**COMHAIRLE CHOIMHEARSNACHD SHLEITE**

**SLEAT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Minutes of the inaugural Meeting of Sleat Community Council held at Ardvasar Hall 4th April 2024

Present:

Rob Ware

Tim Shone

Andy Williamson

Mairead MacDougall

Hans Petri

Duncan MacInnes

Kate Duffus

Janet MacDonald

Councillor Ruraidh Stewart-ex officio member

**In Attendance:** John Weir, Di and Ruud van Ruitenbeek, Paddy and Mairi Mackay, Tricia Petri-Clark, Jonathan MacDonald, Peter and Sheena Roberts, Veronica Barrington, Fiona Byrne-Sutton, Helen Brown and David Bishop.

Councillor Stewart welcomed everybody to this inaugural meeting of the Sleat Community Council and expressed his thanks to the Highland Council elections team for conducting the recent election and for those candidates who stood to represent the community. He congratulated those eight members who have been elected.

Prior to the election of office bearers Councillor Stewart briefly outlined the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils in Scotland.[[1]](#footnote-1) The scheme describes the role of community councils and their representation of the local community. Ex-officio members are Elected Members, MSPs and MPs.

Councillor Stewart concluded this part of the meeting by calling on new members to elect officer bearers for the coming four-year term of office.

Chairman: Andy Williamson proposed by Tim Shone seconded by Mairead MacDougall

Vice Chair: Janet MacDonald proposed by Duncan MacInnes and seconded by Rob Ware

Secretary: Rob Ware proposed by Andy Williamson and seconded by Mairead MacDougall

Treasurer: Duncan MacInnes proposed by Mairead MacDougall and seconded by Rob Ware

Councillor Stewart congratulated the office bearers on their election and handed over to Andy Williamson who would now chair the rest of the meeting.

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

The chair Andy Williamson welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the new members of the community council. He thanked Councillor Stewart for chairing the initial session and thanked Tim Shone for his chairmanship of the former SCC and as there had been a six-month period of abeyance there was much work to do in the coming 3/12 years of office. Andy said that this is a community council, and its job is to listen to the community and represent its views. He is always open to hearing views and if residents wished to raise an issue who might prefer to engage offline then this would be welcomed. He added that community council meetings are held in public but are **not** public meetings.

Members introduced themselves and there were no declarations of interest.

**Item 1 Minutes arising from the September 2023 Meeting**

The secretary, Rob Ware said that if anyone wished to read the minutes of the last meeting on 12th September these could be seen on the SCC website sleatcommunitycouncil.org.uk.[[2]](#footnote-2) Much of that meeting discussed the forthcoming community council election and Rob thanked Gordon Matheson and Flora Maclean for their service to the community with Flora having served in a number of roles for more than 36 years. Rob added that members were saddened to hear of the sudden passing of Roddy Murray, long time chair of SCC and a much-respected person by all who knew him. We send our condolences to Roddy’s family, friends, and many colleagues.

There were no other issues arising from the meeting and the minutes were approved by Andy Williamson and seconded by Tim Shone.

**Item 2 Local Place Plan.**

**Andy Williamson:** The Local Place Plan is a result of the Planning Act (Scotland) 2019. It gives communities the right to develop a plan about the place that they live to help guide future planning decisions. The formal role of this document is entirely about planning but, in reality, it’s an opportunity to create an aspirational document about what we want our community to look like. This is an opportunity for us to look at how we want to see Sleat developing in the next five to 10 years - our aspirations for housing, jobs, the environment, young people and for public services. A Local Place Plan can serve as a blueprint for the community.

The plan has to be submitted to Council by the end of September, which is a very tight deadline. I’m proposing we develop a plan through an inclusive, participatory approach, we can't just put out a survey and the Act insists that the plan is community generated, comes from the heart of the community through a number of events we hold with communities and key stakeholders.

Tonight we agreement from the new Community Council that they are happy to continue with that approach and for us to develop the LPP.

Duncan MacInnes asked of how the discussions of a LPP had come about. Andy said that initially the work was commenced by Sleat Community Trust in association with SCC but as funding was pulled for the two Development Officer roles, the work ceased. Because of this, there is no funding but Andy said that he is willing to take the lead on the LPP.

