



## **DUROR & KENTALLEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 9th NOVEMBER 2020 ZOOM MEETING AT 7.00PM**

**Present:** Sandy Stoddart (*Chairman*), Rachel Shepton (*Vice Chairman*), Jonathan Baxter (*Treasurer*), Steve Bignell, Jeannie Macleod, Chris Pearman, Pat Young, Cllr Andrew Baxter, Becky Coope (*Secretary*)

**In Attendance:** Joanne Baxter

#### **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous AGM in June 2019 were approved without amendment.

#### **Chairman's Report**

Since the last AGM Chris Clay, Malcolm Knowlson and Dave Shepton have all retired from the Community Council and we thank them for all of their hard work over many years. We have also gained Steve Bignell and are glad to have the benefit of his abilities and experience on the Council.

This AGM has been postponed because of the Coronavirus situation so there has been a longer time than usual between meetings and a lot has come before the Community Council during that time.

#### Sustrans

Although it had originally been hoped that the extension of the Sustrans track through Highland Titles would be completed by the summer of 2019 the work continued intermittently and it was many more months before it was fully open if not perhaps actually complete.

#### Duror Primary School

Back in August 2019 there were still significant concerns about the situation around the Primary School and the Education Authority's handling of the new Cluster arrangements. There were a number of local meetings, at many of which the Community Council was represented and more recently there have been very positive reports about the school. There is ongoing concern about low pupil numbers and there has been a revival of parental interest in a Nursery which the Community Council will support as requested.

#### War Memorial Handrail

The Community Council is grateful to community members who installed the new handrail.

#### Play Area at Community Centre

The CC paid £900 for repairs to the equipment.

#### Forest Plans

A drop-in consultation was held in Appin Hall by Forestry & Land Scotland concerning their draft plans for the Bealach, Creran and Appin forests and attended by some residents and members of the CC. The CC had submitted an email outlining concerns to FLS regarding the Bealach Plan, including concern about extraction of timber through Glen Duror and along the cycle track, concern about planting open land at Achvlair and the lack of a replacement footbridge in Glen Duror. These points were all acknowledged by FLS but no hope was given of any action.

#### Glen Duror Hydro Scheme Extension

This scheme will be making a Community Payment of £5,250 per annum to the Community Council. This will be a very welcome cash boost to the community and a new SCIO will be put in place to handle the funds.

Unfortunately although assurances had been given by the developers that construction work would not have an adverse impact on the community there have been numerous problems of noise, mess, deliveries going to private addresses, possible contamination of water with oil or diesel and clear evidence of pollution of the river. While it was recognised that the workers on the site have been helpful with those using the forest, some of the issues have been very serious. On investigation by suitably experienced members of the community, it was found that little or no effective silt management had been put in place at the various worksites. FLS, HC Planning, SEPA and the fisheries management board were all informed and, as a result, work was instructed to be halted immediately on any of the sites near watercourses until effective silt management had been put in place. The developers were also instructed to appoint and pay for an environmental clerk of works. Thankfully things seem to be better at the moment and a recent SEPA inspection of the sites confirmed that they were happy for work to be resumed and that inspections of the work sites will continue. There have been a significant number of telephone and email contacts and conversations as well as on-site meetings and I have suggested that it might be helpful if all correspondence came through me so that the CC can see all that is being discussed and continue to try to help. Recent newsletters from the contractors have been useful and very welcome.

### Tourists at Cuil Bay

This has become an even more serious concern with, on one occasion, 47 vehicles and 13 tents at the bay. We have discussed what is a national problem a number of times and I've had a conversation with Jamie Malcolm about it. It seems unlikely that we can do anything helpful physically, like blocking parking with boulders, etc., but the idea of a warden has been mooted and PC Stephen Softley has encouraged us to keep a register of issues and bombard the Council with our environmental and hygiene concerns until action is taken. We will also join with other Community Councils in writing to the Minister for Tourism to express our concerns.

### Community Resilience Project

Since March this year this has been a significant part of the work that the CC has undertaken. Councillor Niall MacLean introduced the basics of a system which was then put into place across our area. All households were contacted by letter, volunteers were sought, with Rachel Shepton and Sara McNeill I formed a 'steering group' and the community rallied round to care for one another. This is ongoing and very heartening.

