Shieldaig Community Council

Minutes of meeting Tuesday 23 July at 7.30pm

Present: Richard Munday (Chairman), Gemma Livingstone (Treasurer), Viv Rollo, Lindsay Dacker, Ann Barton, Cllr Audrey Sinclair and

Ronnie MacRae (Chief Executive, Highland Small Communities Housing Trust)

1 member of the public.

Apologies from Gerry Beard (Secretary), Irene George and PC Gary Taylor of the Northern Constabulary, Lochcarron beat.

1. Annual General Meeting

The Chairperson’s report covering the work of the Community Council in 2012/13 was agreed (annex1).

The Treasurer presented the accounts for 2012/13 which had been certified by Roger Cundiff. These were agreed and signed and are at annex 2; the Community Council expressed its thanks to Gemma and to Roger.

Election of office bearers : it was agreed unanimously that Richard, Gerry and Gemma would continue in office for a further year.

2. Police Issues

The Community Council expressed its thanks to Alice Maclennan and to PC Donald Morrison for the prompt and diplomatic way they had responded to the recent incident on the Shieldaig campsite.

3. Highland Small Communities Housing Trust : further development at Baile Shuas

Richard explained the background to the previous Community Council’s involvement with HSCHT and Albyn Housing in the development of social housing at Baile Shuas. This was rooted in a long standing shortage of affordable housing for local people to buy or rent. Ronnie explained HSCHT’s new “rent to buy” scheme which would apply to the new development at Baile Shuas. This was an innovative response to the collapse of the self- build market in the affordable sector. He also explained the importance of being able to recoup funds from the proposed development to enable HSCHT to fund other affordable developments elsewhere in the Highlands.

Following an open discussion, the Community Council decided unanimously to support the proposed development.

It was agreed that –

a. the layout of the houses in the planning application represented a significant improvement for current Baile Shuas residents compared with earlier proposals

b. the 3 new houses should be a real help for people with local connections who wished to have a house in the community but couldn’t afford to do so through the open market.

c. it would be helpful if HSCHT could look at the possibility of putting in a duct under the (internal) road to enable the new residents to get acceptable TV reception and a rear access(French windows?) to the 2 proposed semis.

d. as a separate issue to the planning application, the Community Council would explore with Baile Shuas residents the possibility of acquiring some neighbouring land as an informal play area.

Audrey Sinclair took no part in the discussion.

4. Minutes of the Community Council meeting held on 4 June

Accepted as an accurate record of the meeting

5. Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 2 July

While these accurately recorded the key actions for the Community Council to follow up, it was felt that they did not capture the strong local feeling that planning applications for residential development from people outwith the village had an easier passage through the planning system than applications from local residents. While there was no suggestion of impropriety by officials, people were particularly upset because many felt that there were already too many holiday homes in the community.

A Community Council view expressed but not recorded in the minutes was that SNH’s remit in commenting on planning applications should be restricted to issues directly related to their core natural heritage functions.

Arising from the meeting there was discussion about how the Community Council could best decide whether it wished to be treated as a statutory consultee on particular applications. Because speed was of the essence, it was agreed that the Community Councillor responsible for reviewing and circulating the weekly list of planning applications should decide whether they thought the Council should register a statutory interest and take action accordingly, having considered any views expressed by other councillors.

6. Scottish Water

Gerry had still not been able to get a response from Scottish Water on the issue of acceptable levels of chlorine in the Shieldaig supply. There had been further critical comments from Shieldaig residents about recent high levels of chlorine in the water and it was understood that communities further north had experienced similar problems.

It was agreed that the main problem was SW’s apparent unwillingness to engage frankly and openly with communities on issues of local concern. Richard would write to our local MSP to see if an approach to SW at that level would be more effective.

7. Roads Issues

Ann would prepare a suitable notice to go up in the shop to establish the location and nature of the particular problems within the CC area. Once the results had been collated, the Roads Dept. would be asked if they could arrange an inspection visit which interested community councillors could attend.

8. Sea Eagle Agreement

It was agreed that the draft agreement between the Community Council, RSPB, the National Trust, John Macgregor and Nanny’s was acceptable from the Community Council’s perspective and could be signed, although some of the figures relating to the CC’s financial contributions were now out of date.

9. Pontoon

Signs would be erected shortly explaining how the pontoon should be used. [Post meeting note – the revised date for the formal opening of the pontoon is 14 September.]

10. Celtman Triathlon

The organisers were to be congratulated on another successful event despite the difficult weather conditions. Richard would talk to Paul McGreal about issues raised locally relating to the swim.

11. Planning Applications

The Community Council discussed the recent applications on the weekly lists. The only one on which it decided to comment was that relating to the development of the Kishorn Port. While it supported the economic development which a new facility like this would bring to the area it would emphasise to the Planning Department - a. the importance of a good apprenticeship/training scheme to help local young people to access the skilled jobs on offer.

 b. the need to ensure appropriate upgrading and maintenance of the local roads which would inevitably be affected by the construction and use of the new facility.

12. AOCB

a. The letter of 28 June from Police Scotland raised important issues about future arrangements for local police offices and policing which would be discussed at Ward Forums in the autumn

b. Richard reported on a recently identified risk to Scotland’s native pinewoods resulting from Dothistroma needle blight (DNB). A programme to protect these woodlands was being developed by the Forestry Commission but in the meantime there would be a moratorium on any new Scots pine native woodland schemes like that under discussion for Glen Shieldaig.

c. The Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Lorna Hood, and her husband planned to visit Shieldaig on 28 August and a soup and sandwich lunch would be arranged in the Hall. She had expressed an interest in meeting people involved with local community programmes including the Community Council, First Responders, the Car Scheme, the Torridon Lunch Club etc all of whom would be very welcome at the lunch.

13 Next Meeting

2nd September at 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm