**Minutes of a Meeting of the Shieldaig Community Association**

held at 7pm on Thursday 14 March 2019 in the Shieldaig Village Hall

**Present:**

Pauline Stephenson, Andy Moyes, Mya Aronica, Hugh Gosling, Jim Alexander, Nick MacNeil, Alice Maclennan, Viv Rollo, John MacGregor, Emily Harriss, Tom Tindale, Janene Waudby. Apologies for absence were received from Peter Fenton.

**Introduction:**

Pauline welcomed those present and noted a quorum was present.

**General Meeting**

The Meeting was adjourned so that the General Meeting of the Association’s Members could be held. Janene explained the purpose of the General Meeting was to make some technical changes to the constitution, as requested by the Scottish Ministers. It was noted that the proposed changes were in no way controversial. It was noted that a quorum was present in person or by proxy. The amendments were then proposed and passed unanimously. The meeting was reconvened.

**Previous Meeting’s Business:**

It was noted that the village noticeboards still required repairing. It was agreed that Keith be asked to quote for the work. It was agreed that the top noticeboard was still useful and should be kept.

Pauline reported that the Hamilton Trust cheque matter had been resolved. Linda Livingstone had manged to solve the matter and a transfer was being made to the Association’s bank account. It was agreed that the funds (£1500) should be ringfenced and spent in a manner consistent with the purposes of the original trust (understood to be for further education). If in doubt, the Association should consult Linda Livingstone.

It was understood that the Council had been speaking about the playpark and a visit had taken place from a supplier of play equipment. The first priority was to fence the park at the ‘drop’ down to the hall building, and donations/supplies of wood would be sought to do this.

**Housing update:**

Janene reported as follows:

(a) since the last meeting, the Council had woken up to the forecast increase in school numbers. This had led to Norma Young (head of care and learning for the North area) calling to request that we stop work on our application to buy the schoolhouse. It was agreed that we should hold off for now, but try to ensure that the Council follows through and improves the building, preferably in the near term.

(b) Janene reported that as a result of the above development, she had rewritten the paper in support of our purchase of the schoolhouse to draw the Council’s attention to the village’s lack of affordable housing. The paper is called “The Affordable Housing Gap”. On the advice of Ewen McIntosh from the Highland Council asset transfer team, the paper proposed that the Council transfers the Nurse’s House and Wilma’s House to the Association for conversion into flats, and also requested that the Baile Shuas housing be put back on a local letting initiative (basically reverting to the allocation system before it was centralised by the Highland Council). The Council do not want to transfer the houses (citing that in their experience, the costs for a conversion would be too high), but they are surprisingly sympathetic to the situation around the Baile Shuas housing. It was agreed that we should continue to chase the Council on this (the contact being Jim Holden).

(c) Janene also proposed to look at a current map of the land ownership in the village to identify other developable land in addition to the Hugh Tollemache land, which could be used for affordable housing. It was acknowledged that land may not be available, but it was worth going through the exercise on the basis that the Hugh Tollemache land on its own will not accommodate much housing.

A general discussion was also held regarding the Baile Shuas “rent to buy” properties. It was noted that there are now only two lenders who are prepared to give mortgages for these properties and that the terms/interest are much more onerous than normal. This is making it very difficult (if not impossible) for the current occupants to buy their houses. Janene suggested that the Association could express its dissatisfaction with this situation to the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust, and put pressure on them to remedy the situation, but that we need more details about the mortgages that were available when the houses were first offered (to illustrate how the situation had become more onerous and unfair on the occupants).

**Toilets update:**

It was reported that the Council still have not repaired the toilets. Pauline agreed to chase Robbie Bain.

**Hall Rental Agreement**:

Jim reported that the Royal Mail were only planning to continue to use the Hall until September, after which we would no longer be receiving the £1500 annual fee. This would necessitate considering how we fund the hall going forward. After discussion, it was agreed that the first priority would be to make a commercial charge for the entities like Celtman and Woodland Trust who use the hall. Further fundraising may be required, but it was agreed this did not need considering at this stage. Pauline also reported that the matter of exterior decorating had still not been agreed. It was noted that the Church was responsible for the outside of the building, but had proposed that the Village Association meet half the cost. After discussion, it was agreed that Nick should informally approach his acquaintance regarding the possibility of the Association acquiring ownership of the hall. Secondly, if the Church reported that they could or would not fund the exterior works, then the Association should consider gathering a group of volunteers to perform the work.

**Fete**:

Pauline reported that Frosty had arranged or was in the process of arranging the music for the Fete. Mya and Viv both said they would help with food and it was agreed that they should meet with Hazel to work out how the food should be arranged. Andy confirmed he was happy to do burgers again this year. Pauline would also talk to the people who ran the bar last year to see if they would do so again. Alice confirmed she would send out letters for raffle prizes. Jim confirmed he would check the raffle ticket invoice from last year to see where they had been printed.

**Flower tubs**:

Janene had been approached by Robert Gordon asking if he could be reimbursed for the purchase of some plants for the Main Street flower tubs. After discussion, it was agreed that Robert could be reimbursed if he presented the receipt to Jim.

**CC/SCA Insurance:**

It was noted that the Highland Council can no longer arrange insurance for the village association/council. Jim had been researching and dealing with the insurance for the Association. Tom Tindale confirmed that the Council had also been looking into the matter and wanted to avoid unnecessary duplication. After discussion, it was agreed that Kalie (for the Council) should speak to Jim.

**Next Meeting:**

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held on Thursday 25th April, and also that the AGM should be on this date.

**Close of Meeting:**

There being no further business, the meeting closed.

Pauline Stephenson (Chairperson).