### Other Matters:

**Councillor Andrew Baxter** supports us conscientiously and helpfully and we were glad to send a letter of our support for him on a particular occasion.

**PC Stephen Softley** – we have useful contact with our local Police Officer over matters like traffic speeds through the villages, parking issues and the Cuil Bay situation.

**Defibrillator Pads** - new pads for the defibrillator at the community centre were ordered and paid for by D&KCC.

**Mini-bus Project** – this has been promoted and much discussed but seems to have gone into abeyance meantime.

**Village Notice Boards** – are ordered and will be installed soon.

**Travellers Site in Kentallen** – concerns have been raised about this.

**Proposed Road Repairs** – we try to communicate these as far as possible.

**VE Day Celebration** - Becky and Jenny Cameron were going to run this event but Coronavirus restrictions caused its cancellation.

**Village Litter Pick** – this also had to be cancelled but some organisation was made to help volunteers work individually.

**Planning Applications** – we make a point of commenting on many of these so that we can be seen to be supportive rather than only objecting.

**Remembrance Day** – we have helped to organise appropriate marking of this important event in restricted circumstances.

Throughout the year members of the CC attended very many meetings of local interest and responded to numerous matters raised by the Highland Council

Sandy closed by thanking everyone, CC members and residents, for all the hard work which makes this a wonderful community to be part of and a great place to live.

### **Questions from the Floor**

Jeannie asked if the letter to the Minister for Tourism concerning issues at Cuil Bay could emphasise that provision should be made for the huge number of tourists that are visiting our area as a result of the restrictions of foreign travel due to Covid. She stressed that this should come from Holyrood and not local councils. Andrew further suggested that any letter should emphasise that the local police force does not have the capacity to deal with issues arising from pressure of visitors, as the numbers of officers is already low. Sandy confirmed that Jamie is broadly in support of the appointment of a warden to help monitor the situation at Cuil Bay, and it was felt that this is worth a try as there is likely to be little outside help in the short-term. Sandy has been approached by a volunteer for the post. He will pursue the matter over the winter in the hope that something can be in place for next Spring.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The total income for 2019/20 was £1857.70. This was made up of £446.08 from Highland Council Grant and 2 payments of £500 from the Bealach Hydro Scheme (due to the dates the annual payments fell on).

The Expenditure in the year was £2939.37 which included 2 issues of the Community Newsletter @ £278.50 each, plus donations of £900 to the Community Centre playpark, £200 to the Geopark, £182.37 to the Royal British Legion and £500 to Children in Need. This gave a deficit for the year of £1081.67. The Balance brought forward was £7219.39 which left a total balance in the Current Account at the year end of £6137.72.

The Deposit Account has a balance of £3794.17 after the interest of £6.77 was added, leaving an overall balance of £9931.89. It was noted that the annual payment from the Glen Duror Hydro Scheme had not been received in this financial year. It was further noted that £2500 of the balance is earmarked for the Generator Fund, however this seems unlikely to happen, so the funds may be able to be used elsewhere.

Jonathan thanked Chris Clay for his help in preparing the accounts, and Lisa Higham for validating them.

### **Election of Office Bearers**

The existing office bearers were all willing to stand again and all were duly re-elected. Sandy confirmed that he will be standing down as Chairman in November 2021. As the AGM should take place in June next year, there should be time to appoint a new Chairman between then and November.

#### **Date of Next AGM**

A provisional date of 14th June 2021 was set for the next AGM.

#### **AOB**

Rather than holding a separate OGM, Sandy asked if there was any other business to discuss.

Jonathan raised the matter of poor Broadband Speeds. It seems that Openreach have undertaken to provide the villages with Superfast Broadband by 2021 which seems unlikely to happen, however, as long as they have undertaken to do the job, no other company can step in and do the work, even if Openreach fail to provide the service. Andrew is aware of the situation and solutions that other villages in the region have come up with to speed up the provision of Superfast Broadband without relying on Openreach. He will pass the contacts on to Jonathan and he will pursue the matter.

Chris once again raised the matter of scramble bikes on the cycle track. There seems to still be a problem with some bikes going at excessive speed on parts of the track and Achindarroch road leading up into the forest. It was thought a local approach to the problem would be best in the first instance.

As there was no other business the meeting closed at 7.58pm.