

Mull Community Council meeting

11th November 2020

(Via Zoom)

Present: Billy McClymont, Pam MacColl, Moira Westland, Duncan Swinbanks, John Maughan, , Norman Hickson, Colin Morrison, Alasdair MacCrone, Graham Alexander, Josh Liddle, Annie Hall, Tom Nelson, Joe Prior, Mandy McKerl, Tracy Mayo, Iain Campbell

In Attendance: Moray Finch, Joe Reade, Mairi Greig, Terry Hegarty, Andy Jardine, Janna Greenhalgh, Morven Gibson

MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising from previous meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Proposed – Pam MacColl

Second – Ian Campbell

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

a) Chair – Graham Alexander

Proposed – Norman Hickson

Second – Adrian Stephens

b) Secretary – Mandy McKerl

Proposed – Pam MacColl

Second – John Maughan

c) Representative on MICT Board – Annie Hall

Proposed – Josh Liddle

Second – Mandy McKerl

d) MCC Facebook page and website maintainer – Alasdair MacCrone

Proposed – Josh Liddle

Second – Ian Campbell

FERRY UPDATE – Joe Reade

- J.R reported that a webinar surrounding potential purchase of new vessel from Craignure – Oban route had been held and made available for viewing last week.
- T.M suggested that the Tobermory High School students may be interested in viewing the webinar too, as improved travel to and from the island is a good incentive for them to stay on the island.

- J.R stated that there are some perceived downsides of running a catamaran but many are based on misunderstandings or incomplete information.
- By purchasing the catamaran, (purchase price £10m as-is, with the cost of modification to add) , the service could be more reliable in winter, have more space for vehicles, and be able to operate an 'Island Focussed' service because it is both short and light enough to berth at Craignure overnight all year round.
- This being the case any future requests for change or improvement to the service are more likely to be granted as they would be more affordable.
- J.R ultimately would like community backing as the argument in favour of purchasing the catamaran would have more weight behind it.
- J.R to send webinar and surrounding information to new members to allow councillors to form an opinion for further discussion at next meeting.

MULL CRISIS MANAGEMENT UPDATE – Duncan Swinbanks

- Last month saw a surge of Covid cases on the island which ran parallel with the surge in the south and the central belt.
- 1 month ago, there were 2 cases on the island but this then surged to double figures which could have placed the island in band 4 due to our smaller population.
- MCM are working on issuing a poster which re-emphasises the importance of not gathering in groups.
- Encouragingly Numbers in Argyll and Bute have fallen from 46 – 31.
- TM stated the announcement from the MCM about recent Covid 19 cases and the comment it included from Mary-Jean was very positive and indeed a step forward. It is important to keep the community informed, while at the same time ensuring that people who test positive for Covid 19 feel, if they report their case they will receive the appropriate support whilst at the same time their privacy is protected.
- D.S stated that it should be easy for Mull to defeat the spread of Covid as we are well spread apart and can easily self-isolate within the community.
- MCM has put up the most recent information surrounding the vaccine on the Mull Health website.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL BOUNDARY CHANGES – Mary-Jean Devon

- M-J.D attended meeting on boundary changes on 11th November 2020.
- A&BC are planning to reduce their number of councillors from 36 to 34.
- Mull ward is affected by this.
- 2 councillors to be dedicated to Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree.
- 1 for Mull and Iona, 1 for Coll and Tiree.
- It would be imperative that these communities have resident councillors as each islands way of life is unique.
- At present the councillor must reside in administrative area, but there is no stipulation that they reside on the islands they represent.
- Representatives have been charged with taking this matter to the Scottish Government for change and there is confidence that the change will be made.
- M-J.D asked councillors to discuss and decide as to what is best for the Mull community.

- T.N raised concern that in some instances the best candidate for the job may not actually be resident on the island and would like to know that there would be an option for community to choose the most suitable candidate even if they lived elsewhere.
- J.M suggested that member form Tiree Community Council attend one of our meetings and vice versa to discuss fully.
- All in agreement.
- M-J.D asked councillors to discuss and send letter on matter.

COUNCILLORS REPORT- Mary-Jean Devon

- Removal of the 3pm sailing from Craignure has had a negative impact on the island.
- Mail is now arriving in Oban, after sorting office is closed and therefor missing the connection to Glasgow.
- This is causing concern as the post service delivers Covid tests and so these tests are now sitting overnight.
- There is also no clarity as to where the mail is being stored overnight.
- M-J.D has contacted Calmac on matter and is hoping for some resolution within 48 hours.
- M.W stated that as a result of the removal of the 3pm sailing, all patients need to have their bloods done by 11:30am which is proving impossible in some cases.
- D.S also stated that it is having a negative impact on businesses dealing in perishable goods.
- M-J.D stated that she had also had representation from the farming community, that the current service means that animals are having to be loaded and remain in their trailers longer than necessary and this is becoming a welfare issue.
- Fiona Boa will represent the agricultural community on such matters.
- The M.V Isle of Arran will be filling in for the Isle of Mull which is causing concern for families whose children commute to ban High School as there is a vastly reduced capacity.
- MV I.O.A has a capacity of 81 and there will be 40 children needing to travel and so guarantee will need to be given from Calmac that school children will be a priority.
- J.R stated that Calmac has given guarantee that the children will be prioritised on a Monday and Friday.
- M-J.D stated that a park inspection was carried out at Tobermory Play Park. It did not pass the inspection, but work has been carried out and it is open again.

