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Sunart Community Council
7:30pm, Thursday 9th February 2023 Zoom

1. Welcome and Apologies:

- a. Attending: D Anderson (Chair), J Jones (Secretary), E Sneddon Hughes (Treasurer), J Hilder, J May, V Balnaves Aiken (until 8pm), J Millar-Craig (Minute Taker) and three members of the public.
- b. Apologies: Cllr Angus MacDonald

2. Acceptance of previous minutes (Inc. amendments)

Proposed: J Hilder Seconded: V Balnaves Aitken

3. Matters arising not included in the minutes

- a. Police matters – An update has been received:
Road Safety – There have been a couple of Road Traffic Collisions in recent weeks with the main cause being speed albeit under the speed limit. We all know the single track roads are predominantly 60mph, however with the poor line of sight and blind bends nobody should be driving anywhere near the speed limit. Please drive carefully. The Fort William Road Policing Unit will be in the area carrying out patrols and speed checks at a number of sites. Station/House renovations are progressing and all being well, should be done by the end of March.
New Inspector – Inspector Isla Campbell has moved to a new role the new Inspector is Inspector Ross McCartney. Inspector McCartney was previously a Sergeant in Fort William before being promoted and taking up an Inspector's post in Skye.
- b. 3b Paths around Strontian. The bridge is being worked on but is not completed yet. It had been noted that the verges at Ariundle are being very badly damaged by the large lorries which are then also using the car park as a turning place. However, photos are taken of the road before and after the work. FLS then gives the council the money to reinstate the road.
- c. Glenfinnan Bridge – intended for bikes only.
- d. 7a Ash tree – Secretary has phoned for a quote.
- e. 7c Bottle bank. -Has now been emptied.
- f. 7d Litter pick - VBA to be asked regarding role of Primary School in organising this.
- g. MOWI Fish farm Planning Application – noted, this was posted on our Facebook page. There was a question-and-answer session at the January meeting. Imam Ismail, Fish Farm Manager, emailed a reply to all questions raised.

4. Planning Matters – previously circulated

- c. 22/06093/S37 Expiry date 31/01/2023 Proposed to construct a new overhead spur , Bellsgrave Quarry – noted
- d. 22/05874/FUL Erection of Recreational Building, 42 Bellsgrave Acharacle - noted
- e. 23/00306/PIP Erection of 2 houses (renewal of 16/00369/PIP) land 250m NE of Bellsgrave Lodge Strontian – noted
- f. 23/00359/FUL Extension Pabbay, 14 Seaview Grazings, Strontian – noted

5. Correspondence

- a. Fish Farm litter – a member of the public had reported finding a fish feed bag on the beach at Resipole. Secretary to pass on the information to the Fish Farm Manager and ask that employees be more vigilant.
- b. Invasion Bay answers to questions- MOWI had answered all questions raised at the meeting.
- c. STAG Appraisal Lochaber area – it had been requested that the information and link to this questionnaire be put back up on Facebook. This had been done.

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- d. Glen Laudale Native Woodland proposals – the details of the proposal to carry out Native Woodland Regeneration and Native woodland Creation at Glen Laudale had been passed to the Community Council. Noted.
- e. Ariundle Bridge – the Community Company had spoken to the contractors currently working on the bridge over the Strontian River with a view to them also installing the bridge on the Faerie Road above the Strontian River. They are willing to do this but before they can supply a quote for the work, the Community Company must work on fleshing out a joint agreement with FLS. Ultimately, FLS will undertake the maintenance and repairs to the bridge but would not be responsible for a total replacement. This bridge was obtained for the community with the assistance of the Highland Council and David Robertson of the FLS.
- f. Corran Narrows Fixed Link – discussion took place around the upcoming meeting called by JF. It was noted that a lot of time, effort and consultation had already been put into possible ferry replacements. The meeting still felt that the best way forward was to make sure that new ferry(ies) were put into place as soon as possible with a fixed link as a possible option in the future. The Secretary is to reply to JF E mail regarding the meeting JF has called. The Secretary will also write to Jenny Gilruth to look into the possibility of the Community Council meeting with her when she comes to Mull.
- g. HCSN Jan 2023 News Sheet – this newssheet is available on the Highland Senior Citizens Network website. A link is to be placed on Sunart Community Council Facebook page.
- h. Paths around Strontian: Robbie Layden (LD) has forwarded dates when he would be available for a meeting. He and David Robertson (DR) will be invited to the next Sunart Community Council meeting in March. After discussion, it was also approved that all future Sunart Community Council meetings return to the Village Hall as a venue. It is hoped that members the public would feel encouraged to become more involved again in Community Council matters.
- i. Scouts Group – Village Hall. This matter has now been resolved due to the Hall opening again.
- j. The Coronation 6th May – Zurich Insurance state insurance cover **is** available should communities want to organise activities such a bonfires, parties etc for the King's Coronation, providing that:
 - Carry out a thorough risk assessment;
 - Comply with HSE guidance for bonfires, beacons, fireworks or inflatables;
 - Train your event volunteers and staff;
 - Ensure that third-party suppliers have their own Public Liability Insurance.Suggestions from the floor in ways to contribute to the celebrations included giving a commemorative mug or coin to all the Primary pupils, or perhaps a tea party in the Hall, such as had happened in previous similar events. A request for suggestions is to be placed on Facebook. Following a similar post at the time of the Queen's death, it had been suggested that a bench at Teddy bears picnic would be a good memorial. VBA is to be asked if the Primary Parent Council is arranging anything. The Scouts are also to be asked if they have any plans.
- k. A Highland Council Webinar event is arranged to look at the Community Map for Scotland, this is an evening event added 15th Feb 2023.
- l. Invasion Bay request confirmation in writing -See Matters Arising 3g above.
- m. Highland Drug and Alcohol Partnership Small Grants – this information is to be forwarded to Ewan's Room.
- n. Food Waste Sessions – a poster had been received concerning organised events in Fort William on making meals with leftovers etc. The poster will be placed on Facebook and on the noticeboard.
- o. Medical Practitioners, Acharacle, Strontian and Lochaline. – A letter had been received concerning the proposed merger of Lochaline and Acharacle medical practices. Adverts had been placed both for a sole practitioner and also for a salaried GP to replace Susan Taylor in

