Minutes

**Dornie & District Community Council Extraordinary Meeting**

20/7/2022 7pm via zoom

**Present**: Janie Nixon (chair),Alison Jack (secretary) Matt Baron, Karen Macrae, Linda Brooks (member of the public), Lindsay Thatcher (member of the public),Shona Maclennan (member of the public),Elphine George (member of the public), Eibhlin Lee (Community Energy Scotland)

**Apologies:** Roz Birch, Fay MacKenzie(treasurer)

* Introductions made and all welcomed to discuss a potential community energy project for Dornie & District cc area. Unfortunately Lachie Robinson (Knoydart Climate Action Group) did not join the meeting.
* EL explained that Community Energy Scotland (CES) was a membership organisation and a Scottish charity. (Our CC is now a member)They assist community groups in energy efficiency. They can help us point to funding (and help with applying for) They can also offer us consultancy services if required
* LB outlined the purpose/idea of the meeting. With the price of oil rising and oil heating the primary source in our area, LB had raised the possibility of finding community alternatives at a recent cc meeting. LB had begun some research as a result of this and had contacted Community Energy Scotland and Knoydart Climate Action Group. LB reported that a survey is required to find out the energy needs of the community. A climate action plan is better than a plan solely focussed on energy.
* EL said that CES worked with communities to help work out the priorities of the community who are not on the gas network. EL was based in Orkney where communities had switched to heat pumps (cheaper than oil), reducing heat needed and thus bills had been reduced. Home Energy Scotland can grant individuals grants/loans. Business Energy Scotland help community buildings reduce their energy demand. Building a climate action plan can unlock funding (Knoydart have done this) It would be useful to do a survey of properties that maps out our energy use; what level of energy is inefficient, to enable finding out a solution. SM said it would be useful to contact Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association as they had previously done a survey on energy efficiency. LB said that older cottages were of concern for energy efficiency. EL said that the cc had been sent a detailed survey as an example but perhaps we should have a simpler one. Recently bought houses would have an Energy Performance Certificate and this would also be source of information. LB asked asked EL if there were grants for a community based survey. General discussion followed. EL said there could be a heat network with a community ground source heat pump; we would need to get mandate from the community by doing the survey. LB commented on the number of oil tankers in the village and as well as being inefficient, it was potentially environmentally damaging.
* LB asked EL what are our next steps? EL suggested we look at the Scottish Community Alliance for examples of a way forward. E.g. Knoydart and also Self Seeds (Handyman service in Glasgow, offers energy efficient measures e.g. new doors) LB suggested the cc go to Knoydart to find out about their climate action plan. MB said that we should speak to Lachie first as we need hard and fast community examples before proceeding. ALL AGREED to invite Lachie to next zoom meeting. **ACTION AJ/LB**
* LB asked EL about the community wind farm project in Orkney. It’s now self-sufficient and successful. At first they were getting the feed in tariff (now there is no feed in tariff) EL said it was difficult to export electricity (called curtailed electricity) Orkney gets 120% of its electricity needs from wind but only 20% for energy needs. EL said that the electricity network is near full and asked is there a nearby demand for electricity so we can bypass the grid?
* LB asked how we can generate community interest. EL said through a survey, our own social media, local newsletter, local papers and radio. LB said we need to know what the benefits are first and it was hard to define the end point at the beginning. EL said that Barra & Vatersay have done a climate action plan. SM said that we have to get people engaged, give them a reason for filling it in e.g. fuel poverty & net zero and to keep the survey simple. EG said it was disappointing to learn the grid was nearly full. KM also said that although the network infrastructure can’t cope and we should look for smaller gains. KM asked if there could be collaboration with existing Dornie projects (shop & pontoons) with regard to a climate action plan. EL said that SSE plan to improve the grid in Orkney/Western Isles and the Highlands, our nearest transmission is in Broadford and this was to be increased in Dec2025.
* EG asked if the capacity was being looked at, could we influence that by producing our own electricity locally? EG asked if we could have our own local grid? (Attadale have done this in 2016 and it’s has now paid for itself) EL said yes we could have our own grid (Knoydart has) but it has pros/cons. Our own grid would not necessarily mean our own bills would go down. SM asked if the network was being expanded. E.g. at Spean Bridge. EL said that SSE will only build what is needed and that most of the network needs upgraded rather than replaced. MB left the meeting at 8pm.
* LB asked EL with regards to a survey, what resources can the cc use? There’s a community learning exchange, identify funding and work with us, design & analysis of survey. Knoydart had received funding from Keep Scotland Beautiful. KM said we should contact Lachie as a first step to help identify potential benefits to us and look at the community alliance website*.*
* EG/KM/JN/LB are interested in helping, forming a sub group. LB said that we should ask Lachie his availability for the next meeting. **ACTION AJ/LB**. AJ to set up invite all to next zoom, pending Lachie’s availability. AJ asked if a quorum of cc members was needed for the next meeting. JN said not required as it was a sub group. **ACTION: KM** is in Barra in August and will do some research there for us. EG asked KM if the Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust is doing anything regards to energy so as not to duplicate efforts. KM said no, nothing pending. SM left the meeting at 8.20pm. **ACTION AJ** to put a link on the cc facebook page for Home Energy Scotland. JN commented that funding for individuals was not easy. LB asked if we could connect to other cc’s to find out if there was similar work going on. **ACTION AJ** to email Kenny Maclean and forward it to rest of Ward 5. LT left the meeting at 8.30pm.
* Meeting ended at 8.30 and all thanked for attending.