

# **Arisaig and District Community Council – Chair’s Report 2021- 2022**

## **Introduction**

This year’s annual report is for the period April 2021 to March 2022. The Community Council had another busy year, with work advanced or completed on various projects. A brief review of the year follows below.

The current Community Councillors are:

Iain Macniven, Chair Gerry MacDonald, Vice Chair Susan Carstairs, Secretary Maureen McColl, Treasurer Anne Baillie Morag Keenan John Clark (co-opted Member) Wendy Kong (co-opted Associate Member) Eleanor Barrie (co-opted Associate Member).

Meetings During the year in question the Community Council held the full complement of one AGM and nine ordinary meetings, there being no meetings scheduled in July, August or December in any year. Given prevailing circumstances, meetings took place wholly or partly online.

## **Finances**

The Community Council’s Financial Report for the year will be presented separately by the Treasurer.

## **Summary of the Year**

There follows a brief note on some of the issues which occupied the Community Council’s time in the year in question.

Covid - This issue dominated much of the Community Council’s time for a good part of the year. Arrangements were set up to ensure that local residents were looked after, a food bank was set up, and the Community Council liaised regularly with the local authority as the issue moved forward. Thanks are due to all the local volunteers and to Ruth Reavell specifically for setting up a comprehensive information pack for use by the volunteers.

## **The Seasonal Pressures issue**

The success of attracting tourists leading to significant pressure on resources such as parking, toilet accommodation, waste disposal, informal “camping” etc – occupied much of the time of the three local Community Councils. The problems had intensified due to the Covid lockdown leading to a large increase in “staycations”, and the anti-social behaviour of a small number of visitors. Nonetheless tourism is a key revenue generator for the community and issues had to be addressed. The three local Community Councils met on a monthly basis to discuss these issues along with local Councillors, the police and other relevant bodies. Kate Forbes MSP was also involved. Various measures have been put in place including: the appointment of officials to monitor issues and give advice/warnings where required; blocking off potential informal parking areas; adding extra signage; acquiring land for the creation of regulated parking spaces etc. Work on this whole issue is ongoing.

## **New Hospital**

Throughout the year I attended monthly meetings regarding the proposed new hospital at Blar Mhor. Services to be transferred to the new hospital include High Dependence, Emergency, Renal/Chemotherapy, Day Case Assessment, Cardiac Rehab, Outpatients etc. Local consultations are taking place and the draft Initial Agreement covering all aspects of the project has been delivered to High Council, whose response is expected soon, following which the application for funding will progress further. GP Provision Throughout the year the Community Council lobbied over the issue of recruitment of doctors for the area as also the Arisaig community’s wish to see the Arisaig surgery brought back into use. This lobbying has borne some fruit with three doctors to be in place from September.

**Fireworks**

The annual fireworks display had to be cancelled due to then current circumstances.

**Gower Trust**

The Community Council continued to liaise with Arisaig Community Trust regarding all applications for funding that were made to the Gower Trust.

**Planning**

There were no significant planning applications during the year which gave the Community Council concern.

**Conclusion**

As ever, I would like to thank the Community Council members for their support and commitment to the work of the Community Council throughout the year. We continue to work closely with our neighbouring Community Councils in Morar and Mallaig, with whom we share numerous issues in common, as is evident from what is said above. We thank our local Highland Council members, Allan Henderson and Denis Rixson for their assistance and advice throughout the year. Many of the Community Councils' achievements this year simply would not have been possible without that support. We wish both well following their decision not to stand for re-election to the Highland Council this year. We also benefit significantly from the support and guidance which we receive from our Ward Manager, Dot Ferguson. Finally, yet again, I must, of course, thank all the members of the public in the area for their input throughout the year. The Community Council is always receptive to new ideas and fresh input.

Iain Macniven Chair, Arisaig and District Community Council, 20th June 2022.