

# DRAFT

## **Agenda Sunart Community Council 7:30pm, Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 Village Hall**

### **1. Welcome and Apologies:**

- a. Attending: D Anderson (Chair), J Jones (Secretary), E Sneddon-Hughes (Treasurer), J Millar-Craig (Minute Taker), David Robertson FLS Area Visitor Manager, Robbie Layden FLS Regional Visitor Services manager and five members of the public.
- b. Apologies: J May, V Balnaves-Aitken, H Tait.

Item 7 was taken first. The Village Clean-up Day AOB item was added after being agreed by email.

### **2. Acceptance of previous minutes (Inc. amendments)**

Proposed Denise Anderson    Seconded Elaine Sneddon Hughes

### **3. Matters arising not included in the minutes**

- a. Police matters – a summary of the points received:
  - Crime – this has been a busier period but everything that has been reported has been dealt with.
  - Licensed Premises – Licensed premises will continue to be visited by police. It is emphasised that it is the responsibility of the licence holder to report incidents of a criminal nature including at events held under a public entertainment license.
  - Schools – PC Paige MacDonald, the Preventions and Interventions Officer based in Fort William, had carried out a number of inputs with pupils at Ardnamurchan High School on Social Media and Sextortion. This is a crime which is becoming more prevalent in society. A segment is being written for De Tha Dol?
  - Station – station should be open to the public in about 3 – 5 weeks' time.
  - Corran Ferry - HC have released a statement regarding plans they aim to put in place as a result of the delay in MV Corran returning to service.

### **4. Planning Matters – previously circulated**

- a. 23/00301/FUL Erection of self-contained residential unit, East of the Meadows, Strontian – noted

### **5. Correspondence**

- a. Zurich Insurance renewal – this comes to £86, which will be passed to the treasurer to be paid.
- b. Collaborative CC meeting of the Corran Narrows – a discussion took place around this and other issues concerning the crossing including the points:
  - It was very much felt that this issue needs to be sorted as soon as possible given the concerns with the current ferries
  - People seem to be ignoring all the work, research and discussion carried out over the past few years towards a replacement for the existing ferries
  - Apparently, a replacement replica diesel ferry could be built for around £12m- £15 m and could be delivered in 18 months
  - An impartial survey could/should be used to explore the desire or not for a fixed link. Social media is currently expressing a very strong desire for a fixed link but it isn't known who or how many are saying this
  - Before taking part in a survey however, people would need to know details about the link such as exactly what kind of fixed link it would be and where it would be sited. This would take time to develop and the problem of the aging ferries needs to be addressed now.
  - The present road system would have to be upgraded to cope with the potential increase in traffic
  - The SCC still maintains its stand on the need for E ferries to replace the existing ones

## DRAFT

- The SCC are concerned about the possible weight introduction on the Maid of Glencoul. There is to be an announcement on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March in regard to the weight limit and the SCC are waiting to see this.
  - Morvern CC and Acharacle CC are both behind Highland Council and E ferries as replacements.
  - It seems that the Scottish Government is more aware now of the issues.
- c. Bridge – Ariundle inc Cost for Phemies path bridge – The Community Company has secured a replacement bridge which will incur approx. £5000 costs to cover it's purchase and installation. It was agreed that the Community Council would contribute up to £2,500 towards the cost, pending an application, with the Community Company finding the rest. JH will take this arrangement to the Community Company. FLS to work collaboratively with community council and community company on installing/ some maintenance of the bridge.
- d. Firework Control Zones – This gives a council power to set up Firework Free Zones where no fireworks can be used/set off. This power is more likely to be used in a town rather than in a rural setting such as ourselves.
- e. Corran Ferry – Addressed under 5b.
- f. The Community Company is looking at getting a better Wi-Fi signal to the Village Hall, which would enable hybrid meetings to take place.

### 6. Treasurer's Report

Two deposits had been made to the Community Council from Carnoch and Glen Tarbet Hydro totalling £4,246.86.

