

**Minutes**  
**Sunart Community Council**  
**7:30pm, Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024, Village Hall**

**1. Welcome and Apologies:**

**Attending:** J Jones (Chair), J Millar-Craig (Secretary), C Hunter, P Adams, M Stewart, from Urram J. Hilder, D Anderson, District Manager Adult Services Karen Anne Wilson, 5 members of the public.

**Apologies:** A Gainsford (Treasurer), Andrea Herrmann, S Fanet (Councillor).

**2. Presentation - Karen Anne Wilson, District Manager Adult Services and Urram**

This item was taken first at the start of the meeting. J Hilder offered to give an update on Urram and it's activities and answer any questions. He introduced Karen Ann Wilson (KAW) as being better able to give information regarding Dail Mhor. In summary, KAW outlined the current situation in Adult Care, which is currently in 'crisis' resulting from severe staff shortages. Locally two homes are open but two are 'shut' - Dail Mhor and the Mackintosh in Mallaig. Due to staff shortages, the staff from both these facilities are being deployed in the Invernevis centre in Fort William. At the Invernevis there are three respite beds and one palliative care bed so the service has not stopped but these beds are all full.

The reasons given for the (possible) closure of Dail Mhor were given as:

- In a survey, people expressed a preference for 'care at home' in the community rather than in a care home.
- The poor state of the Dail Mhor buildings and of its contents
- Lack of staff
- Must make savings this year
- However, the decision had not been made yet. Have to wait and see.

Whilst this was not an official announcement of closure, the impression given was that it would close; and also that a decision might be made soon. If the building is closed, the local staff would be deployed for local 'care at in home'.

A Summary of Points made by the attendees at the meeting:

- Job adverts were difficult to locate on the website.
- In order to close a facility like Dail Mhor certain steps needed to be followed, including having a well-advertised, public meeting. This had not been done. KAW agreed that these steps would happen.
- The meeting was dismayed that Dail Mhor could close.
- It is vital that elderly people on this side of the ferry are able to receive care locally, not a long journey away.
- The recruitment service for staff itself seems to be a major weak area. Various issues and problems were outlined.

- A request was made for Ardnamurchan specific adverts for Ardnamurchan specific jobs.
- The question was asked, that if a care home wasn't possible why not create 'day care' beds.
- A member of the public described her personal situation with having to care for a loved one and being unable to get any respite. KAW will speak to this person individually.
- Urram is working hard to provide other services that help provide some support, care and respite.
- Urram and others locally, are looking at a variety of projects and different sources of funding with a view to providing care in different formats that can be achieved within the local set up – if Dail Mhor closes. With community led support this area could be a trial project.
- If Dail Mhor closes, a new doctors' surgery and nurses station would also be needed.
- The community could try to build a new centre but there would have to be a cast iron guarantee that NHS would rent it back.
- All Urram minutes are available on their website. There are representatives of all the community council areas on Urram board.
- Urram, while having invited KAW to speak at the meeting, had been unaware of exactly what she was going to say in her presentation.
- It was agreed that a letter to be sent to the other community councils outlining the above.

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

Two amendments were made to the minutes: In the heading "Agenda" to be changed to "Minutes".  
Item 7f: "Ardnamurchan" changed to "Acharacle".

Proposer: C Hunter    Seconder: M Stewart

### **4. Matters arising**

- a. Police matters – none so far
- b. 3c. Sunart Community email addresses have now been set up for all councillors. Some addresses have not been made active yet. People are asked to check.
- c. 3h. the phone box has not been checked yet to see if it has a working light.
- d. 3l. The Crisis payments have been sorted out.
- e. 5e. Mod - the date is now 17<sup>th</sup> April to apply for funding.
- f. 5f. Highland Council Nature Restoration Fund – JJ has met with Eilidh-Ann Philips with regard to applying for funding towards rhododendron removal.
- g. Parking Charges Ariundle – the letter to Forestry Land Scotland had been written and was with councillors for discussion before sending.
- h. 7e. Dail Mhor – see the note above re the attendance of KAW.

