**NOTES of Ward 6 Joint Community Council Meeting**

**held in Kinlochewe Village Hall from 7-10pm on Thursday 27th October 2016**

**Present** – Kenny MacLean, Eliza Leslie Melville & Bob Moir - G&DCC, Terry Doe, Anne Macrae, Maggie Smith & Carol MacIver- T&KCC, Helen Murchison & Q Banting – Lochcarron CC, Claire Munday & Kalie Wilkinson – Shieldaig CC, Pat Gulliver, Kenny Thomson & Willie Macrae – Gairloch CC, Amy MacDonald, Alasdair Wright, Mairi MacKenzie & Derek Morrison - WLECC, P. MacLachlan - Aultbea CC, Ann MacLeod – Coigach CC, Robert Irvine - Strathpeffer CC, Monica MacKay, James MacKay, Isabel Grant & Annie Higson – MSSCC.

Robbie Bain, Ward Manager, Cllr. Richard Greene, Cllr. Isabel Campbell, Cllr Ian Cockburn & Cllr. Audrey Sinclair.

Kate Earnshaw - NHS, Maimie Thomson - NHS, Atoria Reed - NHS, Charles ENGE - Carbon Dynamic, Nick Scroggie & Peter Guthrie – HIE.

**Apologies** – Jennifer Haslam – G&DCC, Adrian Solwood – Lochalsh, Plockton, Loch Duich, Glenelg & Dornie CCs.

1. Terry Doe, Chairman of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (T&KCC) welcomed all to Kinlochewe Hall before handing over to Kenny MacLean, Chairman of Garve & District Community Council (G&DCC) to Chair the meeting. Kenny remarking how good it was to see so many Community Councils represented and noting that Stromeferry and Lochbroom CCs were no longer active.
2. **Presentation NHS & OOH Cover \***

*\* A Digital copy of the Presentation was forwarded to all Community Councils following the meeting.*

GP Atoria Reed explained why it was felt that changes and redesign were needed within NHS Highland and to Primary Care Out of Hours (OOH). With a shortage of GPs and many in their late 50s, it was felt that working out of hours was not attractive to graduates and there was a need to plan new models to maintain daytime services. Employing locums was not seen as the answer as they would not know the local people so it was thought better to ‘Grow our own locally’ work together more in teams and to increase the role for nurses. A map was shown with the current 22 sites which are proposed to be reduced to 17. The Gairloch area would not change much but Lochcarron would provide non-emergency care for Applecross whilst care for Glenelg would come from Broadford. In the case of an emergency, a potentially life threatening case advice would be to phone 999 but any other medical problem that was felt urgent would contact OOH Care on 111 which will be managed from Inverness. Out of hours would be from 6pm till 8am from Monday to Friday and at weekends. First Responders would also be trained to help maintain quality of care.

Biz Campbell noted that in Glenelg the doctor was down from five days to two with a nurse covering and questioned whether in the case of an emergency such as a heart attack help should be sent from Kyle rather than Broadford.

Audrey asked about the timescale for Kyle area but was told it is OOH anyway and covered by Broadford so the biggest changes would be for the West and North Coast.

Helen enquired whether there would be enough trained nurses and was told that there had recently been ten applicants for two posts. This resulted in discussion on the need to train more people including children in basic first aid and on the use of defibrillators. Kalie queried why some areas had more provision of units than others. The defibrillators are generally self-funded schemes with Lucky2Bhere providing communities with training. Anne MacLeod mentioned that although Coigach had started with 17 First Responders they were now down to only 3. This was a pattern also experienced in other communities.

Biz then raised the subject of lack of care at home provision and the shortage of beds and facilities. There then followed discussion on the location of care homes and the dispute on whether a new hospital would be located in Broadford or Portree, the NHS representatives suggesting they meet with Biz to continue the discussion on care issues and look at possible solutions.

1. **Presentation – HIE, Superfast Broadband \***

* *This presentation was also forwarded to Community Councils after the meeting.*

Although Kenny had invited BT to speak, they had passed this on to HIE and Nick and Peter took turns to speak on plans for the proposed roll out of Next Generation Broadband which will cost in the region of £146 million. It is envisaged that 95% of premises will be covered by the end of 2017. 191,000 homes and businesses are already connected. Maps were shown, illustrating where new cabinets and cabling would be along the North and West Coast first with 400km of subsea cabling via 20 subsea crossings. 800km new cable and ducting will be buried as existing cabinets are upgraded and new ones built. The average cost of a cabinet being £26,000. More information is available on the HIE website <http://www.hie.co.uk/whereandwhen>

The Scottish Government is committed to 100% Broadband coverage by 2021. This may be delivered through community solutions and public sector funding.

Nick then spoke on Community Broadband Scotland (CBS) which has been set up by the Govt. to support communities working in partnership with other groups to decide what is best for their own situations. CBS can offer money to scope and technical expertise to identify most appropriate solutions and manage the process. There is a total of £16.5 million from Scottish Government and European Funding but this is to cover the whole of Scotland.

There was then considerable discussion and questions relating to which areas might not be covered, speeds provided and the effectiveness of existing cabinets BT did not seem to provide effective feedback and there were problems with poor or fluctuating speeds in a number of areas. We were told the most effective way to improve speed at the moment is to put in the new cabinets and the biggest factor will be the length of line needed to reach premises.

