SHIELDAIG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Comhairle Choimhearsnachd

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2018/19**

**Members :** Kalie Wilkinson (Chair), Claire Munday (Sec), Lisa Fraser (Treasurer), Viv Maclennan, Duncan Carmichael, Tom Tindale, Susan Holmes, Gordon Drysdale.

**Key Issues in 2018 /19 :**

**Roads -** ongoing issues

* Repairs to pot hole and cattle grids.
* Traffic calming measures for the top road in Shieldaig.
* Overgrown verges and trees hiding signs and reducing visibility.
* Blue passing place signs for the coast road (hopefully July).
* Gritting issues in January 19.
* Yellow lines at Nanny's cafe.

HC have been allocated £365k for roads in Wester Ross for this year, which is totally inadequate.

**Fish farm issues:**

When an planning application came in to HC from the Scottish Salmon Company to expand the fish farm at Aird, Ardheslaig a public meeting was called in January, followed by our response to the Scottish ministers and SEPA objecting to the plans. We then wrote a strong and detailed response to HC with copies to our MP, MSP's, Councillors, Wester Ross Fisheries Board, SNH and Marine Science Scotland. We had feedback from some complimenting Shieldaig on a comprehensive and professional response. Input from Janene, Julian and Gordon were invaluable. There have been enough objections from other organisations for it to be brought to the HC North Planning Committee on 1/8 or 10/9.

We invited SSC & MOWI to attend our May CC meeting with a view to reinstating the Loch Torridon Area Management Group. Both companies have agreed to meet again in the autumn and hopefully develop a more open relationship with the community and between themselves.

**Woodland Trust purchase of Beinn Shieldaig :**

We have been in contact with the Trust and invited the 2 permanent staff, Malcolm Turner and Donnie Chisholm to attend our June CC meeting. They will also be hosting a drop in session at the hall on 24th June between 3-8pm.

**Increasing school numbers:**

With up to 19 pre school children in the area we are concerned that adequate plans are being made by HC to accommodate them. We have invited Norma Young, Area Care and Learning Manager, to attend our September CC meeting. She is also meeting with Torridon and Kinlochewe parents on 12/6 in Torridon to discuss primary school resourcing.

**Playpark :**

Communications with HC have clarified which boundaries belonging to the church and to HC, so we can now reinstate the fence. A local volunteer has offered to erect the new fence. HC removed one of the climbing frame last month as it was beyond repair. Parents are currently looking at ways of funding a replacement and Tina MacGregor is doing some fantastic fund-raising. New play bark will be ordered to renew the safety zone area under the existing swing and rope climbing frame.

**Street lighting :**

New LED lights will be installed in Shieldaig sometime this autumn. They are more cost effective and reduce light pollution.

**Housing :**

Discussions with HC regarding the Schoolhouse and vacant council house proved a dead end. Janene (Shieldaig Community Association) and Kalie (SCC) had a meeting with HIE in February to look at other options and we will continue to pursue ways of developing the 2 plots at Baile Shuas for affordable housing.

**Broadband :**

Ongoing intermittent problems with AppleNet, the only broadband provider for the coast road residents, have been causing frustration. Alex and Kalie are liaising with Applecross Community Company, HC and HIE, who are overseeing the R100 scheme to achieve full (>30mbps) rural connectivity by 2021. 20m has been allocated to Highland region and by September an action plan will be drawn up to deal with the more rural areas.

**Community Resilience Plan :**

We had a visit from Steve Mardon, Resilience officer for HC, which was very helpful. Since then Claire and Kalie have been completing the CRP and a partial draft form will be up on the new noticeboard this week as well as a 'telephone tree' and emergency contact details.

From the SSE Resilient Communities Fund we have purchased the new noticeboard, a defibrillator machine and 2 training sessions, a share in a small generator, the possible installation of a changeover switch in case we need a temporary SSE generator in an emergency. We have agreed on emergency items for purchase (camping stoves, torches, solar chargers, shovels, blankets etc). It is hope that these will be stored in the village shed.

We plan to hold a public meeting in the autumn and also have a workshop on radio use, possibly with the help of Torridon MR team.

**Joint ward 5 meeting :**

Kalie and Claire attended this meeting in May. There were various topics:

* Presentation from by the Development Trust Association Scotland on: Right to Buy, Community Asset Transfer and the Community Empowerment Act.
* Presentation on the HC Housing Allocation Policy. HC plan to build 650 new houses each year until 2021 (30 - 40 in ward 5). Ward 5 has 800 Council Houses of which only 76 were re-let this year.
* Wester Ross Biosphere update.
* CC elections will take place in Nov '19 with nominations from mid September.
* Broadband, roads and fish farms were also discussed.
* Stromeferry bypass update. The road will be closed from **10pm - 7am from Sept 9th for 8 weeks.** There will be a 1½ km single convoy in operation during the day.

**\*Total closure** on the weekend of 14/15th of September.

**Waste management on Mary Street :**

Over the year we have met with residents of Mary Street to try to reduce the collection of materials at the entrance to Mary Street. There has been discussion with Andy Hume, HC Waste management officer, to move the bottle banks to be in line with the public toilets and to move the clothes bank along side too.

We recently received a phone call from HC informing us that the green bins at the public toilets would be removed due to misuse. Claire and Duncan contacted the Waste Management department to point out the impact this would have and requested time to discuss it further and to be kept informed. Unfortunately the bins were removed last week without warning. Rubbish bags have been dumped in the car park risking health and safety, vermin and the prospect of rubbish being blown into the sea. Residents on Mary Street had no time to order household bins for their properties.

**Scottish Rural Parliament :**

Kalie attended this 3 day event in Stranraer in November. There were 400 participants, from across rural Scotland, taking part in 50 workshops. Topics discussed were housing, digital connectivity, health service provision, care of the elderly, rural gender pay gap, supporting refugees and the implications of post Brexit. The Rural Parliament was also attended by policy makers, MSP's, exhibitors and government organisations.

Key findings have been presented at the Scottish Parliament.

**HC restructuring :**

The new chief executive of HC, Donna Mason, is restructuring the council for a better and more accountable service. CC's will hopefully no longer feel so frustrated and let down by HC.

Wester Ross councillors have requested a break away from the rest of Ross and Cromarty to allow better control and management of responsibilities to WR communities. A decision will be made on the 27th of June. At present, ward 5 is the largest council, by area, in Europe.

**Presentations / talks at CC meetings & public meetings:**

Lyme disease (Sept)

Community resilience (Nov)

Kinloch Woodlands (April)

Fish farms (May)

Scottish Woodland Trust (June)

**Many thanks to all who attended the CC meetings and to Alex MacInnes our Highland Councillor.**