

Morvern Community Council Meeting held on  
Tuesday December 12th 2023 at 7pm Lochaline Village Hall

Present Community Council representatives: Clara Montgomery, Henriette Laidlaw, India Boulton, Jenni Hodgson, Miles Welsh  
and Members of the public x 7

1. HL welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Em Rosier, Helen Jones, Terra Grier, Sue Layton and Stuart Layton.
2. AOB requests were taken by the chair:
  - a. CM noted the rising expense of public transport costs from the Central Belt to the Highlands and how this creates a challenge to young people returning home to visit, and is likely to be a deterring factor for young people moving to/returning to places like Morvern to live, particularly at a time when the use of public transport is to be encouraged over private cars. CM will send a letter to Kate Forbes expressing this concern.
  - b. CM also noted an interest in developing a community online calendar which can combine events being hosted by different groups in Morvern into a single space, for those particularly who don't often use Facebook to keep on top of what is going on. Robert Melohn is kindly helping to establish such a calendar. CM will reach out to MCDC to ensure such a calendar does not clash with any plans for the new morvern.org website, as well as to the various community groups who would likely benefit from contributing to such a calendar, which has space for 8 modifying users.
3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising
  - a. Amendment of minutes: The Morvern CC meeting of November 2023 had an agenda item to amend October 2023's meeting minutes. This has now been done, but wasn't minuted in the November 2023 minutes. Therefore the November 2023 minutes will be amended to include this amendment and uploaded on the morvern.org website.
  - b. Co-opting of Council members: No co-opting took place in this meeting.
  - c. Local Place Plan: The chair noted no updates since the last meeting. The chair mentioned a reminder that funding from MCT was granted for the full amount requested, and that MCT have suggested seeking further funding elsewhere to support the development of the Local Place Plan and that funders have been identified. It was pointed out during this discussion that Live Life Morvern information is now missing from the morvern.org website.
  - d. School update: Janette Cameron updated that the school roll is currently 10 pupils, 6 of which will be leaving in August 2024. The nursery roll is currently 5 funded children. Also a reminder that the children are performing a Christmas Carols sing along on Wednesday 13th outside the school at 2.45pm. The school Christmas pantomime is on Monday 18th at 6.30pm in the village hall and everyone is encouraged to come along and support the children, they've worked so hard.
  - e. Village Tidy Update: Kevin Laurie updated that the map and village tidy suggestion box which had been positioned in the hub for 6/7 weeks has been collected and collated. Community suggestions have now been handed over to MCC to develop a strategy moving forward. CM will have an update on this at January 2024's MCC meeting. Steve Hardy fed back congratulations from Tracy Lambert, Scottish Wildlife Trust's 'Creating Natural Connections' Project officer, on the engagement of our community. Steve Hardy also announced that Ardtornish Estate are enthusiastic about turning the meadow between

Torr Na Faire and Kirk Brae into a community Nature Reserve. Kevin Laurie updated that the phone box refurbishment project is ongoing and will be slower to progress through winter due to the weather and shortened daylight hours. HL voiced the idea to use disused boats donated by the Morvern Sailing Club as planters around the village, perhaps having the opportunity for a community planter competition included in the Morvern Gala Week. A big thank you is given from the community to all of those involved in the steering of the Village Tidy project, particularly Kevin Laurie, Emily Rosier and Steve Hardy.