Rob advised that Andy had produced a briefing paper on LPPs that has been circulated. Highland Council has a major suite of website pages of LPPs.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Duncan MacInnes said that all eight members should support this as well as resources from SCT. Members unanimously agreed that SCC will support this. Andy said we do need volunteers to move this forward. John Weir noted that CDLT have published the recent results of the recent community needs survey, which Andy noted were helpful to the process.

*Local Place Plan Action Points*

* Start planning process for this (AW)
* Report back to SCT (AW)
* Register intent with HC (AW)
* Start building connections with other local orgs (All)

**Item 3 Update from SMO**

We regret that Dr Gillian Munro has been unable to attend tonight as originally planned due to staff holidays but has committed to provide a written report for the next meeting in May or ask a senior colleague to attend on her behalf.

**Item 4 The Community Council in the community**

Members had agreed in a pre-meeting that several aspects of community engagement should be revisited. Mairead MacDougall will lead on Youth Members where up to two 16-18 year-olds could join the SCC. There was a short discussion on the process and how this could be achieved. This must be done in association with High Life Highland and Mairead will contact Community Support Manager Willie MacKinnon in the first instance. Young members could help in developing the LPP. Most youth club activity in Sleat is in Broadford. Kate Duffus offered to support on this.

*Youth members Action Points*

* Connect with HC youth advisors and Àrd-sgoil (MM)
* Consider ways for engaging with young people in the community (including youth members) (MM, KD)

Community engagement. Rob expressed concern that there are significant numbers of residents in Sleat that do not use social media or use email or websites. Unlike other community organisations and groups, SCC has never access to a database of residents thereby further restricting the dissemination of local information. It has been a real challenge for former community councils to encourage residents and representatives of businesses and organisations to attend meetings. It is a two-way process and although a community council is the first tier of local democracy everything is done to support the community. There was a short discussion among members on how communications could be improved. Duncan MacInnes said that he felt that an SCC database would not work, the SCT list was around 360 names. He added that social media was the way to go and the latest ‘Sleat and everything Sleat’ FB page now has over 500 followers in 4 months. Duncan reiterated that there are other ways than to collect email addresses. Andy Williams spoke of his ‘day job’ and a recent project to look at parliaments worldwide and the methods they use for publishing information. The vast majority use their websites and social media, but email reporting has seen a big drop off. Rob said that the temporary Sleat Community Forum Facebook page can be taken down. Notice will be given and there will be encouragement for those followers to move to the SES page and SCC page. John Weir spoke about the statistics of the new FB page. Duncan suggested SCC that seek further specialist advice about managing and improving social media which could be a young person. TikTok should not be used.

Duncan spoke about newsletters that he has used over many years such as Mailchimp and was pleased to see CDI publishing its own online and paper copies but to produce an area wide edition for all elements of Sleat would be difficult to manage. SCC could have a slot on the SCT newsletter which is both online and hard copy. Anything submitted for the FP must be topical and could be used again for promoting meetings. Members agreed to reassess these processes.

Duncan asked if we could cost up for 10 new community boards for Sleat. Perhaps an application for the Community Regeneration Fund. Mairead suggested new admins for the SCC Facebook page and Andy Williamson suggested a new communications strategy and having a new positive approach. Members agreed to work on the ideas discussed in this item. Rob will look at options for noticeboards.

*Communication Action Points*

* Put ‘Sleat Community Forum’ Facebook page into abeyance (RW)
  + Encourage followers to ‘like’ SCC page and join ‘Sleat and everything Sleat’ FB page (RW)
* Ongoing - use SCC Facebook page and cross-post to ‘Sleat’ page going forward (RW)
* Develop draft comms policy and circulate (AW)
* Talk to SCT about adding an SCC page to newsletter (DM)
* Look at physical distribution of updates and meeting notices (RW):
  + Armadale Stores & An Crùbh
  + Identify physical noticeboards and get estimates for replacement/repair (RW)

