

**MINUTE
of
APPLECROSS COMMUNITY FORUM**

Date: 21 April 2021, 7.00pm

Venue: Online, Zoom meeting

Attendees: (13)

KM Sheriff Kathrine EC Mackie (Forum Chair)
RHJ Rodger Harvey-Jamieson (Chair Applecross Trust)
DM David Mackie
JW Jess Whistance (Applecross Trust)
KG Kenny Gillies?
SV Saara Viitanen (Applecross Community Company)
GM Gerry McPartlin
FM Fiona MacKenzie
AM Archie Maclellan (Applecross Trust)
CW Chris Ward
JG Jon Glover (Chair Applecross Community Council)
TO'H Tom O'Halloran
GW Greg Watson

1. Welcome and apologies

There were no apologies.

KM welcomed everyone and gave thanks to the Community Company for hosting the meeting. She expressed the hope that the next meeting might be in person.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10 February 2021

The Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as true and accurate, proposed by GM and seconded by RHJ.

3. Action Tracker and matters arising

KM indicated that most of the items in the Action Tracker featured in the update reports.

At the last meeting Kalie Wilkinson had raised the question of the money to be paid by CRF Hydro Developers and clarification was anticipated regarding payment of a sum of £5,000 they had indicated an intention to pay in addition to the sum of £5,000 payable by them in terms of the lease with the Trust.

AM has spoken to Rob Foster of the developers. Initially he indicated that he did not consider it his role to specify what the money was for and that he regarded it as a

general disturbance payment. When advised by AM of the concerns regarding some of the ambiguity he explained that he saw his relationship with Applecross, by his thinking this was just an additional £5,000 to go the same way as the initial payment of £5,000 and it was for the Applecross community to decide how to distribute any funds. In summary his intention was that the total of £10,000 go into the Community Fund.

RHJ reported that the £10,000 has been paid and is sitting with the Trust to go into the Fund when it is finally set up.

4. **Update Reports ([access here](#))**

a) Community Council

The CC has produced Minutes from their two latest meetings. The Minute of 9 March addresses the question of the internet connection and a proposed meeting among ACC, Openreach and Ian Blackford regarding the cost of the connection, a prohibitively expensive estimate of £790,000 having been given by them for connection to eleven houses in Culduie. This item will be added to the Action Tracker.

b) Community Company

The report reflects a lot of work that is ongoing and addresses a number of matters on the Action Tracker. The conveyancing for the land at the Hydro Field and Torgarve is completed; the housing project at Camusterrach is ongoing; upgrading of the public toilets is progressing.

SV reported that at last night's meeting of the company a majority voted in favour of proceeding with a feasibility study for the acquisition of the Church at Camusterrach and so an application for funds for that will be submitted to the Scottish Homes Fund in the next month or so.

GM observed that there is a lot going on, it is fantastic and this observation was endorsed by RHJ who added that we are indebted to those involved in the Community Company for this.

c) Applecross Trust

The Trust update was received without comment. RHJ reported that the Trustees will meet informally during the week commencing 4 May, will be visiting around Applecross and offered an invitation to observers from the community to accompany them.

Asked by the Chair about the idea of the laundry, RHJ explained that this was an idea being developed in parallel to that of a community laundry, and very much at an early

stage yet. The concept is different, complementary to and not in competition with the community laundry and was likely to take the form of a separate bespoke service for community use.

AM indicated that it would assist the Trust to have access to the ACC housing list and SV confirmed that subject to GDPR requirements, this could be shared with the Trust.

There was some discussion regarding the repairs to the Roundhouse and the salvaging of reeds formerly stored in the barn at Keppoch. AM reported that a full refurbishment is required, and an insurance claim is in hand. A decision and plan will require to be made regarding the desired outcome. It was unlikely that work could commence until the back end of the year and there was, therefore, an opportunity over the summer for a plan to be put in place to either reinstate the building or something else more secure and less likely to be the subject of damage. TO'H floated the idea of a learning opportunity in the process of repair and thatching. This will be brought back to the Forum for further discussion.

d) Helipad

The update report was received. CW explained that, ideally, we would wait for the grass to grow to better accommodate the larger air ambulance helicopter. Lights and a windsock are awaited to elevate it to an official site and not just a rendezvous site which it is at the moment. Lights and an illuminated windsock are in course of being designed to be powered by solar panels.