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Lochaline who is retiring. There had been no applicants. It is now proposed to advertise for a 30hr per week GP to add to the current GP provision in Acharacle to enable all GPs to work across all 4 sites in future. This met with the meetings approval.

- p. Ardgor Community Council meets on the same night and time as Sunart Community Council. Local councillors cannot come to both meetings and enquiries were made as to whether times/ nights could be changed. The suggestion of the meeting was that local councillors can alternate their attendance at the different meetings or attend on a rota basis, as was the practice previously.

6. Treasurer's Report

Current Account: £11,160.93p Reserve: £3,109.00p

The librarian in our local library has asked for £50 - £60 to purchase books for a school project. This was agreed Proposed DA Seconded JJ: the money will come from the sale of the second handbooks.

The Community Council Treasurer requested for her records, a receipt and acknowledgement of the recent cheque from the Community Council of £7,500, which was sent to the Community Company as a donation to the Sunart Community Endowment Fund. This will be sent to her.

Advice was also shared with the Community Council members as to the best way to go about putting in requests for funding and grants when required in the future

b. Any other business

- a. Lack of a Venue in the Village for Local Events – For a while the Village Hall and then more recently, also the Church had been unavailable for public use. A member of the public shared with the meeting, how she had been left without a venue for a funeral of a family member. This had made what was already a very difficult time, even more challenging. Thankfully, the funeral could ultimately be held in the Village Hall. The Hall has now been reopened. She asked that the Community Council be behind ensuring the availability of venues such as the Village Hall and /or the Church at all times. The Community Council was aware of this issue and had always been fully behind the reopening of the Hall and in keeping the Church available for community use. Currently, the Church is earmarked for sale, it is hoped it can be purchased for the community, be repaired and have Dualchas Heritage Society run it as a multifunctional space, which would include Church services. The meeting agreed that the village should not be in a position where there is nowhere suitable to hold such community events.
- b. Robert Dunn then spoke on a number of issues:
- He thanked the Community Council for being instrumental in getting Scottish Water to lay a new water main in Longrigg, some years ago.
 - The recent Lighting strikes had led to problems with his modem box. He was approaching the Community Council to help the residents of Longrigg Road to get BT to install Broad Band fibre optic cable on Longrigg Road. He handed in a petition signed by Longrigg residents to back up this request. The meeting agreed that they could approach BT. It was pointed out that such a connection may also be needed elsewhere in the village.
 - Sunart Community Renewables – Robert shared a report on the success of the recent distribution of cheques to local residents from the monies gained from the Hydro Scheme. He thanked all who had been involved in the task of organising and delivering the cheques.
 - Community Energy Club - He also described the hoped for next step of setting up a Local Energy Club. The aim would be to set up a club in which members would get their energy at a discounted price from the local, renewable source rather than from the national grid. Club members would have to install a smart meter and have an account with Octopus Energy. The need for the installation of smart meters is a further example of the need for improved broadband in Longrigg Road and elsewhere in the village. The intention is to form a sub committee of the renewables group to help organise this project. They would

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also be advertising for a part time 'Development Officer' to help explain the scheme to potential club members.

- The Sunart Community Renewables group also hope to expand their renewables capacities e.g. wind turbines and / or solar panels. NB: the Community Renewables items above are fully reported in February's De tha Dol. The Community Council is supportive these future possibilities.

- c. James Hilder shared information with regard to the recent Community Company questionnaire. One hundred and fifty surveys had been returned. He thanked the Community Council for it's support in promoting the survey and the practical help members gave in it's distribution etc. There is to be a number of meetings to discuss the findings and next steps. A report will be passed to the Community Council when ready. It is intended that the findings will then help provide evidence in support of a variety local purposes which may require a bid for funding etc.
- d. The Community Council then passed on their very heartfelt thanks to James for all the fantastic work he has done and the support he has given while serving on the Council - especially during COVID. The Chair also shared a number of best wishes and thanks to James that had been expressed by members of the community. They indicated their disappointment that he was retiring from the council and felt that he would be great loss. He was and is a huge asset to the village. James is continuing on the Community Company and Urram and will still support the Community Council with advice etc.

7. **Co-option of J Millar-Craig** J Millar-Craig was made a co-opted member of the Community Council. Proposed: Denise Anderson Seconded: Elaine Sneddon Hughes

The local community are encouraged to come along to meetings. If anyone is interested in joining the council and would like to know more about getting involved, they are invited to speak to any member of the council.

The Council members voted in favour of returning to the Village Hall as happened before the hall was closed. The Sunart Community Council will approach the Village Hall Committee about returning to hold our meetings in the Village Hall in future.

Date of next meeting – Thursday 9th March 2023 at 7:30pm, the venue will be the Village Hall.