

The Highland Council

Minutes of Special Meeting of the **Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee** held remotely on 29 August 2022 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mrs I Campbell
Dr C Birt

Mrs E Kraft
Mr P Logue

In attendance:

Mrs D Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr W MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Communities and Place
Mr I Moncrieff, Roads Operations Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Ms F Cameron, Programme Manager, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Ms M Gray, Project Officer, Infrastructure, Environment and Economy
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Governance
Ms R Ross, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Governance#

Also in attendance:

Inspector Richard Ross, Area Inspector, Police Scotland

Miss J MacLennan in the Chair for Items 1-4.

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.

Business

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Declarations of Interest
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt**

The Committee **NOTED**:-

Item 10: Mr P Logue (Transparency Statement)

**3. Recess Powers
Cumhachdan Fosaidh**

The Committee **NOTED** that the recess powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022 did not require to be exercised in relation to the business of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee.

**4. Appointment of Chair
Cur an Dreuchd Cathraiche**

The Committee **AGREED** that the post of chair and vice chair be shared and, in this instance, between Councillors Campbell and Kraft with each swapping roles for a 12 months period. After 4 years, the remaining term would be shared equally.

With lots being drawn to decide who would serve for the initial period, Mrs I Campbell was duly appointed and took the Chair with Ms E Kraft serving as Vice Chair.

At this point, the Chair referred to the shock and sadness at the tragic events that took place on the Isle of Skye and Lochalsh on Wednesday, 10 August. As a mark of respect for all those affected, the Committee observed a two minute silence.

**5. Appointment of Vice Chair
Cur an Dreuchd Iar-Chathraiche**

This item had been dealt with as detailed above.

**6. Police Scotland Local Committee Performance Report
Aithisg Choileanaidh Comataidh Ionadail Poileas Alba**

There had been circulated a Report No WRSL/9/22 by the North Area Commander. Area Inspector Richard Ross gave a summary of the report highlighting the key areas of interest.

During discussion the following issues were raised:-

- the post of the Harm Prevention Officer was welcomed;
- information was sought, and provided, on whether the general trend in crime numbers was replicated nationally;
- further detail was sought concerning the possibility of hidden domestic crimes during Covid; and
- the links forged between Police Scotland and visitor management groups were welcomed.

**7. Member Appointments
Cur an Dreuchd Bhall**

**i. Skye & Lochalsh Local Access Forum
Fòram Inntreigeadh Ionadail an Eilein Sgitheanaich is Loch Aillse**

The Council has a statutory duty under Section 25 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to establish Local Access Forums for its area. There are currently six Local Access Forums in the Highland area which advise on matters in relation to the exercise of access rights, the existence of delineation of rights of way or the drawing up and adoption of the Core Path Plan. In addition, they also offer and give assistance to parties in terms of the resolution of any disputes in this respect.

Mrs I Campbell was nominated by Mr C Logue and seconded by Ms E Kraft. There were no further nominations, the Committee **AGREED** to appoint Mrs I Campbell to the Skye and Lochalsh Local Access forum.

ii. **Wester Ross Biosphere Limited**

Wester Ross was recognised as a Biosphere Reserve in 2016 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for the breadth of landscapes, wildlife and cultural heritage that the region offers. Biospheres house dynamic local partnerships, rooted in communities that work collaboratively with Biosphere teams in a global network, to explore how – through education, science, culture, communication and information – people can learn to live in harmony with their environment.

The Committee **AGREED** to ratify Ms E Kraft's appointment as a Director of the Wester Ross Biosphere Limited.

8. **Winter Service Plan for 2022/23 Plana Seirbheis Geamhraidh airson 2022/23**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/10/22 dated 13 July 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

During the discussion the following issues were raised:-

- it was queried if the requirements of the Winter Service Plan had changed over the past decade as a result of milder winters and how the service was dealing with the problems that this caused;
- information was sought, and provided, on the effects of the change in supplier for the emulsion used for surface dressing;
- information was also sought, and provided, on the effectiveness of precautionary treatments carried out in the evenings; and
- it was understood that, whilst it was disappointing, road treatments could not be carried out after 9.30pm due to drivers' hours regulations and a lack of alternative resources available locally.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Winter Service Plan for 2022/23; and
- ii. **NOTED** that Covid-19 and driver's hours regulations will potentially have an impact on the winter service provided.

**9. Highland Coastal Communities Fund – Assessment of Application
Maoin Coimhearsnachdan Cladaich na Gàidhealtachd – Measadh Iarrtais**

There had been circulated Report No WRSL/11/22 dated 11 August 2022 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy.

The Committee had been invited to consider the application presented for funding and to determine whether to approve, defer or reject the application. An approval of funding would require detail of the amount approved and outline any conditions of funding that Members wish to attach to the approval over and above the required technical conditions. A deferral would allow an applicant to resubmit the current application at a future date with updated information. A rejection would mean that the application would not proceed and any future application to the fund would be brought forward initially as a new expression of interest.

In discussion, the refurbishment of the Coigach Public Convenience was welcomed as it was a well-run facility that was essential to the area. Confirmation was sought, and given, that the proposed upgrades to the facility would make it more accessible.

Accordingly, the Committee **AGREED** to award Coigach Community Council a grant of £20,148 towards the Coigach Public Convenience Refurbishment project, subject to the conditions detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

**10. Ward Discretionary Grants 2022/23
Tabhartasan fo Ùghdarras Uàird 2022/23**

Transparency Statement: Mr P Logue made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in that a family members was involved with the Balmacara Community Trust. However, having applied the objective test he did not consider that he had an interest to declare. This was because the item was solely for noting. He requested that this Statement be recorded in the Minutes.

The Committee **NOTED** the following Ward Discretionary Budget applications approved since 1 April 2022:-

- Headway Highland – to support vulnerable adults - £71.43
- CALA Integrated Services – development of school aged child care in Ullapool - £2,700
- Lochalsh Community Council – floral displays across Lochalsh area - £445
- Wester Loch Ewe – Aesthetic improvements to area - £1,047
- Auchtertyre Primary School Parent Council – install play equipment - £1,300
- Balmacara Community Trust – Gala Day - £510

**11. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

The committee **NOTED** Minutes of Meeting of the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee held on 9 February 2022 and 7 March 2022 which were approved by the Council on 10 March 2022.

The meeting concluded at 11.30am