

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Lochaber Committee** held remotely on **Tuesday, 14 May, 2024 at 10.30 a.m.**

Present:

Mr A Baldrey (remote)
Mr J C Grafton
Ms S Fanet
Mr A MacDonald

Mr T MacLennan (remote)
Ms L Siggers
Ms K Willis

Officials in Attendance:

Mr W MacKinnon, Community Development Manager, West and Mid Highland, Communities & Place
Mr D Wood, Principal Housing Officer, Housing & Property
Mr A Lawrie, Principal Repairs Officer, Housing & Property
Ms S Murdoch, Common Good Fund Officer, Performance & Governance
Mr M Culbertson, Project Officer, Community Regeneration Fund
Mr A Yates, Strategic Lead - Environmental Health & Bereavement Services
Mr J Maclean, Bereavement Services Project Manager
Ms R Robertson, Project Co-ordinator (Burial Grounds)
Mr A MacLeod, Policy Officer, Performance & Governance
Mr S Manning, Principal Traffic Officer, Infrastructure, Environment & Economy
Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Performance and Governance Service

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

Ms K Willis in the Chair

BUSINESS

**1. Apologies for Absence
Leisgeulan**

There were none.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement
Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt/ Aithris Fhollaiseachd**

There were none.

**3. Housing Performance Report
Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais**

There was circulated Report No. LA/8/24 by the Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property which provided information on how the Housing Service performed in relation to Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 31 March 2024.

Reference was made to the poor condition of the properties at Claggan Quadrangles and the need for major refurbishment was acknowledged. An update to Members on these properties was to be provided at a Ward

Business Meeting by the Service Lead Housing Investment/Building Maintenance.

There was a shortage of properties suitable for people with disabilities across Lochaber. When new builds were proposed, the Housing Development team was informed that more properties of this type were required. However, there were budgetary constraints that affected how achievable it was to provide more of these properties. The team did work closely with Occupational Therapists in installing adaptations into homes.

It was queried if tenants were sufficiently equipped and informed on how to deal with mould in their properties. It was advised that Maintenance Officers dealing with these issues, would inform tenants on how best to prevent condensation which can lead to mould. They would also issue leaflets on the subject, information to deal with this problem was highlighted in the tenants newsletter and on the Council's website.

It was queried what advice was given to tenants who had to endure anti social behaviour by other tenants. It was hoped most tenants would be aware of how to report such incidents i.e. report it to their Housing Management Officer and it was also recommended tenants report it to the Police. Before any action could be taken, there needed to be evidence and any action would have to be proportionate to the level of anti social behaviour involved.

Reference was made to the Lochaber care and repair service being in jeopardy due to a cut in funding being proposed. Officers were reviewing this and further developments on this should be known soon. It was advised that the Housing repair team did undertake adaptations to tenants homes. A potential reduction in service from Lochaber care and repair could increase the amount of work for the Council's repair team.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April, 2023 to 31 March, 2024.

4. Fort William Common Good Fund – Asset Register Maoin Math Coitcheann a' Ghearasdain – Clàr So-mhaoin

There was circulated Report No. LA/9/24 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place and the Acting Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance. The report provided information on the title and ownership investigations that have taken place with a view to identifying Common Good property relating to the former Burgh of Fort William. It also detailed what steps will be necessary to commence a public consultation leading to the establishment of the Fort William Common Good Asset Register.

In discussion, with regard to the public consultation it was suggested that maps outlining the land assets should accompany the Asset Register, as it would make it easier to visualise where the land assets were.

In relation of the West End car park, it was queried what portion of this was common good land and what portion of income from this could be diverted to a common good fund. It was advised that while exact measurements would require to be undertaken, it was around half to two thirds of the car park was common good and formed the car park extension. This would create a significant income for the common good and a definitive date when revenue

could go into a common good fund would require to be decided by Members. It was also noted that there would be a cost to the common good for looking after common good fund assets and there was a corporate review ongoing of what payment should be made by the common good funds for maintaining their assets.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the contents of the list of property proposed to be included in the Common Good Asset Register for Fort William (Appendix 1);
- ii **AGREED** that maps outlining the land assets would accompany the Asset Register; and
- iii. **AGREED** the commencement of the public consultation on the list of proposed property in accordance with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act).