Current Account: £15,407.79p      Reserve:      £3,111.15p

Endowment Fund – As bank accounts are giving very little return Sunart Community Company has £25,000 invested in an Endowment Fund. Foundation Scotland has invested a matching £25,000. Their £25,000 doesn't belong to the SCC but any growth that it makes does. Both funds are valued at £25,656.09p. In addition to the SCC money, The Foundation Scotland's interest also goes to the SCC. All monies are invested in ethical funds. Since the Fund was established in October it has earned the community a potential £2,650.

### 7. Any other business

- a. Paths around Strontian - Forestry and Land Scotland, Robbie Layden and David Robertson – (this item taken first, at the start of the meeting)

David and Robbie were welcomed to the meeting. They had been invited to attend so that the concerns raised by the SCC and members of the public regarding the condition and maintenance of local routes and paths, could be discussed. A discussion paper containing a comprehensive list of specific concerns had been sent to Robbie and David. It was also pointed out that some of the actions being implemented by FLS locally appear at odds with some of the FLS national stated simd.

It was pointed out that many members of the community were angry about lack of consultation, the 'down grading' of a number of paths, that board walks had been removed, certain bridges were still unusable and paths were becoming so muddy that the public were having to walk further beyond the edges of the paths, thereby causing increased damage to surrounding plants etc. David shared that they were very much here to listen and to work with the community. He explained the 'historical' nature of many of the paths, boardwalks, bridges etc. and the current financial restrictions facing FLS. They were open to seeing what work they could realistically take on themselves and what might need to be shared with or even passed over entirely to, the community. He stressed that they are happy to work with the community and discuss concerns and they looked forward to all parties working together to investigate innovative and collaborative approaches to the issues.

Detailed discussions took place on the ten Request Points contained in the Discussion Paper. Some general points were also made. At Ariundle, the current work being done had caused

## DRAFT

some damage to the road. FLS will be repairing this damage after the work is completed. FLS are looking to using greener methods to help with bracken control etc. DR has agreed to try and keep the SCC (informally) informed of various works as to when and where they are being carried out. Efforts will be made to try and make sure formal and informal paths are not lost when work is being done.

Some other requests unfortunately could not be met by FLS but the following action points were established by David:

- Ariundle/Ceum Na Coille – priority location for FLS. Some improvements to be made to surface of path on the east bank, especially around An Torra Ban with some basic work being done by internal staff. Some vegetation management progressed on all trails including bracken at the Ceum Na Coille. Strimming long grass from around the rocks in the car park will be undertaken. These actions to be part of the work programme / maintenance plan for Ariundle NNR.
- Rathad Na Sidhein – Community Company to take forward installation of bridge over the Allt mo Nionag as per discussions. FLS and beat forester to undertake some vegetation clearance including bracken to help maintain the 'informal' but important trail.
- Coille Dubh Bridge – top bridge is relatively new and is felt to have no issues but this will be checked.
- Phemies – it is acknowledged that this is locally a very important route but the route via An Rathad Ard is to be maintained and that therefore there is still a safe connection between Ardnastang / Longrigg and Strontian. The point re the A861 and from where the road end to the informal access at the Knoll is a distance of around 950m involves a section of walking on the road. An onsite meeting between FLS and the Community Council / Community Company to be arranged to look at the aspirations for the location.
- Gleann Na H-lubhraich (Glen Hurich) – these routes are not seen by FLS as introductory and SOAC/Open Access in terms of underfoot conditions and are fairly remote to reach for many visitors. However, they will attempt to help keep these informal trails more accessible by removing fallen trees and the occasional minor maintenance should resources allow.

Car Parking Charges –these are to be introduced for parking at Ariundle and Garbh Eilean. both of which are priority sites for FLS. The charges highlight the need FLS has for additional resources and funding.

The Community Council thanked David and Robbie for coming to the meeting. They also thanked FLS for the new bridge that they had put in, commenting that it was well made and attractive to look at.

- b. Village Clean-up Day, Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023 starting at 2:30pm outside Oakwood

**Date of next meeting** – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7:30pm, in the Village Hall