MARINE WRECKAGE WASHED UP AT PENNYGHAEL – Mandy McKerl.

- 49m x 49m Platform of Mussel farm has come adrift.
- Plastic polystyrene cubes are also being washed up.
- Residents have gathered as much as they can but there is still lots of detritus on the shore.
- B.M stated that Dr Philippe Heiniger, who owns the site is notorious for dereliction and that the Crown Estate have revoked licence for keeping premises in the past.
- M.C.C will have to contact Crown Estates on the matter to have it cleared.
- B.M stated that M.C.C should also contact Iain MacKinnon at Environmental health and SEPA.

A.O.B

MULL RALLY – Andy Jardine

- Looking to make changes to format of Rally by having more daylight stages, shorter stages, events finishing at a more sociable time.
- It is hoped that by doing this that the organisers will be able to deploy marshalling manpower more densely, reduce fatigue of marshals and make the event more attractive to other championships.
- A.W expressed concern that if the night stages were removed it might take the backbone out of the event, which is totally unique.
- T.H stated that the Lochs stages will still be done at night.
- J.P enquired as to whether event organisers are hoping that changing the current format will increase support for the rally.
- T.H stated that they are expecting to get full entry again next year.
- Having consulted with M.C.C, event organisers will consult with Argyll and Bute Council and submit article outlining plans to Round & About Mull.

SEAWEED FARM UPDATE – Morven Gibson.

- SWMID are currently applying to the European Maritime Fisheries Fund to set up seaweed farm in the Ross of Mull.
- There are currently only 2 other seaweed farms in Scotland.
- Looking to create new industry in the South end of the island by starting an ecological, income generating project which will benefit the whole community.
- The project will create 1 full time job in the first year with more opportunities to come.
- SWMID have worked closely with the SAMS, the fishing and wider community in the area to identify a site that works for everyone.
- The project has received 100% support from the fishing community.
- A 6-hectare site has been decided upon at Aird Fada.
- SWMID are half way to getting marine licence granted.
- Looking to have works started in May and farm opening in October 2021.
- The farm will take the form of a grid-like structure from which seaweed lines are suspended.
- The project is ecological and doesn't require chemicals, land or a fresh water source.
- SAMS have recently carried out studies on their own sites and results have shown that the presence of seaweed farms increases the biodiversity of the shellfish in the area which in turn will benefit the fishing community.
- In the first year the site will mainly produce sugar kelp.
- Produce from the site will go towards the production of bio refined plastics and a buyer has been identified.
- Money generated in the first year will be put towards product development.
- M.G asked that M.C.C provide a letter in support of the project.
- All in agreement.

CRAIGNURE STAG – Norman Hickson

- Malcom MacDonald has now submitted pier report.
- It is hoped that by mid-December it will be out for consultation.

USE OF MICT ZOOM ACCOUNT

- Adrian Stephens suggested that a donation of £30 be made to MICT every 6 months for the use of their zoom account for M.C.C meetings,
- All in agreement.

REPORTS OF HUMAN WASTE AT PENNYGHAEL

- M.M reported that there have been complaints made about human excrement being found frequently at Pennyghael.
 - There have also been reports of local people allowing strangers into their homes to use the toilets due to a lack of public convenience.
 - This information has been passed to Highland Health Protection Team and will be raised with Argyll and Bute Council Environmental Health.
 - M.F stated that this is a huge health risk for locals and should be highlighted to Argyll and Bute Council as a reason for re-opening public toilets in the area.
 - M-J.D stated that the council have no funding to re-open the toilets as the costs are increased due to enhanced cleaning requirements.
 - M-J.D will report further with this new information from M.M.
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- M.F asked M-J.D to report to A&BC that he has not received the information regarding the incremental increase in cleaning costs that he requested at a meeting in September.
 - M-J.D to follow up on this.

VOTES OF THANKS

- **A.W** wanted vote of thanks to be given to all businesses on island who have changed their practices since the Covid 19 outbreak to operate in the safest possible manner.
- **J.M** extended vote of thanks to community members who were vulnerable or concerned for staying at home when visitors arrived on the island.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

2nd December