

## Minutes

### Sunart Community Council

7.00pm, Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025, 7.pm Village Hall

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies:

Attending: J Jones (Chair), A Evans, J Millar-Craig (Secretary), P Adams, C Hunter, M Stewart and one member of the public

Apologies: A Gainsford (Treasurer), A Herrmann, A Baxter (Councillor), M Prosser (Councillor).

#### 2. Acceptance of previous minutes (inc. amendments)

Proposer: J Jones    Seconder: A Evans

#### 3. Matters Arising

- a. Bridge on Fairies Road / HF Holidays Pathways Fund Charity – In train, waiting for HF Holidays to reply. **AG to action**
- b. Public Toilet at Shops – on going. **JJ to action**
- c. Trees at Parking Area Surgery/ Village Hall – on going. **JJ to action**
- d. Join Rural Watch Scotland – In order to better enable items and links to Rural Watch Scotland, Neighbourhood Watch etc, to be place on Facebook, PA is going to join and take this on. **PA to action**
- e. Laudale felled trees waiting on a reply from Nature Scot **JJ to action**
- f. Laudale Estate Woodland Plans 2025 as above **JJ to action**
- g. Extra / Larger bins for village centre – no further response from Highland Council. They are to be contacted again. **JJ to action** It was suggested that perhaps erecting an enclosure around the bins would be helpful but this ultimately would require more maintenance. Bags are still being left lying beside the bins or crammed in on top resulting in the lid not closing. PA will monitor this. **PA to action.**
- h. FLS- lack of Funds for Maintenance of Visitor Facilities – possible sources of funding to be investigated. **A G to action**
- i. Community Regeneration Funding Expression of Interest 25/26 – had been actioned by AG
- j. Community Council Zoom Account – the Community Council is paying for an account. This is to be checked by AG. **AG to action**
- k. Highland Community Safety and Resilience 30<sup>th</sup> Jan. – this had been sent to the Resilience Group.

4. **Police Matters** – the most recent update was from 15<sup>th</sup> January and advised of the house break ins which were taking place around Drumnadrochit and Fort William. There hadn't been any reported on this side of the loch but people are asked to keep a very careful eye out for any suspicious activity, vehicles or visitors to properties and outbuildings, in the area.

5. **Planning Matters** – no notifications for Sunart

#### 6. Correspondence

- a. Nursery, letter A Baxter – AB had shared with the Community Council, a copy of an Email he had sent to Highland Council with regard to nursery provision in Strontian. Parents had approached him with concerns regarding the operation of the nursery and AB's letter identified a sustained failure with regard to staffing resilience, workforce planning and contingency arrangements. He was demanding a full and urgent review of the situation. The Community Council had not been contacted by parents but wished to express their full support in this matter. AB to be contacted **JMC to action**

- b. Strontian Playpark Update Jan. 2026 – J Hilder had shared an E mail with The Community Council, giving an update on the possibility of installing a new Strontian Playpark. An outline was given regarding costs and the necessary fundraising which would have to take place. It also outlined the phases which might be gone through in the construction of the new playground.
- c. FAQ Insurance and Community Councils (from HC) – Sunart Community Council has insurance through Zurich.
- d. Strontian Village Planter Refurbishment – the grant for this has been awarded as previously agreed.
- e. EZO community chargers – update – an E mail had been received advising the community of the migration of public EV charging points in Highland, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray council areas. EZO has been appointed by Highland Council to operate and maintain the network. Drivers using ChargePlace Scotland chargers will now have to download the EZO app to access the network.
- f. New Fort William Hospital, Access Panel – MS and PA had attended the meeting which was discussing the new Belford Hospital building with regard to accessibility to the proposed site and interior of the building. They shared some of the issues and the solutions provided. A copy of the plans is to be placed in the library. **PA to action**
- g. Lochaber Redesign Option Appraisal – MS and possibly PA are to attend this meeting.
- h. Request to use Sunart Resilience Plan Risk Assessment, Arisaig and District Community Council - the Community Council was happy to share this document with Arisaig and District Community Council, to help in their endeavours to construct their own risk assessment.
- i. Have Your Say, Participation and Engagement Strategy – this E mail had been shared with the Community Council. **PA to action**
- j. Survey on Planning System – noted.

7. **Dail Mhor** – no further information

8. **Old Primary School** – the council is to be contacted again to establish what their intentions / plans are for the old primary school. **JJ to action**

### 9. **Corran Ferry**

At a previous Steering Group meeting, community council reps. had insisted on the ramps of the Maid being inspected due to the higher-than-normal number of vehicles being damaged when getting on/ off the ferry. The subsequent Navel Architects report described how various parts of the ramp, which are built up with 'sacrificial steel' to protect them from abrasive wear and tear, had been replaced during the Maid's recent refit. However, they could only be replaced as to be a 'best estimate' as to how they would interface with the slipway. Even with some subsequent adjustment after her return to service, it was acknowledged that the quality of this interface was still limited due to the 50-year-old design geometry of the ramps. The inference therefore is that there is potential for the ramps to result in damage to vehicles and that such incidents are not purely down to 'driver error', as had been implied. Drivers should put in claims to Highland Council, if their vehicle is damaged as result of getting on/off the ferry. Improvements to the ramps will attempt to be made during the 2026 Annual Overhaul.

The MV Corran refit is apparently on track to be completed by 'February 2026' however, the Maid is still scheduled to go away for her overhaul in March!

It is intended that online ticket sales for the ferry will go live this summer.

The Service Outage/ Contingency plan, which had been shared at the previous meeting was accepted with the amendment that the Shuttle Bus be provided on the A82, Corran – Fort William (rather than the A861, Ardgour – Camusnagaul).

The request for funding to do further upgrading work on the A861 in 2026/2027, has been passed to the Lochaber Area Roads Team.

**10. Place Plan** – on going

**11. Treasurer's Report** – apologies but, no report was available at this point in time.

**12. Any Other Business**

- a) JJ had received an E mail requesting that he complete a survey on 'Urram'. He is to seek more information on this. **JJ to action**
- b) Concern was expressed that the signpost, which normally stands beside the village centre car park, was still lying on it's side. EAP to be contacted. **PA to action**

**Date of Next Meeting- Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026 7pm, Strontian Village Hall**