**COMHAIRLE CHOIMHEARSNACHD SHLEITE**

**SLEAT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Minutes of a Meeting of Sleat Community Council held at Sleat Free Church Hall 11th January 2023

Present:

Rob Ware

Tim Shone

Veana Cleland

Flora Maclean

Kate Duffus

Gordon Matheson

Andy Williamson

Apologies: Duncan MacInnes, Polly MacInnes, Paddy MacKay

**In Attendance:**

Ludwig Appeltans (part), Sgt Neil Graham-Police Scotland, John Duncan MacInnes, Debbie and Gavin Smith, Kathryn Rawlinson

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

Tim Shone welcomed everybody to the meeting, our second time at the Free Church of Sleat and reminded that the meeting is being recorded for the purpose of minute taking and this will be destroyed after adoption of these minutes. The chair asked Ludwig Appeltans if he was recording the meeting and he affirmed that he was not. He was reminded that both video and audio recording and broadcasting of the meeting both inside and outside of the building is expressly forbidden.

There were no declarations of interest.

**Item 1 Mr Appeltans**

Following the email below sent to Mr Appeltans by the Chair on 11th January he was invited to make a statement at the meeting tonight.

*‘Dear Ludwig,*

*You should now be aware that the Scheme of Establishment states that if a community councillor does not attend a meeting for six consecutive months, then he WILL be disqualified. No vote is required. You are not a community councillor.*

*However, if a majority of the remaining councillors believe that the reason for non-attendance is 'reasonable in all the circumstances' then the disqualification may be rescinded. All the other members have indicated by email that they do not consider the reason you gave as reasonable.*

*Please prepare a statement that you can read out at the meeting tonight itemising any other reasons for not attending the last three meetings. This should not take longer than the 8 minutes you requested.*

*There will be no filming or recording of the meeting, inside the church or outside, by anyone other than the secretary, and this only for the purpose of accurate minutes.’*

*Regards, Tim Shone.*

Andy Williamson reminded that under the Copyright, Design and Patents Act, Mr Appeltans was advised that he does not have permission to record, broadcast or repeat anything that is said in this meeting without prior written permission and added that ‘if you do you will be in breach of the Act’.

Tim Shone outlined the reasons for offering Mr Appeltans to speak at the meeting, on the basis he had not attended a Sleat Community Council meeting for a period of more than six consecutive months as annotated in the email above.

The chair invited Mr Appeltans to speak but asked that he adhere solely to the issues in relation to his absence from meetings. Mr Appeltans asked if a ‘temporary and less impartial’ person could chair this part of the meeting. It was agreed that Andy Williamson would take that role.

Mr Appeltans outlined his views to the meeting, with occasional interaction with Mr Williamson, and prior to the ending of the session Mr Williamson advised that, in his view, the decision to consider a review of the disqualification was a matter for the existing four councillors and not those that have just been co-opted.

He asked each member if they believed Mr Appeltans’ reasons, given just now, for his absence were 'reasonable in all the circumstances'. All four indicated the reasons were not reasonable, and not acceptable.

Andy Williamson closed this part of the meeting and handed over to Tim Shone.

**Item 2 Matters arising from the meeting of 6th December**

The secretary had distributed copies of the minutes of that meeting.

For the benefit of the new residents of Capisdale present Rob outlined the key points of the SSEN webinar that he attended in November about the Rota Load Disconnection which was raised as an agenda item at the December meeting. The minutes contained several links for general information about potential planned power cuts.

**Item 3 Police Scotland-Sgt Neil Graham.**

Tim thanked Sgt Graham for attending and hoped that regular community engagements such as this can continue with Police Scotland whenever operational duties permit.

Sgt Graham briefed on several key local issues as well as the wider concerns of rural police numbers. Following the road traffic fatality in March there has been a significant increase in the deployment of officers conducting speed checks across the island’s roads particularly at weekends. He added that in the aftermath of that accident officers were surprised at the amount of excess speeding on the A851 Sleat road. The force is endeavouring to deploy a speed camera van, but limited resources mean it is very infrequent that operations can be undertaken on Skye. Officers are also undertaking regular visits to local schools to highlight the concerns of unsafe online activity as well as issues such as ‘sexting’ and scams aimed at young people. Local police commanders have initiated a new rural crime unit, targeting such crimes as oil theft and agricultural fuels. It is believed that there have been no reports of domestic oil theft on Skye with the problem more prevalent in locations such as Caithness and Sutherland. Sgt Graham spoke about police numbers across the region saying that tonight that it is he and two other officers to cover Skye/Raasay, Lochalsh, Glenelg, down to Clunie, Wester Ross to Applecross, Shieldaig and Torridon, an area of over 1,600 sq miles. Recruitment of new officers remains a priority, but housing issues remain a difficulty in attracting officers to work in the area. There is a new ‘Islands Allowance’ for officers but, for example, this does not apply to colleague officers in Kyle of Lochalsh. The control centre for this area is Dundee and the back-up for officers is Inverness and Fort William. There are currently 3 vacancies in Kyle and 2 in Portree and some temporary placements can be in place, but these are often recalled to their original locations at the end of that term. Sgt Graham said that the resources involved in abuse investigation,mental health issues and online activity are time-consuming and complex.

