

Minutes for Stromeferry and Achmore CC Meeting – 25th November 2020 @ 7.30pm

1 Present. Microsoft Teams Meeting all connected at 7.32pm

Present: Mary MacBeth, Neil MacRae, Kath Smith, Gill Harrington, Helen Robertson, Dawn Lupton

Members of the public: Jim Coomber

Apologises: Ann Gillespie

Biz Campbell was not present.

2 Approve and adopt previous Minutes

The minutes from the 28th October 2020 meeting were approved by Kath and seconded by Helen.

3 Matters Arising

A household have withdrawn their consent to receive communications to their email address. Gill has written to those involved to formalise our GDP regulation process and this topic is closed.

The CC's method of distributing information is predominately by using its authorised email distribution list. The minutes are usually lodged on the Stromeferry and Achmore website, and physically copies of the minutes will be put in the A4 leaflet holder by the Achmore Hall notice board, and on the Stromeferry Notice Board.

Action: Mary to get all the minutes on the website, Gill volunteered to put the minutes in the A4 leaflet in Achmore and Kath will put them on the Strome notice board.

The Stromeferry and Achmore CC wrote to the WHFP to express our concern about their front page reporting that there may or may not be cases of COVID in Achmore. Gill received the following reply to our letter of the 23rd Nov 2020 "Many thanks for your letter - it will be published in full.

The front page story in question was based on inaccurate information from unreliable sources and should never have been printed.

That it was is a matter of real regret, and I apologise to your community.

Kind Regards, Keith

Keith's response was well received by all and this matter is now closed.

4 Communications received

TD – means to be discuss; NNTD – no need to discuss

Email - Weekly - Maureen Mackenzie - Planning Information.

Email – Ad Hoc – K MacLean – CC minutes from other Ward 5 Councils

Email - Weekly - Maureen MacKenzie - Planning Information.

Email – Ad Hoc – K MacLean – CC minutes from other Ward 5 Councils

Email – Ad Hoc – Emails between CC members on agenda items, verifying minutes etc.

Email - 16 Nov – D Ferguson - Government Boundary Commission - Letter to Community Council Members – TBD @ 9.3

Email – 16 Nov – D Ferguson - Tourism Infrastructure Plan - consultation with Community – TBD @ 8.3

Email - 18 Nov – Policy 6 - Highland Green Health Partnership survey – distributed to all residents – NNTBD

Email – 18 Nov – S Walker Lochalsh Collaboration - Campervan infrastructure survey + information – Distributed to CC & other groups. TBD @ 8.3.

Email – 19 Nov - Kenny MacLean The A890 Closure

Email – 23 Nov – Colin McAndrew update for Fernaig Trust

Email - 24 Nov – P Game update from CMNet CIC

Minutes for Stromeferry and Achmore CC Meeting – 25th November 2020 @ 7.30pm

5 Treasurer's Report

The Balance at the bank at 25/11/2020 is £3,724.35. A cheque for £35 has been written and not yet cashed, so the new balance will be £3,689.35. There was a suggestion put forward to look at replacing the table/bench on the Fernaig Shore which is now dilapidated. We all agreed to look at this option.

Action: Dawn to check prices of table/benches made of recycled materials which can 'stand up/sit down' in our weather.

Ongoing Local Items and Progress update

5.1 Defibrillator

Kath's rota system for the defibrillator at Achmore hall has a team of 7 and is working well. No problems reported with the defibrillator, so big thanks to Kath.

Potential home for a Stromeferry Defibrillator is the phone box. Gill has obtained all the necessary documentation from the BT on how to adopt a phone box. The adopting community has to apply for the necessary consent to retain a phone box. BT will disconnect the box from its network and remove equipment. If the power is still available BT will pay for the supply of power to the adopted box. The adopt community has to purchase the box for £1 to be legally compliant. We delayed deciding which body should own the adopt box.

Action: Gill to continue obtaining the necessary information from BT re power.

Gill reminded us all that we need to do fund raising for the Achmore defibrillator, maybe do something like a quiz night. Helen will talk to Martin to see if the hall can do some fund raising stuff for the defibrillator.

Action: All CC members to think about how to raise funds for defibrillator and Helen to discuss with Martin.

Mary has the old defibrillator box and batteries and will return them to Lucky2BHere.

Action: Post COVID Mary to return old equipment to Lucky2BeHere

At a previous meeting we discussed Defibrillator training and to look for online courses as physical courses cannot happen due to COVID.

Action: Dawn to get information about the online courses that she knows about.

