

Minute of The Applecross Forum

Wednesday 2nd October 2019

Applecross Community Hall

Attendance:

K.E.C.M Sherif Kathrine E.C Mackie (Chair)
E.G Elaine Glover (Applecross Community Forum secretary)
K.M Kirsten Mackie (Applecross Community Company and Appleseed)
J.G Jon Glover (Chair Community Council)
A.M Arthur Macdonald (Applecross Trust)
L.T Lynn Turner (Appleseed)
A.M Alisdair Macdonald (Applecross Trust)
R.C Roslyn Clarke (Community Company)
M.S Michael Summers (crofter)
N.G Nick Goldthorpe
H.T Heather Teale (Helipad)
C.W Chris Ward (Helipad)
K.W Kalie Wilkinson
P.B Phil Buckley
G.W Gregor Watson (Community Woodland Group)
J.B Julie Baird (Community Company)
A.M Archie Maclellan (Applecross Trust)
V.H Valerie Hodgkinson (Community Company)
S.M Sarah McCowan (Sports group)
S.V Saara Viitanen (Community Company)
J.M Jack Marris (Applecross Community Hall)
R.P Rodger Pertwee
S.P Sue Pertwee
A.W Alan Wright
L.W Liz Wright
F.M Fiona Mackenzie (Applecross Historical Society - Clachan Church)
A.S Anita Stutter (Minister of Church of Scotland)
I.S Iain Stutter
M.P Melanie Page (Appleseed)
K.G Kenneth Gillies (Appleseed)
S.G Sue Grucock
R.H.J Rodger Harvey Jaimeson (Chair Applecross Trust)
T.M Tery McCowan (Sport group)
J.W Jess Whistance (Applecross Trust)
O.K Owen Kilbride (Chair Applecross Community Company)

1. Apologies:

Gill Fairweather, Tom O'halloran

2. Minutes from meeting 13th June 2019

R.C noted that the donation of £1000 to Helipad fund was made directly by Community Company and not Bealach Sportive and minutes amended accordingly.

Minutes proposed by K.M and seconded by L.T

3. Action Tracker

K.E.C.M removed complete items from the action tracker.

It was agreed to leave the footpath network on the action tracker and as a future action as this has been identified as a community priority.

ACTION

J.G will forward lay-by maps to Gerry for inclusion on the forum website.

Matters arising

Anita Stutter from The Church of Scotland explained that after discussions with The Applecross Trust it had been agreed that The Church of Scotland services could, in the future be held at Clachan church and that as a result the Church of Scotland building at Camusterrach could be sold. The General Trustees of The Church of Scotland were anxious that the building should continue to serve the community and that any potential sale to this end would be looked upon favourably. A.S invited the community to give some thought as to how this may be achieved.

It was agreed that this was potentially an exciting opportunity and it was expressed by K.E.C.M that she hoped the community could look at options to take advantage of this offer.

4. REPORTS

K.E.C.M explained that reports were published on the website prior to the meeting and it would be assumed that attendees would read them prior to the meeting.

A) Applecross allotment scheme
No questions raised.

B) Community Council.

The community council have identified tourism management as priority for the community and agreed at the last meeting to work with The Applecross Trust in developing a long term strategy which will be led by J.W.

J.W proposed to form a small working group from businesses, the wider community and in particular the community council.

Whilst the precise remit of this group is yet to be decided J.W explained that objectives would include:

Managing the impact of the NC500

Expanding the tourist season in the shoulder months

Managing the impact of wild camping

Emphasising the importance of education

Increasing provision of infrastructure - refuse, chemical toilets etc

The intention is for this to be a permanent group and it was indicated that anyone interested in joining the group should get in touch with J.W or J.G.

L.T expressed a keen interest, having had some interaction with The Heart of Sutherland tourism body and emphasised the importance of working with other affected groups across the Highlands. This point was broadly agreed although K.E.C.M pointed out that there were some problems which were unique to Applecross. G.W pointed out that the NC500 brand had recently been bought by a new owner who may have a more sympathetic attitude towards local communities.

ACTION: Initial meeting to be held towards the end of October.

Traffic on the Bealach:

J.G explained that the community council is leading a project to gather traffic data on the Bealach with a view to finding solutions to some of the acute problems now occurring due to the high volume of traffic.

Initial work has identified that in order to find meaningful solutions the level of data needs to be extremely comprehensive. J.G gave the example that if one pushbike refuses to pull in to let traffic past it become irrelevant how many cars are on the bealach that day.

Mark Stewart (community council) had identified some academic contacts who might be prepared to help the community council in devising a method for this level of data collection. It is accepted that this may include some low tech methodology and J.G explained that to get the best possible results (therefore solutions) the community would likely be encouraged to get involved.