5. **Community Regeneration Fund Assessment of Applications Measadh Iarrtasan Maoin Ath-bheòthachaidh Coimhearsnachd**

There was circulated Report No LA/10/24 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The report detailed 3 community regeneration fund applications received for consideration. There was a total request of funding of £89,495.00, with an available budget of £90,620.01. All 3 applications were eligible for support.

Following consideration, the Committee **AGREED** all the applications for Community Regeneration Fund grant award and the grants requested.

6. **Bereavement Services – Project Update Cunntas às Ùr mun t-Seirbheis Chaoidh**

There was circulated Report No. LA/11/24 by the Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place which provided an update on the work being undertaken on burial ground capacity and new burial grounds in the Lochaber area.

In discussion, it was advised that Officers were discussing with the land owner a site adjacent to the existing burial ground at Glen Nevis, for additional burial ground capacity. Reference was also made to the burial ground at Kiliharrol near Roy Bridge as potential for expansion. This was an historic site and details of this would be provided to Officers so that records could be updated. Also, details would be provided to Officers over possible land for extending Blairour cemetery. Further, the community in Arisaig felt that their cemetery could be expanded.

It was advised that restrictions were introduced on burial grounds, generally when they had less than 10 years capacity which allowed the Service to manage the remaining space. Burial grounds that had more capacity, may be considered for advanced sales.

It was noted that the Council had commissioned a feasibility report on the possible operation of a crematorium in the Lochaber area. Members requested that this be discussed at an Area Business Meeting prior to the

report on this being submitted to Communities and Place Committee in September, 2024.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i the progress of burial ground extensions in the Lochaber area;
- ii the challenges with identifying and developing suitable land for burial ground development; and
- iii Officers would discuss further with Members their suggestions for possible land for burial ground development.

**7. Islands (Scotland) Act 2018
Achd nan Eilean (Alba) 2018**

There was circulated Report No. LA/12/24 by the Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance which provided an update on the implementation of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. It also detailed the projects that had benefited from the Islands national plan.

In discussion, it was requested that the Isle of Rum should be considered as part of the national Islands plan as it had some significant problems in terms of a low population, education and housing provision. Both Scottish and UK Governments were aware of the need to give Island Councils as much notice of funding in order that the money could be spent on projects within the timeframes set. The criteria for this year's Islands funding, in terms of the bidding process and when money had to be spent, had still to be received.

The Committee **NOTED**:-

- i the update and acknowledged the work that had taken place; and
- ii that a request to consider the Isle of Rum as part of national Islands plan would be looked at by Officers.

**8. Parking Income and Tariffs
Cìsean Parcaidh Loch Abar**

There was circulated Report No. LA/13/24 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place which provided an update on parking income generated in 2023/2024 and future additional car parks. Members were also invited to deliberate on any changes to current tariffs in Lochaber car parks.

In discussion, in relation to the new mandatory pay and display car parks in Lochaber these were to be included in a master traffic regulation order that would be published soon and would include other car parks throughout the Highlands. Any objections to any of the proposals in the order would be addressed through a statutory process and Members would be asked for their views on any objections. In addition, it was possible to make these car parks invitation to pay (a donation). It was intended that these car parks would become operational this summer.

There was discussion in relation to the Ben Nevis Visitor Centre car park which was operated by High Life Highland and the West Bay Mallaig car park, income of which had been received from 2022/23. In terms of the latter car park an undertaking was given to look at lining parking bays for a section that was currently not lined. In relation to Achintee Road End, this was currently

on street parking and free to park. An undertaking was given to consider delisting the on street car parking so it could be classed as a car park.

Further, for consistency purposes, it was requested that all car parks with 24 hour parking, the charge be increased to £10 for up to 24 hours parking. Also, the Fort William Viewforth Car Park, this be increased from 3 to 4 hours minimum stay parking, to allow people to stay a bit longer in the town. These changes should be reviewed in one year's time.

In terms of regulating car parks that prohibited overnight parking of motorhomes, Parking Enforcement Officers did random evening and early morning patrols, and tried to educate people that they could receive a penalty charge notice for unauthorised overnight parking.

In relation to the West End Car Park, income from this would be of great benefit to the common good. Common good sites see 100% of income deposited with the relevant common good fund and the Service submit expenses for recovery on an annual basis. Discussions would require to be held on how this site was divided between common good land and core service land and an agreement reached.