1. There then followed a short presentation by Charles ENGE, on house building techniques and he issued an invite to anyone interested to visit his factory in Alness to see how they build in a modular fashion. The houses are delivered to site on the back of a lorry. Claire mentioned the need for care to be taken as additional height on lorries had damaged ancient woodland as they cut through Caledonian Pine. Audrey had visited the factory and had been very impressed with the design.

INTERVAL – There then followed a short interval when there was the chance to speak to Charles and have some refreshment.

1. Highland Council Matters

As all four Councillors and the Ward Manager were there, Kenny highlighted issues shared by all Community Councils starting with Road Maintenance. As Vice Chair of Community Services, Richard acknowledged the problems such as potholes existing but pointed out Ward 6 covers a huge area and described how financial cuts over recent years were resulting in the Council finding themselves in a serious position. This year they had put in an extra 2.4 million into roads but the financial figures were frightening with an estimated 34-37 million in cuts within the next 3 to 4 years.

Over the last year money has been put towards operating a jet patcher machine and a new one has been ordered with four teams being trained in its use.1km of black tar costs around £56,000 and chipping / top dressing around £23,000 per km. 11/12 million will be spent on the Strathcarron road and 5million on the next phase of the Slattadale to Gairloch road. Work is being planned for Achiltibuie and the Bealach and they also have their eye on the Glen Torridon road but all is depended on future Capital Plan Budgets. New 30 signs are to be painted on the Kinlochewe road with Dragon Teeth on the side of the road and signs showing a reduction from 60 – 40 – 30 as vehicles travel from the Gairloch side. There seems to be a better relationship with BEAR and three junctions at Marybank, Gorstan and Braemore are to be resurfaced with nonslip tar and new signage. With the new jet patcher next summer there should be a better chance of getting potholes filled in. Work on the road surface under the bridge at Lair will continue though they will need to go in with a planer as cannot raise the road surface.

Winter readiness is to be discussed in the next week. There are 50,300 tonnes of salt in storage already with more on standby. 20 new vehicles are to be used in delivery of service. Some of them are gritters and with 12 vehicles to come in there will be 45 new vehicles in all.

There are two snow blowers, one in Grantown on Spey and one in Applecross.

It was admitted that the Winter Assistance Scheme could have been handled better. Out of 1,900 post engagements, only 60 contractors had expressed an interest. 22 had returned forms incomplete and the final number had been down to 6. Insurance also seemed to be problematic.

Helen Murchison then raised the subject of the lack of, or poor response times from Highland Council to Community Councils such as her own in Lochcarron. A number of issues existed including Lair Bridge, potholes and numerous ripped tyres. She was fed up not getting any response and was beginning to wonder if some officials even existed. The popular playpark at Kishorn had been closed without any warning or discussion and she was still to get any reply as to why or who took the decision. Biz commented that she had e mailed and in general most replies now came by e mail. Helen would prefer to get a letter in writing. The land belonged to Helen. Any faulty equipment should have been removed and there seemed to be a breakdown in communication.

Richard hoped to look at the Kishorn Play equipment issue personally and confirmed that when equipment is removed but not replaced the land is usually landscaped. Grass cutting remains at a status quo.

Garve had also had difficulty getting any feedback or replies to issues there with bus shelters and it had taken two years to get information. ENECO had not had any reply back from Highland Council and Robbie thought this might be a problem with SPAM. There have been great changes within Council staff with four managers going completely. 300 had been given Voluntary Redundancy, 78 of those from Community Services. However, there was hope for positive change.

Kenny reinforced the message that it was important to chase things up and give Community Councils feedback. Robbie replied that they recognise they will have to do better but that with hundreds of e mails in each working day, some do slip through the net. At this stage, there is a redesign board looking to make improvements.

Toilets – The Council hope to keep Rogie Falls open till those at Silver Bridge reopen. It was pointed out that Rogie Falls car park is a very popular and busy stopping point. Toilets however are not a statutory service for the Council to provide.

Concern was expressed at the number of empty buildings being left to deteriorate by the Council. Richard said that Kinlochewe Schoolhouse was up for sale and that they were now looking at Achnasheen.

**6, North Coast 500 (NC500)**

NC500 has really taken off with both good and bad results for our area. The number of tourists and vehicles has increased proving productive to those providing accommodation and for small businesses. However, infrastructure needs to catch up with problems concerning litter bins, toilets and driving on single track roads. Kalie requesting more signage on the Applecross Coast road.

It was felt that NC500 could be more proactive, especially as they are charging membership fees.

A liaison group is being set up with NC500 and the Head of Roads, Tracy Urray, to see what can be done to help. They will meet 6 monthly.

1. Highland Small Community Housing and Land Funds There is currently money available to help self-build or purchase land for communities to build affordable housing on. HSCHT are offering up to £175,000 to help self-build.
2. **AOB - Wester Ross Biosphere** Wester Ross has been designated a UNESCO World Biosphere in Lima, Peru in March 2016. The area covers from Glenelg in the South to Coigach in the North and Garve in the East including nearly all Ward 6 Community Councils. A Development Officer will write up a 10-year plan for Wester Ross and will be looking for any feedback or ideas from Community Councils and local residents.

Kenny thanked all for taking the time and trouble to attend the meeting, especially as some had travelled a great distance. It is hoped that this will be the first of future meetings allowing representatives to get to know each other and work on common issues.