Rob Ware asked about crime trends based on the earlier visits by officers to community council meetings. Sgt Graham said that mental health issues is the biggest area of concern in the area as against traditional ‘crime’. There are drug issues in Broadford and some anti-social behaviour but in the aftermath of the events in Sleat and Dornie there was a big spike in enquiries in respect of mental health which requires significant resources. Rob asked about the police resources being required to conduct fit and proper person checks for the Short Term Lets Licence for holiday accommodation and felt that this would add further demand to an already stretched police service.

##### Gordon Matheson added that he had heard from Kate Forbes’ office that Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care had relayed a message asking what support areas in Skye and Lochalsh might need following the events in August. Gordon asked Sgt Graham what *he* would want and he replied simply more officers, using the example of two officers on shift at any one time. An example was recently there was no 4 x 4 on Skye to ferry officers to a rescue and had to ask the coastguard to help. John Duncan MacInnes asked if there is a recruitment programme for special constables, this is being considered.

Sgt Graham said that if any local people have any issues in respect of their own safety, they should contact 101. He reminded of Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 in respect of online threats in any form which states:

Under s. 127(2)(c) CA 2003, **a person may be guilty of an offence by persistently making use of a public communications network for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another person**.

Tim thanked Sgt Graham again for his contribution to the meeting which was ‘informative and entertaining’.

**Item 4 Roads and Planning**

Rob updated on the approval of the 40mph extension at SMO. Temporary Road Surface have now installed at Kinloch Farm, but one member has already had two broken windscreens. All potholes and carriageway issues can be reported online at the HHC website.

Planning: the unauthorised development at Teangue is still to be resolved and there is no further of the status of the wastewater treatment works at Armadale Castle and Gardens and its replacement.

The number of planning applications in Sleat has slowed significantly since the autumn, just two routine applications this month.

**Item 6 ‘Community Resilience for Sleat’**

This is a topic that was raised last summer and was followed by a draft paper for a community resilience group in Sleat prepared by Andy Williamson for what it actually might mean for our area. Gordon Matheson, Andy Williamson and Paddy MacKay had all expressed moving this forward. There was a short discussion about how to make this happen and Gordon himself had asked Sleat Community Trust for their support. Other stakeholders could include CDLT and SMO. The concept can now be taken forward and members of the Community Council wholly supported this new initiative.

**Item 7 Aquaculture Well Boats-Noise and Light Pollution**

This follows a ‘complaint’ by a local resident in Duisdale of noise and light from well-boats moored up close to the Sleat coast. Rob is taking this up with Highland Council’s Environmental Health team and has an online call next week. This is the second known case of residents’ concerns.

**Item 8 Public Transport and Ferries**

CMAL/HC/CALMAC are finalising plans for the traffic management at the Pier. CFL hoping that the passenger gangplank for Coruisk will be reconfigured by March 31st. Work starting on Sleat Rd and Ferry Gantry signs this month. CFL timetables and bookings by 30th Jan for services 31/3 to 4/6. Rest of summer TBA (due Uig changes). Uig Harbour closed from next Mon 16th Jan

**Item 9 NHSH and Social Care**

NHSH have issued SCC with an update on Broadford Hospital.

We are still working on 12 - 14 beds max depending on staffing and acuity of the patients due to staffing availability.  We seldom breach in so far as waiting time in ED but people can be waiting for up to 4 hours depending on how busy ED is and depending on whether any emergencies come in which will push back people with less urgent conditions. We strongly advise everyone to access ED (unless via ambulance) through NHS 24.  That way you will be triaged and given an approximate time to attend which hopefully would save any long waits although that cannot be guaranteed. Please continue to put out the message re not just turning up it does help overall.   Newsletter should be out next week.

Gordon asked about the communications channels from NHS24 to the hospital after a patient’s telephone triage. Rob will speak to the District Manager.

**Item 10 AOCB**

Scot Gov have delayed by six months to 30th Sep applications for short-term lets. New rateable values on non-domestic properties eff 1/4/23. Owners can appeal this by 15/3. Scot Gov held a working group following a study of the Small Business Bonus Scheme, no changes planned at this time.

Lucky2BHERE Skye Activities Leaflets. Copies in Armadale Stores and An Crubh. PDF copies available on request and on our FB page.

**Item 12 Public Discussion**

Gordon Matheson briefed on his recent call from MSPs about what would be required in terms of support following the August events. Andy Williamson outlined significant concerns in respect of Fas Mor, the Gaelic children’s nursery, and its importance to the community. Rob asked the newly arrived residents of the Capisdale homes and Kathryn Rawlinson was keen to see a community resilience group and added how welcomed they have been made here, echoed by Kate Duffus as well.

Flora MacLean added that in her opinion Tim Shone is an excellent chair of Sleat Community and Rob Ware has been a very good secretary.

The meeting closed at 2130.

**Item 13 DONM** 7th February 2023 at Sleat Free Church Hall 1930