L.T asked if anyone would like Applecross to be removed from the NC500 route.

H.T expressed deep concern about emergency service access and P.B expressed the view that with or without the NC500 on the official route the Bealach would still experience high volumes of traffic.

J.B. asked about the advisory sign which is covered in stickers at Tornapress and J.G explained that the sign would be left in situ but a new higher sign would erected on the opposite side of the road. Despite much cajoling from the community council the Highland council are dragging their feet and the replacement sign appears to have disappeared!

C). Community company

Saara Viitanen has been appointed as the new part time LDO.

R.C informed us that the community land use plan is now complete and has now been lodged with Highland Council for consideration by Ross and Cromarty planning committee. If it is approved at this stage it will go onto the Scottish government to be adopted as statutory supplementary guidance.

The community company has been successful with their grant application for ten E-bikes which will be arriving around the 18th/19th October. The bikes will be for community use only. R.C explained that volunteers would be needed and the grant also covers training and basic maintenance.

Local Energy Scotland sought an application from the community company to provide an E.V charger powered by Applejuice hydro scheme. If it goes ahead it will be only the second E.V charger powered by hydro power in Scotland. It was noted that currently the nearest E.V charger is in Torridon and G.W pointed out that there was an app available which shows where all the EV chargers are in the country.

D) SPORTS AND RECREATION

S.M stated that progress at the Gym has been good and she is planning an open day in November with a view to opening with a membership scheme.

E) CLACHAN CHAIRS

It has been agreed that the chairs will be moved from Camusterrach to Clachan when the congregation moves but this can not happen until the church is sold. M.S pointed out that there are comfortable chairs upstairs in Clachan and A.S said that chairs could be lent to Clachan if needed.

F) TRUST

K.W asked why there had been more frequent forestry lorries going round the coast and A.M explained that the lorries being used are smaller than expected so more frequent trips are needed and it would take longer than first thought. K.W expressed disappointment as the road had been seriously degraded and north coast locals have been held up on a daily basis. She suggested that the Trust or Scottish Woodland make a donation to Sheildaig play park as a form of recompense. R.H.J will report back to Scottish Woodland and insist they take into account community considerations as a first step. A.M had agreed to try and establish if the cause of the degradation to the road had been caused by forestry lorries.

G) WOODLAND GROUP

No questions were raised.

H) HELIPAD

Fundraising is ongoing. K.E.C.M asked about overall cost. C.W explained that we need to find out how much material is needed before we know precisely. As the covering will be grass volunteers will be needed to maintain the site. H.E.L.P have agreed to provide substantial funds and a request for £10000 from an NHS endowment fund is being considered. The next stage is to apply for planning permission.

5) GOVERNANCE

K.E.C.M pointed out that the original working group had envisaged reviewing the forum at the end of one year and that almost two years have passed since the forum was formed and the group has still not been reviewed. The original document had envisaged that the forum would not be a decision making body but in the light of recent developments, particularly questions arising from the newly created community fund it may be necessary to look again at the governance of the forum. K.E.C.M suggested that the original forum working group reconvene to look at all aspects of governance and after some debate it was agreed that Tom O'Halloran be asked to chair this group, which would tally with the working group as named on the website.

ACTION K.E.C.M agreed to contact Tom about chairing the sub group with a view to submitting a report at the next meeting.

6) COMMUNITY FUND

Three options have been identified for the use of the community fund, although other ideas will still be welcome. The three options identified so far are:

- 1) Allow the community company to take control of the money and use it for community projects.
- 2) Set up and run our own investment fund with a view to building our own community property port folio
- 3) Disperse the funds in a traditional way in response to applications from community groups

It was agreed that the community company J.G and P.B would lead the groups respectively and produce presentation at the next meeting on the 27th November.

K.E.C.M had been in touch with Foundation Scotland who have experience in managing community funds. If we were to use them there would be a fee. K.E.C.M will contact them and invite them to our next meeting.

The debate about the community fund was lively and the following points have been noted.

O.K suggested that at a previous meeting it had been agreed that the fund should be used for housing but this was not accepted and no record of this could be found in the minutes.

V.H requested any rent rebate from the Applecross Hydro Scheme should go to the community company rather than the community fund. R.H.J and A.M clarified that Applejuice rent is currently payable at a low level to the Trust. R.H.J added that some snagging work was necessary but acknowledged that at some point in the future a rebate could potentially be made to the community pot. A.M distinguished between the community Hydro and the potential development of a Hydro

scheme at Calnakille, which will make a £5000 p.a contribution which will go directly to the community.

After some debate it was agreed that O.K, J.G and P.B would deliver presentations in support of each option at the next meeting on 27th November

Date of next meeting: wednesday 27th November

ENDS