It was advised that all penalty charge notices were published on the Council's website. This was not classed as income, and the money was used to pay for the Parking Enforcement Service.

It was explained that vehicles parked in mandatory display car parks must display a parking ticket. Failure to do this would amount to a contravention. In terms of electric vehicle bays there was a limited period allowed free for charging purposes. Overstaying this period and without displaying a parking ticket for any additional time over the free period, would result in a penalty charge notice.

The issue of laybys being full, preventing HGV drivers from parking and resting was raised. This could not be regulated as laybys were a place of safety for all vehicles. Also, 25 small isles permit bays were to be provided for Islanders in the east bay, Mallaig area.

It was queried if one of the laybys on the A82 between Corran and Fort William could be designated for HGV vehicles for road safety purposes. It was advised that this request would require to go to Transport Scotland as it was a trunk road.

The Committee:-

- i **NOTED** the income reporting in section 4;
- ii. **AGREED** the further increase in Tariffs in section 5, with the addition that:-
 - a) all car parks with 24 hour parking, the charge be increased to £10 for up to 24 hours parking;
 - b) Fort William Viewforth Car Park an increase from 3 to 4 hours minimum stay parking;
 - c) these changes in Tariffs would commence as soon as practically possible, with a further review of Tariffs in one year's time from the commencement of these changes; and

- iii. **NOTED** the proposed tariffs for Glencoe Village Visitor Car Park in paragraph 5.2;
- iv. **AGREED** the regulation of the car park sites in section 6.

**9. Ward Discretionary Fund
Buidseat Fo Ùghdarras Uàird**

The Committee **NOTED** the following Ward Discretionary Fund grant awards from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

Ward 11

HLH Archive Centre – contribution to travelling exhibition costs Tir nan Og - £750
Lochaber Wheeled sports society – for purchase of bikes & helmets - £1,000
Knoydart Trading Limited – purchase of freezer - £2,350
Remembrance Day - £302.50
Nevis Landscape Partnership - National Park Working Group - £1,500
Repairs to viewforth toilets - £3,500
Knoydart Tree Nursery - project costs - £3,300
Lochaber Environmental Group - new website - £500
Nevis Community Radio Ltd - storm damage repairs - £469
Cruise Ship Maiden Visit Plaques - £187.50
CFINE - Fareshare in Highland - £1197

Ward 21

Kinlochleven Primary School Council – School trip - £250
South Lochaber Community Association – Contribution to Bus repairs - £1750
Lochaber wheeled sports society – for purchase of bikes & helmets - £1000
West Ardnamurchan Community Council – for purchase of IT kit - £450
Remembrance Day - £302.50
West Highland Way signs cleaning - £370
Nevis Landscape Partnership - National Park Working Group - £1,500
Repairs to viewforth toilets - £3,500
Voluntary Action Lochaber - Kinlochleven & Fort William CAGs - £3,000
Kentallen & Duror Community Centre - replacement seating main hall - £1,000
Nether Lochaber Community Association - North Ballachulish Water Tank Acquisition - £880
Lochaber Environmental Group - new website - £500
Nevis Community Radio Ltd - storm damage repairs - £469
Cruise Ship Maiden Visit Plaques - £187.50
Morvern Community Council - Local Place Plan Morvern - £1,000

**10. Minutes
Geàrr-chunntas**

There was circulated for information, Minutes of Meeting of the Lochaber Committee held on 23 January, 2024 which were approved by the Council on 14 March, 2024, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

11. Appointment to the proposed West Highland Way Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) Board of Trustees

The West Highland was Scotland's first long distance route established under the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967. It remained the most well-known route and walked by around 50,000 people end-to-end every year. The Council had been a member of West Highland Way Management Group since the 1980's, this is currently led by Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority. There was increasing need to source external funds for the improvement, maintenance and administration of the route. The establishment of a SCIO was being proposed, this would have representation from each local authority involved in the management of the Way.

Nominations were invited to appoint one Member, from the Lochaber Area as an Interim Trustee of the West Highland Way SCIO for the first year of establishment and the first term once established.

Ms K Willis was nominated by Mr A Baldrey and this was seconded by Mr A MacDonald.

There being no other nominations, the Committee therefore **AGREED** that Ms K Willis be appointed as Interim Trustee of the West Highland Way SCIO for the first year of establishment and the first term once established.

The meeting ended at 12.46 p.m.