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

None

## 6. Correspondence

- a. Disrupting Criminal Dumping – an E mail had come in about SEPA's campaign regarding waste criminals – people who offer to remove waste but then just go on to dump it illegally. The public should use properly registered companies and report fly tipping. It was noted that a caravan had been dumped locally and had been found to contain corrosive materials.
- b. Ariundle and Faeries Walk - licence. The components of the bridge are in the FLS yard. An outline had been sent to SCC of how to go about getting the required paperwork needed to allow the construction to take place. **JJ to action**  
FLS also reported that the small bridge over Allt an Fhasaidh had damaged boards, possibly due to horses being taken over. It may be that this bridge will have to be removed but the decision will not be taken until a proper assessment has taken place which will not be until after Easter. The burn can be passed on the lower ford.
- c. Follow up, The Belford Action Group, Letters, TJ – The Back the Belford group had sent an email asking individuals and community councils to send letters to the Cabinet Secretary for Health Neil Gray and the chair of NHS Highland, Sarah Compton-Bishop. Template letters had been provided which urged that design and preparation work for a new Belford Hospital be included in the revised Capital Investment Programme. This email to be forwarded to all Sunart Community Councillors and to be placed on the website. **Secretary to action.**

## 7. Presentation Sunart Networks and Commswest – Andrew Sinclair

This item has been postponed until the next meeting. Thank you to Andrew for his understanding.

## 8. Presentation Urram – this item was taken first

## 9. Corran Ferry – feedback was given on the recent Steering Group Meeting.

Project Update- design works underway and alignment structure confirmed, design work should be completed by Sept 24, out to contract Dec 24 into 25, completed late 2026. The new vessel is still to be an e-ferry. There will be a backup generator on board but it will only be to power the vessel to dry dock or if there is a power failure in Ardgour. The new ferry is to replace the Maid of Glencoul.

Capital Funding – A total of £30m has been repurposed from a number of infrastructure projects.

The source of £25m for the new ferry hasn't been settled yet. Will know more by next Steering Group meeting.

Operational Update – Maid of Glencoul – towed away Wednesday for refit. Hoped to back be back under own steam by end of May. New parts for steering still being worked on.

AOCB – webcams on the ferry queue should be set up after Easter.

Kiosks to be reinstated and fare collection to be started from cars parked in the queue – some fares may be collected on ferry.

The new e-ferry is to replace the Maid of Glencoul. No new ferry to replace MV Corran is yet planned. No new diesel vessel is planned.

Fixed Link Study – costings are being looked. Report out soon.

Concerns were raised about safety and queuing cars. HC not planning to have marshals back.

## 10. Treasurer's Report

A full Treasurer's report was sent in by A Gainsford. The Bank account and signatories still being sorted out.

Deposit Account: £3,155.64 Current Account: £14,966.53

Outstanding year-end payments not included total £645.18, so final year-end balance for accounts purposes will be £14,346.85.

## 11. Any other business

- a. Highland Consultation [Highland Council on LinkedIn: #highland #yourplacehighland](#). re Community Area: A Public Consultation survey is available on what makes my local area good to live in / visit – noted. Comments were made about the number of local surveys already carried out recently.
- b. Dog Fouling – a member of the public sent in a concern about the quantity of dog mess being left on the path at the back of the hotel and up the side of the river. **Secretary to inform police.**
- c. Faeries Road Bridge – see item 6b.
- d. State of Road running alongside the river, school pitch side – Concern expressed regarding the state of the path. Paths Group are to be working on this and on others around the village. Concern also expressed regarding the height of the step between the back path and the Ardnamurchan High School ground being too high.
- e. State of Road running up towards Anaheilt, alongside of river – Condition to be reported to Roads Dept. – **Secretary to action.**
- f. Green bin opposite telephone box, Strontian - concern expressed regarding the green bin being too small for purpose. The community owns this one and pays for it to be emptied. **JJ to investigate costs of getting a larger bin.**
- g. Damaged Greenhouse behind Dail Mhor – new glass has been ordered.
- h. A request for Urram minutes to be put in De tha dol? – Urram minutes are published on their website. It costs to publish them in DtD?. People can be supplied with a paper copy if they should so wish – contact Urram.
- i. It was shared that J Green had stood down as a community councillor. It was proposed and agreed to approach another named individual to become a co-opted member.
- j. It was proposed that meeting start at 7pm rather than 7.30. This was agreed. To be arranged.

**Date of next meeting** – Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at **7:00pm**, in Village Hall