**WESTER ROSS, STRATHPEFFER AND LOCHALSH**

**MEETING RE WASTE AND PUBLIC TOILET ARRANGEMENTS**

**Thursday 18 February 2021 – 10.30am**

**Present:**

Aultbea (Fiona MacKenzie)

Coigach (Ann Macleod and Julie Edwards)

Gairloch (Fran Cree)

Garve (Kenny MacLean)

Glenelg and Arnisdale (Donnie MacDonald and Cameron McMurdo)

Kyle (Brian Easter)

Lochalsh (Tim and Adrienne Sowood)

Lochbroom (Topher Dawson and Angela Ford)

Lochcarron (John MacPherson and Jan Overmeer)

Plockton (Peter MacKenzie)

Shieldaig (Viv MacLennan)

Strathpeffer (Ron McAulay)

Torridon and Kinlochewe CC (Caroline Hamilton and Mat Webster)

Wester Loch Ewe (Alasdair Wright)

Councillors Ian Cockburn (Chairman); Biz Campbell; Alex MacInnes

Keven Wickham; Debbie Sutton; Dot Ferguson

**1 Welcome and Introductions – Cllr Ian Cockburn**

The Chairman welcomed all those present and thanked them for their time in attending.

**2 Overview of Waste Provision – Keven Wickham, Waste Operations Manager**

An overview of the situation which arose last year was given, with much of the waste response being reactive to the influx of visitors to the area, dealing with fly-tipping, human waste, motorhome waste, litter, overflowing bins etc. This year it is intended to:

* offer equipment, PPE etc to communities for litter picking etc
* provide additional bins at cost to communities
* run a more frequent collection service, with smaller vehicles to allow a more flexible response
* increase street-cleaning
* work with marketing groups eg NC500, motorhome hire companies etc to promote more responsible behaviour and to signpost to further information eg waste disposal points and Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)
* use of QR codes to provide more information

**3 Questions –** in discussion, the following points were highlighted:

* + mixed and recycled waste collection is preferred but contamination rate is high
	+ motorhomes will be encouraged to take their waste to HWRC
	+ need to remain welcoming to visitors, not move them on from lay-bys etc
	+ increased number of waste centres should be provided and advertised – use of Auchtertye ? Noted potential difficulties with SEPA consents etc
	+ large bins prone to dumping of large items – hoped to use locked bins with small aperture
	+ large / more bins needed at Glenelg Hall
	+ Lochcarron – needs more frequent collections
	+ Gairloch tip needs new signage
	+ Loch Achilty suffers from amount of rubbish, waste etc. Additional bins there would help
	+ some communities have put out information material indicating locations of waste points
	+ HC is responsible for verge / lay-by cleaning but few resources to respond quickly

 **Any areas of concern should be notified to Keven Wickham –** **keven.wickham@highland.gov.uk**

 **Litter and fly-tipping can also be reported on-line at –**

[**https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1054/rubbish\_and\_recycling/89/litter\_and\_fly-tipping**](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1054/rubbish_and_recycling/89/litter_and_fly-tipping)

**4 Overview of Public Toilets arrangements – Debbie Sutton, Amenity Services Manager**

There are 19 public toilets in the WRSL ward including those in Highland Comfort Scheme (HCS)

* Opening times have been varied over the past 12 months due to Covid 19
* All information about toilet provision, including opening hours / facilities etc is on the HC website and is updated regularly - <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/283/community_life_and_leisure/814/highland_council_public_toilets>
* There are no motorhome waste disposal points run by the Council
* Additional HCS sites are being sought – PR will be going out soon

**5 Questions –** in discussion, the following points were highlighted:

* + funds can potentially be available to community groups for installation of motorhome waste disposal facilities through Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund and other sources
	+ guidance has been produced to help communities install facilities **(attached);** further guidance is being drafted by HC to help with further consents required eg planning
	+ view expressed that public toilets should be a statutory function – noted that this would require individuals/groups to lobby Scottish Government
	+ HCS funding is inadequate – noted there are three levels (up to £300 per month) and is a contribution to the cost of running facilities
	+ Had been hoped to install 10 new facilities on NC500, but SEPA objected to 9 of the locations so didn’t proceed
	+ Cost of provision of motorhome waste disposal can vary widely depending on site conditions
	+ Toilets and waste disposal point should be installed in Ullapool (Latheron) car park
	+ Significant pressure on both waste and toilets at Eilean Donan and Dornie with no waste disposal points in the area
	+ need to take strategic approach with community groups working together
	+ need to ensure Police are involved in discussions and are actively enforcing laws
	+ Auchtertye would be ideal site for toilets / waste disposal points
	+ Toilets at Torridon – part HC/HLH – who takes responsibility for having them opened?
	+ HC website should identify location of motorhome waste disposal points

**In summarising,** the Chairman confirmed that the discussion at this meeting had been around the short-term arrangements for the year ahead, but that the Council’s Tourism Committee is concentrating on the medium to longer term plans, which will be informed by the Tourism Infrastructure plans (drafts circulated prior to Christmas 2020). This involves a range of partners including Police, Visit Scotland etc. As Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh now has its own Area Committee it is better placed to prioritise provision and lobby for funding.

Councillors will also be working with HIE and the Council’s Executive Chief Officer Malcolm MacLeod to seek funding for a strategic approach to the problem. **In order to inform this work, all Community Councils were asked to forward any plans, proposals etc for tourism infrastructure to Dot Ferguson –** **dot.ferguson@highland.gov.uk** **so they can be collated and considered.**

**6 AOCB –** there was no other business