AM paid tribute to Kenny McBeath for his invaluable contribution to the development of the site from the planning stage through to delivery, and all agreed. The Chair extended the community's appreciation to all involved in the development of the helipad and for the creation of a tremendous asset. There was some discussion regarding the possibility of a formal opening ceremony and an appropriate commemoration. CW added that the HELP appeal will benefit from some publicity. He clarified also, and it was noted, that the helipad has now been formally handed back to the Community Council.

e) Community Fund

The Community Fund update was received without comment. DM reported that a draft constitution was near completion and, shortly, invitations would be sent out to organisations to consider joining as members. Once the drafting of the Constitution was completed the solicitor will proceed with the application to OSCR for the SCIO to be registered.

f) Tourism Management Group (TMG)

The update report from the Tourism Management Group was received and the Chair paid tribute to the amount of work that has been undertaken.

JW reported that the Wester Ross Area Tourism Partnership (WRATP) has produced a leaflet for motor homes and caravans to be distributed to all motor home hire companies. It has been accepted by ten motor home hire companies in the region, will be supplied to any other businesses that want them and has also been well received by some online forums. The Applecross Ranger will keep a supply. The leaflet has a map of camping, overnight parking and other facilities on the NC500 route.

Three Access Officer posts are being advertised for the region of the WRATP whose role will be to provide support to communities, engage with Community Councils, development companies, landowners and stakeholders, to look at where there are gaps, where projects might be worth pursuing, to map existing projects, show where projects might be joined up and to access funding.

WRATP have submitted a funding application to NatureScot for three local rangers in addition to the Highland Council Rangers already in course of being engaged to start in the first week of May. There will be, therefore, four rangers in the WRATP area all to be managed by Highland Council. The TMG also submitted an application to NatureScot for funding for a ranger for Applecross but withdrew it at the behest of Highland Council who are submitting a single application for funding for all the area rangers and will manage them, dealing with HR, advertising, recruitment, provide a car and expenses. Day to day management of the individual appointed to Applecross will nonetheless rest with the Applecross TMG. These rangers will be engaged full time from 1 May to 31 October.

A second half of the application for funding from NatureScot has been kept for signage, a beach clean scheme, a dog waste scheme and additional bins. A decision on this and the Ranger is expected within a week. The desirability of signage beyond the immediate vicinity of Applecross village was discussed.

SV raised the question of additional toilets for the Bay. JW explained that there has been a lot of discussion on this and with Highland Council. The explanation that the remote location of Applecross rendered Portaloos impracticable and uneconomical was open to debate. The use of composting toilets was discussed with concern that visitors would not use them as they should. Such toilets have, however, been installed at Arisaig and Contin and so may be worth further consideration. There followed a full

discussion of the subject of toilet facilities from which the following main points emerged (the main contributors SV, JW, AM, GW, JG):

- The public toilets have undergone some upgrading and will continue to serve visitors subject to a payment system. A cleaning schedule twice a day will be maintained similar to last year but it was acknowledged that the facility is inadequate to cope with the volume of use that is likely to arise;
- Hartfield House cannot offer relief and is utilised to capacity already;
- There may be some prospect of the campsite taking some pressure off the public toilet facility but only during the parts of the day between departures and arrivals when campers are not present. It was likely that help from the campsite would be very limited especially if, as is anticipated, it enjoys a high volume of business and requires to prioritise the needs of its customers;
- The campsite will offer camper vans use of its new chemical waste facility upon payment of a modest charge and camper van users will be encouraged to make use of this.

There will be some reliance upon the Ranger to engage with visitors and to offer advice on toileting, especially in respect of toileting outdoors.

5. AOB

No one in attendance had any other matters to raise.

6 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Forum will be on 1 September 2021.

Meeting closed at 20:07 p.m.