5.2 Planning

Nothing to report

5.3 Lochalsh Collaboration Group

The Lochalsh Group has been meeting regularly with a sub group formed to develop the questionnaire that will be posted online and physically to every household in Lochalsh. The purpose of the questionnaire is to collect data from as many households as possible in the Lochalsh area and the data will be used to develop community projects/plans. It was agreed at the last LC meeting that circulating the questionnaire so close to, or over the festive period might mean it got lost and that it would be better to send it out in the New Year. It was agreed to promote it as good time of year to think about the future and how to improve things. Stromeferry and Achmore CC area will host the 1st virtual road show as COVID advice restrictions us from having physical road shows in local halls.

Action: Mary will keep CC informed on progress with road show scheduling and the questionnaire delivery to all.

Minutes for Stromeferry and Achmore CC Meeting – 25th November 2020 @ 7.30pm

5.4 Path Access at Stromeferry

Kath contacted the new Path Officer in Portree and he suggested that she checks to see if the padlock has been removed. And it has been removed, we do not know when but the gate can be opened. The part of the path nearest the shore has become very overgrown. Kath has written to Philip to ask when the padlock was removed and if this is a permanent thing.

Action: Kath will monitor that the gate is left close but not padlocked.

5.5 The Safety concrete block fence at Ardnarff. Ref Number FS130640243 – no progress. This is our No 1 priority

In August 2019 Gill had a meeting with Kate Forbes MSP re the safety barriers. These barriers were put up as a temporary measure some years ago as the safety fence behind the barriers is damaged. On the 25th Feb 2020, Kate Forbes' office received the following response from Highland Council, quoted below.

We have no current plans for this road such as widening or resurfacing. The road network programme which would consider whether to resurface this road is reviewed annually and roads are assessed for their strategic importance. There are too many roads that need resurfacing, and too small a budget.

The concrete barriers are there to protect drivers and prevent them from leaving the road and entering the railway. They are temporary whilst the safety fence is being repaired.

The roads team are aware of the condition of this road and carry out maintenance as necessary. Potholes can be reported on the Highland Council website under the "Report a Problem" tab.

Gill reported that the appalling state of the Bypass road is causing a lot of driver frustration which is contributing to 'road rage' and very nasty behaviour being displayed by some drivers.

Biz our councillor has been diligently pursuing this issue with the Highland Council and she told us that provision has been made in the 2020/2021 Highland Council barriers budget for work to be undertaken to remove the barriers.

MacKenzie emailed us on the 25th Nov 2020 to let us know that Gordon MacDonald (the area Manager for Skye) has the lead on this as he has the staff qualified to undertake barrier repair/replacement. There is an ongoing discussion between the HC and Network Rail as authority to work so close to the railway line is required.

Action: As Biz was not at our meeting we had no update from her HC sources on this topic.

We agreed with MacKenzie that we will tell everyone to continue using Highland Council problem reporting system for the time being. It can be found using this link <https://www.highland.gov.uk/report> and then pass the report number to Mary.

As our No 1 priority is the barriers and they are being managed by the Skye team we nominated the clearing of the ditches in Stromeferry as our next priority area of work which can be completed by the local team and then road repairs.

Action: Mary to email MacKenzie with our ditching request.

5.6 Fernaig and Portachuillin Rail Bridge works.

Network Railway's contractor AMCO has completed the Fernaig Bridge scour works plus the refurbishment of the Portchuillin Bridge. AMCO have removed all their equipment from the Fernaig Compound. Completed.

5.7 Bench

We all agreed that the bench should be sited in the Spring.

Minutes for Stromeferry and Achmore CC Meeting – 25th November 2020 @ 7.30pm

5.8 Recycling Bins

There are no recycling facilities near our CC area so we decided that this is a service we urgently need and we will make it part of the services we will ask for via the Lochalsh Collaboration questionnaire.

5.9 The Strome Salmon Fish farm.

The CC have written to Scottish Salmon and requested a meeting; which they declined, so we email again inviting them to meet with us when COVID procedures allow us to meet. In the meantime we agreed that we would create a list of the questions and forward to Scottish Salmon. When we are collecting questions we will provide the link to the Highland Council planning details that were submitted by Scottish Salmon between 2014 & 2019 and the other regulating bodies that approved this farm, so that our questions focus on actual breaches or non compliance of the plans that have been approved. Mary and Kath have a drafted letter which is nearly complete to circulate to all CC members before forwarding it to all residents to obtain questions which Kath will collate.

Action: Kath and Mary to pull together an email and distribution so that we capture resident's concerns.

5.10 Wreath for Remembrance Day service

Gill laid a wreath on behalf of our Community and it was appreciated that new Communities are taking part. While Gill was at the memorial she observed that there were seven people from Stromeferry whose names were inscribed. Completed for 2020.

6 Updates from Regional & National Organisations (As and when issues arise)

6.1 NHS

- Nothing to report.

