the meetings this term and we look forward to new community council being formed and try to get more residents and estate representatives to attend. He also thanked Flora for all her work for the community council for so many years.

**Public Discussion**

Kevin Williams asked about the footpath from Mill Bridge up to Ferrindonald that is consistently overgrown. Gordon added that when the Sleat road was widened a new experimental ditch alongside the footway was added and had stones added. But because of lack of regular maintenance parts of the footway are reduced in width by almost 2/3. Rob will speak again to Donnie MacLeod of HC. Mr Williams asked how far the public road goes to at Armadale Pier. Rob explained that it goes to the beginning of the pier walkway and that CMAL and Highland Council own a proportion of the public car park area. Kevin added some concerns about new street furniture under phase 1 of the project which included the new bus stance, speed humps etc. Rob would raise any concerns with the CMAL project team. Gary Mahon said that this is a work in progress and no future proofing and space is very limited at the Armadale site.

The next meeting will be held if a new community council is formed in 2024.

The meeting closed at 2110.