

DORES & ESSICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 1st March 2010 in Dores Parish Hall.

Members Present

Ella MacRae (Chair)
Iain Cameron (Treasurer)
Ruairidh MacLennan (Secretary)
John Martin (Vice Chair)
Anna Williams
Graham Scott
Annette Munro
Gavin Finlay

In Attendance:

Cllr Margaret Davidson
Les Houlker, TEC Services, Highland Council
Quintin Stevens, Dores Inn
Howie Whyte, RNLI

Apologies:

Cllr David Henderson, Cllr Fraser Parr, Cllr Helen Carmichael, Cllr Drew Hendry, Cllr Hamish Wood, Louise McCaul HC, Kevin Cameron Ross, Cllr John Finnie.

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and before business began, informed members of the death of fellow community councilor Bob King. It was agreed that flowers and a card be sent to his wife Lily King, on behalf of the Community Council. The Chair then informed the meeting that Kevin Cameron Ross has written to resign his position as a Community Councilor due to family commitments. It was agreed to write to Kevin to thank him for his years of service. The Chair expressed concern that new members are needed onto the Community Council and this should be included within the next Rockness Flier which is due to go out in May.

Roads, Traffic, Signage

The Chair welcomed Les Houlker of TEC Services, Highland Council to the meeting. Les was invited to the meeting to discuss issues relating to traffic calming and signage. Cllr Davidson commented that in the recent community consultation held in the hall, speeding and the appearance of the village seemed to be one of the most common concerns among residents. Les Houlker stressed that speeding was a very common problem with almost every Community Council and as Dores has warning signage and smiley faces, there are limitations as to what else can be done. PC Matheson commented that the recent traffic survey statistics show that on average, 70 – 80% of vehicles are speeding through the village which is a fairly consistent level of speeding compared to other communities. He went on to say that approximately 90% of those speeding are likely to be locals. The Chair asked Les to have a look at what options could be considered for Dores in terms of traffic calming measures and he agreed to do so. Some discussion followed regarding the merits and drawbacks of various forms of traffic calming. These included chicanes, re-design of the traffic island in the centre of Dores and physical features which would change the perception of the appearance / entrance of the village. Les Houlker to provide information on these including physical barriers to slow people down, a solution John Martin thinks will be necessary to actually get people to slow down. He will also arrange a further speed survey to see what the impact of the smiley faces has been.

Discussion ensued regarding road signage in the centre of the village. Concern was raised that any new signage would need to be bi-lingual which the majority of the Community Council feel is unnecessary and will result in larger signs. It was agreed that the present signage is already excessive and the traffic island is cluttered. Consideration to be given to remove some of the place names signposted on the island.

John Martin asked Les Houliker what Highland Council's policy was on "Homezones". Les said that he was not aware of any such policy in Highland Council and thought that this policy does not apply in Scotland. John Martin disputed this point and said he would further investigate the matter. Les commented that homezone style developments have been carried out in Inverness and many residents do not like having no footpath.

It was commented that a car park is needed in the village and land would be required for this. This to be discussed at a later date.

Beach Safety

The Chair welcomed Howie Whyte of RNLI to the meeting. The RNLI took over from HM Coastguard the running and operation of the Loch Ness Lifeboat a number of years ago. At recent meetings, the necessity to have a lifebelt by the slipway was raised and Howie Whyte informed the meeting that a suitable lifebelt has been donated by a local resident, Roderick Morrison for use on Dores Beach. The lifebelt will be presented to the Community Council at a date to be agreed. Howie confirmed that in fact, due to the length of Dores beach, additional lifebelts should be sourced in due course to be placed further along the beach with 4 being the appropriate number according to the regulations. Concern was raised that these could be vandalised. Some discussion took place regarding the design and cost of various lifebelts including stands to attach them to.

Howie Whyte informed the meeting of the various tasks undertaken by the RNLI and asked for feedback on the idea of having a lifeguard service presence on Dores beach during the peak months of summer. The idea would be to have a number of lifeguards patrolling the beach and ensuring the public safety when partaking in water sports or swimming in the loch. It was commented that there are people swimming in the loch from Dores beach most days of the year, predominantly back packer tours. There would be a requirement for a minimum of 5 volunteers who would be trained by the RNLI. Some debate took place regarding the need and form of such a service on the beach but it was generally felt that this should be given further consideration.