6.2 Tillhill

Dawn spoke with the Tillhill's office two months ago in a private capacity (not wearing her Community Council hat) and told Tillhill staff that the Braeintra gate across from the allotments and the Achmore gate behind Ascaig Cottage were locked and we wished to have the locks removed so that we can have pedestrian access to the hill and lochs. Dawn confirmed that the gates are now open with a sign on them asking all to make sure they close the gates after them. Hopefully everyone will respect and adhere to this request so that we all benefit by having pedestrian access to our hills and lochs.

Action: If anyone has any issues with the gates – not being able to open them etc then please contact Dawn who will liaise with Tillhill.

6.3 Highland Council

6.3.1 Winter resilience

Mary sent all the details of the folks who volunteered for the winter resilience program to the Highland Council, so far she has not had any more information

Action: Mary to follow up and find out when the bins etc will be delivered.

6.3.2 Local Government Boundary Commission

The Boundary Commission began a public consultation on their proposals for councillor numbers and ward boundaries in the Highland Council area. For ward 5 they have removed the Strahpeffer area so our new ward 5 would stretch from the Coigach area in the north to the Glenelg area in the south. When deciding councillor numbers in the island the parity is based on 1:800 while for the Highlands it was 1:2,800 which has left whole areas of the Highlands without representation.

Minutes for Stromeferry and Achmore CC Meeting – 25th November 2020 @ 7.30pm

This has resulted in the Highland Council lead by Margaret Davidson to reject has the proposals and she is asking to meet with the Minister for Local Government and Planning to discuss the matter further.

We concluded that we support the stance being taken by the Leader of the Highland council and we will convey this to our councillor Biz Campbell. The redrawing of the boundaries so that Strathpeffer is no longer part of ward 5 we believe makes geographical sense.

Action: Mary to email Biz to let her know our thoughts on this topic.

6.3.3 Wester Ross Tourist Infrastructure

The Highland Council is producing a Highland wide Tourism Infrastructure Plan which will detail existing provision and focus more on the the gaps in provision around the Strathpeffer and Wester Ross area. The plan looks at seven areas of infrastructure e.g camper van waste deposal facilities, parking that need to be provisioned to improved facilities for our major tourist industry. We all felt that this undertaking of implementing essential infrastructure for Lochalsh residents and tourists requires the heft of the Highland Council and other such bodies and is way beyond what Community Councils can undertake. We will provide feedback on the proposals as and when it is required.

6.3.4 Road Closure

The A890 will be closed at the Liar Railway Bridge at Achnashellach from 10.00pm on Tuesday 15 December till 6am on Wednesday 16 December 2020. Diversion will be via A896 Lochcarron-Shieldaig-Torridon-Kinlochewe and then A832 Kinlochewe – Achnasheen.

6.4 Police & Fire

- Nothing to report

6.5 Utilities - Scottish Water

- Nothing to report

7 Update from our Councillor

- Nothing to report

8 Updates from Local Groups

8.1 CMNet CIC Broadband

Here is a brief summary of progress in the past month:-

The AGM was held via Microsoft Teams on the 11th November and draft minutes and other documents have been circulated.

The test sites in North Strome, Ardnarff and Strome Ferry have been used as "targets" and the respective dishes on Creag Mhaol aligned; signal strengths and throughputs are now as expected. Work continues to find the optimum frequency for each radio.

The Plockton line is now fully operational and traffic has been split between Achmore and Plockton. Both Plockton and Achmore Hall radio links are showing peaks of 79 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload; i.e. they are working well and should have enough capacity to fully utilise the fibre lines.

We have had to amend the MikroTik central logging system and also write new software to properly record false RADAR events and now for the first time are able to gather accurate data.

There are 4 installations waiting for activation and a further 9 which will be started as soon as the subscribers' statutory cooling off period has expired.

Minutes for Stromeferry and Achmore CC Meeting – 25th November 2020 @ 7.30pm

"Whole house Wi-Fi" has been installed for one subscriber.

COVID 19 - If we stay on the current tier we expect to be able to continue with installations.

There are more details on the website:-www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=433827

--

Phil Game, CMNet CIC, Achmore & Strome Ferry Community Broadband System

8.2 Fernaig Trust

The Trust's AGM, normally held in mid-December, is postponed for 3 months and will be re-assessed then.

Colin MacAndrew

8.3 Stromeferry and Achmore Hall

9 AOB

- None

10 Calendar

11 Next Meetings

By Microsoft Teams – last Wed January 2021

12 Formal close of meeting @ 9.00pm

Gill closed the meeting by thanking all for their efforts this year and wished everyone a Happy Christmas. We are not having a meeting in December. We are looking forward to a great 2021 and getting vaccinated – stay well, stay safe.