

## MULL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st September 2021

By zoom and live streamed on Facebook

Present: Tom Nelson, Andrena Duffin, Iain Campbell, Jo Prior, Norman Hickson, Billy McClymont, Pam MacColl, Moira Westland, John Maughan, Angus Williams, Alasdair McCrone.

In attendance: Cllr Devon, Angus Brendan MacNeil, Calum MacLachlainn, Mairi Greig, Morven Gibson.

Apologies; Vic Linnemann, Adrian Stephens, Robbie Cameron (joining late)

Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th August were approved by J. P. and seconded by I. C.

Minutes of the extra meeting held on the 24th August were approved by T.N. Seconded by P.M.

Correspondence: A.D. reported that the Coop had been contacted but she was awaiting the outcome. A&B C and the Screen machine are in talks and it is looking positive that their next visit will go ahead.

West Coast Motors has said it will consider an early bus for the Ross when they review the winter timetable.

Future Housing plans: T.N. said that we had had an extra meeting to discuss the immediate problem of lack of properties to let and the cost for first time buyers on the Island. This affects businesses and staff for essential services. Could C.M. give us some information regarding future building plans and problems with planning etc.

C.M. said they were planning to build 60 houses at Shilling Hill ( some for long term rental but the majority for sale) however the costs for building on the Island were really high. This is a problem for all Islands, installing essential services is very expensive as is employing engineers etc. also the cost of buying and transporting building materials is increasing. Applying for planning is onerous as some of the regulations were set out for Strathclyde Region as a whole rather than the Islands. E.g. if the build is for more than 5 houses a double track road has to be installed which makes a project unaffordable.

There is potential for building a block of 10 one bed apartments but the site has to be surveyed. There were problems with the block they built for workers in Tobermory as they were left in bad condition and became too costly to run so were now holiday rentals. Long term rentals can be difficult but there are benefits for the Island as a whole.

T.N. commented on the proposed appeal for owners of self catering and second home properties to consider a long term let. The appeal could stimulate debate and high light the current problem.

Cllr. D. said she was very aware of the lack of houses for key workers as well as seasonal ones. This affects businesses as well as services.

A.W. asked the difference of building here and on the mainland. C.M. said roughly 22% more.

A.B.M. commented that as Barra was mainly a crofting area it was easier for planners. On Mull the need is for 2/3 bed, middle sized houses. He suggested we appealed to Parliament to change the planning anomalies. Building plots on Mull had increased in price.

M.G. suggested the third sector like MICT could be an option for affordable housing.

C.M. said land for building could be released from the Forestry or landowners with planning that includes a caveat that it stays in local ownership, this would relax the value of the ground.

T.N. suggested a small group gets together to identify the problems and take them forward to A&BC or the Scottish Government. A.B.M. said if the group could offer their solution for the problem to the authorities then it was likely to have a positive outcome.

Cllr. Devon said these are the problems for the Islands' Bill team to help with.

B.M. asked A.B.M. for his thoughts on the proposed Island Bond. He replied that it had not been thought through properly and the Islands had not been consulted.

C.M. commented that self catering properties were good for the Island's economy but a balance was needed.

T.N. had no intention of stigmatising anyone but to stimulate discussion.

J.M. agreed as did A.M.

J.P. strongly disagreed, it could be divisive in the community.

I.C. thought a better and more immediate solution could be found and presented to the authorities.

Cllr. D. put forward the motion that a redrafted appeal should be circulated.

T.N. proposed the motion, seconded by J.M.. J.P. opposed it, I.C. and B.M. abstained.

A.W. stressed the need for housing for our young people.

T.N., A.W., J.M., C.M., H.M., A.B.M. agreed to form a working group to look into housing solutions.

Access to ferries for locals; A.B.M. commented on the success of RET however this has brought about an increase in demand making access to travel difficult for Islanders. At the moment several ferries are out of service and every Island is suffering. Tourists can plan their holiday and book early, locals travelling for medical or business reasons can not. He suggested a system along the lines of releasing 70% of the tickets, then a month before travel date 20%, the last week 8%, 24hours the remaining 2%.

Different Islands have different needs, the demand is increasing and the present system can lead to resentment towards visitors.

J.R. agreed that a phased release was a practical way of solving the problem, however the underlying problem was the lack of capacity. At a meeting with the Transport Minister last week this was discussed and ways to alleviate the situation are being looked at.

A.B.M. mentioned that tunnels are a real alternative, in the Faroes many miles have been built very successfully.

Police Report; Total calls this month were 52, North Mull had 24 calls with 3 crimes recorded, Craignure had 8 calls with 2 crimes recorded, Salen had 12 calls with 3 crimes recorded, the Ross had 9 calls with 2 crimes recorded. No actions to update from previous meetings.

Councillor's Report; Cllr D. had a meeting with the Transport Minister, concerns were expressed about animal welfare as farmers had difficulties accessing ferries. The Islands Bill was also discussed along with the lack of patient transport and housing needs for key workers.

Cllr. D. said she had given her resignation as a Councillor to A&BC. She had very much enjoyed her time and was happy that if anyone was interested she would allow them to shadow her for the final 6 months.

T.N. expressed thanks and appreciation from the Community Council for all the hard work and time Cllr. D. had given to the community.

A.O.B. Concerns had been raised about the large rolls of wire left at the side of the road at Pennygael. J.M. has spoken to the relevant department and hopefully they will soon be removed.

R.C. said that a new High School for Mull had been mentioned at the Community Planning Meeting, however this is still in the future.

**The next Community Council meeting will be on the 6th October.**