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

held at 7.30pm on Thursday 24 June 2021 in Shieldaig Village Hall

**Present :**

Pauline Stephenson (Chair), Andy Moyes, Jim Alexander (Treasurer), Nick McNeil, Viv Rollo, John MacGregor, Janene Waudby (Secretary), Fiona Moyes, Phil Collins, Lynn Frost (Apologies for absence: Peter Fenton, Tom Tindale)

In attendance: Mr Terrington. Tom O’Halloran

**Introduction:**

Pauline welcomed those present and noted a quorum was present (four proxies being held by the Secretary).

**AGM**

Pauline delivered her report for the year, reporting that it had been a quiet year due to the pandemic. The only event held had been the bonfire and fireworks. Nevertheless, the SCA had managed to arrange the lease for the toilets from the Highland Council, and the toilets had been renovated to allow them to open in time for the 2020 delayed tourist season.

Pauline reported total public donations from the toilets so far was in excess of £4700. Jim confirmed total income from the toilets between mid June 2020 and April 2021 (including a £1,000 grant) was £5850. Expenditure over the same period was £3,523. The income is therefore exceeding the costs of running so far. The intention is to build a fund to help any future renovation plans. Janene reported that no steps had been taken to buy the building, partly because the SCA would need funding to complete the acquisition and the Scottish Land Fund would want to see strong evidence of the community’s ability to run the toilets at a profit. Janene recommended that the SCA notifies the Highland Council of the community’s intention to buy the toilets and the land around it (i.e. the car park area) so that the Council can start to find the (lost) title to that land. In the meantime, it was agreed that the community should continue to run the toilets to build up its track record which would be a vital part of any future funding application.

Pauline concluded her report by saying that the church hall acquisition had also stalled during the period and the fete and OAP lunch had been cancelled. The children’s Christmas presents had been delivered to the school in lieu of the usual party.

Jim then referred to the accounts which had been posted online and on village noticeboards for some time now. There being no questions, the accounts were unanimously approved. It was noted that the balance remains healthy for the time being at around £30k.

Each of the Secretary and the Chairman were unanimously re-elected (in lieu of any willing replacements). Pauline noted that she would like to stand down at the earliest time possible once a replacement is found. Phil Collins had communicated his willingness to act as Treasurer and his election was proposed and approved unanimously. Lynn Frost also indicated her willingness to become a trustee and her appointment was unanimously approved. Peter Fenton had asked to step down. The Secretary agreed to make the changes.

**School renovation update:**

After the business of the AGM was concluded, the SCA’s meeting resumed. A discussion and update were given on the renovation of the schoolhouse. Tom O’Halloran described the recent delay due to suspected bats (but that a recent inspection had found no bats). This needs to be confirmed during a second inspection and then Nature Scot will need to issue a certificate. It is hoped that a ‘soft start’ on the renovations was imminent, but works to the fabric of the building cannot start until the certificate is issued. Whereas the renovations had been due to be completed in time for the new school term in Autumn 2021, the latest ten week delay means that Christmas 2021 is now the completion date. Due to this, and the numbers on the school roll, the Highland Council has asked the SCA and Church for permission to use the Church building as a nursery for the duration of the renovations. Tom and Janene then briefed the meeting on the relatively minor changes which were proposed to the building, and each confirmed that the nursery would have exclusive use of the building during nursery hours. Janene confirmed that the community would continue to be able to use the building outside of nursery hours, but the nursery equipment etc. would make this practically difficult so that any additional use would be confined to important event such as community meetings and the OAP lunch etc. It was noted that there would be no fee, but the Council would pay all utility charges. It was also agreed that a fee should be paid of £100 per week if the renovations go beyond 31 December 2021. Janene had prepared and circulated a letter and there being no other comments on it, Janene agreed to send it to the Council.

**Sale of Church Hall:**

The proposed sale of the hall to the SCA was discussed. Janene reported that not much progress had been made to date, as there had been communication issues within the Church. Janene had recently received an email from a Church lawyer, but he had so far not returned any calls. Janene had nevertheless got matters moving with the Scottish Land Fund so that (i) the SCA will be able to speak to the Applecross and Golspie communities about their experiences buying Church buildings and (ii) the SCA can work towards submitting a Stage 1 Funding application to fund a lawyer, surveyor and valuer. It was agreed that the SCA’s existing credit balance should be ringfenced for its other obligations (toilets, pontoon, events, hall maintenance etc.) particularly as the ongoing pandemic is curtailing fundraising activities. Janene was authorised to continue to progress the sale and application for funding.

**Fete:**

The proposed 2021 fete was then discussed. It was unanimously agreed that in view of the current uncertainty around the pandemic, the event should be postponed to 2022, as the SCA could not justify spending funds in anticipation of an event which may end up being cancelled at short notice. The possibility of holding a smaller event was discussed, but it was felt that this would not avoid the risks of a late cancellation. It was agreed that if the parents wanted to arrange an alternative sports event for the village children, then the SCA could provide some financial support for that.

**Pontoon:**

The use of the pontoon was generally discussed. It was noted that craft are left alongside the pontoon regularly in bad weather and sometimes boats are left on the hammerhead overnight. It was noted that the whole community needs to be made aware of the importance of maintaining this expensive asset, and that it is not robust enough to withstand the use it currently endures over the long term. It was agreed to try and pass the message around by word of mouth initially, and possibly to ask regular users to get involved in maintaining it, which may make them better aware of the pontoon’s vulnerabilities.

**AOB:**

(a) John mentioned that he had heard that Mr Pattinson had offered land in Locharron for sale to the crofters/or the community. Viv and John agreed to try and find out more details in case he would be prepared to offer croft land in Shieldaig for sale to the community.

(b) Jim then mentioned the community’s current website and whether it should be upgraded to “https” status. In this context, Janene then mentioned the magazine, and whether it was worth the deployment of the community’s resources given the huge effort it takes for a few people to make each year (despite its popularity). It was unanimously agreed that it would be better to create a new website over the Winter of 2021/2 which could be a modern and attractive source of local and tourist information, as well as a hub for community information.

**Next Meeting:**

It was agreed that the next meeting should be arranged for Thursday 5 August 2021.

**Close of Meeting:**

There being no further business, the meeting closed.

Pauline Stephenson (Chairperson).