**Item 4 Local issues**

Andy Williamson said that Rob has produced a short overview of current local issues relating to the general items such as roads, planning, public transport etc and so it would not be necessary to go through these in detail. They will be published on the SCC Facebook page, possibly monthly ahead of the next SCC meeting. Andy was concerned that there has been a significant delay to the work of the speed signs (smiley faces) at the school. This has been outstanding since October. It has been escalated to HC many times. ***Update 15/4/2024 work is due to be undertaken w/c 22nd April to complete the project.***

Rob reminded of the recent major road works carried out to resign the 40mph zone from Toravaig down to the Ostaig junction. That project would not support a zebra crossing between the Iain Noble Building and the main campus for a number of reasons. Real concerns were expressed at the footpath from the Ostaig junction despite numerous reports to the HC website. **Update 17/4 work will begin this week.**

Rob briefed the meeting in the key points in the report mentioned above. He reminded that residents could report faults of any type at the Highland Council’s website here.

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/report>

Diane van Ruitenbeek asked what processes are in place for people to contact the community council, for example, are surgeries planned? Andy said that there is an email address for the SCC and messaging via Facebook. People can contact the community council at any time, and for example, there is always a call for people to raise agenda items. Andy suggested a reverse meeting could be held where residents could address the community council directly with questions and concerns. We can look further into this suggestion. Duncan suggested a method of residents asking a question or raising a topic, like a suggestion box located in key places like An Crùbh, Armadale Stores and village halls. Action item: investigate funding to repair local community notice boards.

Hans Petri suggested that the number of road signs in Sleat have too much information on them and this could be a road safety hazard. Rob added there are strict criteria for signage including distances from location and most non-traffic signs require advertising consents from Highland Council for a fee. Veronica Barrington expressed concern at the signage directing traffic to and from the ferry at Armadale. Whilst there is signage present this could be reviewed as part of the junction project for white lining.

*Local Issues Action Points*

* Àird a’ Bhàsair/Ardvasar junction requests to HC (RW)
  + Markings and signage at junction of main road
  + Missing ‘passing place’ sign at start of the road
  + Better signage for ferry
* School signs and 20mph timings (RW)
* Pavement clearing between Drochaid a’ Mhuilinn/Mill Bridge and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (RW)
* Report potholes in Camus Croise/Camuscross (RW)

**Item 5 AOCB**

Tim Shone outlined the recent history of the Sleat Deer Management Group which has been in abeyance since autumn 2021 when the chair left the area. No meetings have taken place since that time. Tim has been the treasurer but there are no other personnel, and it is proposed that the group be closed. There have been six organisational members and around £2,000 in the group’s bank account. He will assess options for closure and distribution to members of the funds or potentially that money could be donated to charity. CDLT and FEI have already stated their intention to manage their own plans for those estates. Sleat Primary School has been suggested as a recipient and Tim will now speak to RBS. The current DMP runs to 250 pages and new legislation will make further changes necessary.

Andy Williamson reminded that past community councils had a representative on the board of Sleat Community Trust. Currently he fulfils this role and members unanimously agreed that Andy continue.

Rob reminded that the two signatories on the Bank of Scotland account are Flora MacLean and the late Roddy Murray. Treasurer Duncan MacInnes will initiate the transfer process and it was agreed that three signatories would be beneficial going forward.

*Administrative Action Pont*

* New bank signatories (DM)

Hans Petri asked if there is any collaboration between community council chairs in Skye and Raasay. Andy Williamson said not but this should be an aspiration to improve communications.

Duncan MacInnes suggested a similar representational role with Camuscross and Duisdale Initiative as there is with SCT.

**Item 6 Public Discussion**

Mairi McKay expressed concern at the lack of a passing place sign just 200m along the Ardvasar Road where casual parking occurs with people camping on the shore woodland. Rob will raise a requisition request with Highland Council.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending this inaugural meeting of the new Sleat Community Council.

The meeting closed at 2050 and the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 7th May at 1930 in An Crùbh.

1. https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4456/scheme\_of\_establishment\_for\_community\_councils.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://web-cdn.org/s/1219/file/meetings/minutes/2023/Approved-Mins-SCC-12092023.docx [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development\_plans/1043/local\_place\_plans [↑](#footnote-ref-3)