Adoption of Previous Minute

Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

Proposed: Graham Scott

Seconded: Iain Cameron

Matters Arising from Previous Minute

Scottish Water

Ongoing and taken forward to next meeting. Iain Cameron commented that there was sewage coming out of the manhole by the manse.

Village Improvement Project

The Chair confirmed that an application was submitted for fencing, seating, information board, planting, cycle parking, village entrance signage saying "Loch Ness", a BBQ area on the beach and tidying around the bus shelter. PC Matheson suggested that we speak to the crime prevention officer before purchasing or positioning benches etc.

Ness Castle Right of Way

Cllr Finnie is pursuing the matter.

Housing Needs Survey

The survey has shown a positive housing need for affordable housing in and around the village. Cllr Davidson said that Jim Harbison and David Polson need to come out on site and discuss potential land that can be zoned for development. The Chair declared a non financial interest as Chair of Albyn Housing Association.

Letter to New Residents

This has been completed and issued.

Flooding at Millcroft

Waiting for an improvement in the weather before being actioned.

Knocknagael

John Martin stated that the road improvements have been unsatisfactory as 3 laybys are not intervisible and as such local residents are unhappy with the situation. Cllr Davidson said that the planning permission with the associated conditions has all been passed so the only thing we can do is to ask SSE to attend to this. John Martin said that there was a rumour that this road will be closed for 10 days to allow re-surfacing works, to check with TEC services. John Martin stressed that this should be a lesson for the future, the Community Council should be a statutory consultee.

Damage at Cullaird

Rockness and Highland Council dealing with this.

Fly Tipping

The accused will be up in court 8th March.

Aldourie Castle – Access

Awaiting response from Roger Tempest.

Treasurers Report

The sum of £312 has been put towards the cost of the smiley face. The annual grant has just been received so the bank account is looking quite healthy.

John Martin asked that the Community Council holds onto the Rockness money once it has been received and enquires as to what the Dores Community Development Trust is doing with the money before we hand it over, this was agreed.

Correspondence

It was confirmed that John at the Pottery B&B will be taking over the running of the Dores village web site. It was agreed that all future information and notices to be placed on the web site.

Water Sewage & Roads

Covered above.

Planning

No new planning applications received. No further news on the Darris steading application.

AOCB

Discussion took place regarding the possible introduction of Camping Bylaws for the Dores beach and surrounding woodland area. Concern has been raised with regard to cars going into the pub's bottom car park with the occupants then going along the beach, lighting fires and playing music whilst consuming alcohol and leaving litter. The bylaw which is used in Loch Lomond would allow camping to be banned within a certain area. John Martin commented that the problem is the lack of campsites. Iain Cameron said that he has had interest in a possible camp site area being developed south of the village at Baile-a-Chladaich but the interested party were put off by the close proximity of the fishfarm. Gavin Finlay stressed that the people causing problems on the beach are not your standard campers but youths from town. It was agreed that this matter be further investigated and a letter to be written to William Gilfinnan at the Town House to ask for more information on potential bylaws.

Gavin Finlay asked that the grit bin by the hall be re-filled. He also enquired as to when the fishfarm cages are going to be moved. Iain Cameron said that he understood that it would be sometime in spring but said that their planning application has not yet been submitted. Gavin Finlay asked if the cages were definitely going to be moved and the consensus was that the fishfarm had agreed that they would be moved once the fish were removed.

John Martin asked that the issue of minute Secretary be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

It was noted that Steve Feltham no longer takes money for beach cleaning and consideration was given to finding someone to supplement Steve's efforts that could be paid. A couple of names were suggested having expressed an interest in the past.

Rockness – It was commented that a local Police officer should be within the village area during Rockness. It was also commented that the Torr Woods and camp site areas should be searched for drugs in advance of Rockness as it is widely rumoured that dealers are hiding / burying drugs on the site prior to Rockness.

Next meeting: Monday 12th April at 7.30 pm in Dores Parish Hall.