- f. Morvern Futures: Veronique Walraven noted the flood risk in Morvern, particularly at Claggan where three rivers meet and which flooded in October 2023. Climate change is likely to mean incidents like this will occur more in the future. Morvern is not mentioned on the Highland Council's Flood Risk Management Plan and we would like to make sure that this threat to our community is recognised. HL will contact the Highland Council's Flood Risk Management Team to relay the communities' concerns and find out if there is any work being done on this.
- g. Air ambulance location: Janette Cameron updated that several sites have been approved for air ambulance landing sites, though it is not yet clear which. The sites which have been surveyed are: Lochaline Hotel car park, Knock Park car park area, the field next to Kirk Brae, a field on the Ardtornish Boat House road, and a few sites at Drimnin.
- h. Access to vaccination locally: Chris Arnold at NHS Highland responded to concerns raised over limited space at vaccination clinics for local residents: "we think the most prudent action is to increase capacity at these clinics to allow citizens in Mull and Lochaline a reasonable choice of vaccination location and to meet the needs of the local communities."
- i. Royal Mail address change: The chair noted 25 objections to the removal of 'Morvern' from the Lochaline postal address have been handed in to Lochaline Stores, with many individuals having reported sending off their own objections directly. MCC have been contacted by the Oban Times to clarify that we do not and have never expressed support for the removal of 'Morvern' from any postal address.
- j. Christmas tree: MCC expresses thanks to all involved in the inauguration of a Morven community living Christmas tree which now stands in the Field of Hope in Lochaline. We thank Heather Pearson and Robert Melohn for the donation of the living tree. We thank Kevin Laurie, John Cameron and Blondie Laurie for digging the hole and planting the tree, with careful supervision. We thank Bob Brown and Walter Hodgson, from CLAM for their help with decorating and sorting out the power source for the lights. We thank the children at the school and their teacher's for writing and presenting such lovely poems about the new tree. We thank Katy Bremer for donating a willow woven star to adorn the tree. And we thank Creina Jackson for lighting the tree.  
CM will contact Highland Council about the possibility to have more Christmas lights throughout the village for December 2024.
- k. Street lights: CM noted having received complaints about the numerous and very bright street lights in Lochaline which shine into resident's windows throughout the night. Interest has been expressed in dimming these lights / shielding the angle at which they shine / turning off some of the street lights at certain times. Consideration was also noted on the impact of street lights on local wildlife which is not desirable. CM will contact the Lochaline Quartz

Sand Mine to ensure that these suggestions would not negatively impact staff returning home from night shift at the mine. CM will then progress this query with Highland Council.

4. Report from Corran Ferry steering group, HL: A consolidated result from all 6 community council's is coming out in due course, however at time of meeting what had been shared still had some inconsistencies. The result from the survey in Morvern is: Fixed link 122 votes, Ferry 86 votes, Abstained 1. We have a lot of comments on the responses and will now have to find a way to use this information. At the Corran ferry steering group meeting Monday 11th December we were informed that the 20 million pounds allocated from Westminster is for infrastructure only, and it should enable THC to complete the new infrastructure enabling roll-on roll-off ferries. The spare parts for the Maid of Glencoul are now due in January 2024 and she will then have to be fixed. The Corran is not due for dry dock until next autumn (2024), aiming for November. The Highland council is part of the small boat procurement with Calmac, and that's currently on time.
5. Planning applications - MW:
  - a. 10 houses in Lochaline, MDCDC project. MCC have already expressed our support for this project.
  - b. Kinloch radio mast, 20m high for telecommunications. Scottish Mountaineering Association (SMA) have noted a request to blend the access path into the mountain more visibly. Steve Hardy pointed out that this is very close to the Rahoy Nature Reserve. MW will contact Ardtornish Estate and Donald Kennedy if they have any more information or feel like they would benefit from this telecommunications mast. MW will comment on the planning application requesting more information on the proposed purpose of the mast.
6. MDCDC Update: The chair noted that MDCDC held an AGM on 6th December 2023 which has been adjourned but not concluded due to there being a tied vote for new directors. At this point there is nothing more to report.
7. Treasurer's Report: JH, the treasurer, is as of yet unable to access the MCC bank account due to the card authenticator not arriving. HL spent £40 on the community Christmas tree lights, therefore the MCC account balance should be £8,470.24.
8. Other correspondence - CM
  - a. Ardgour community place plan review: Noting that the deadline to submit a review to the Ardgour community place plan is Wednesday 13th December.
  - b. Community curated heritage trail: Jenny Robertson at the Morvern Heritage Society is discussing utilising a grant offered by the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) to add an audio component to the recently completed mine trail. An idea to use the village telephone box for this has also been discussed. Veronique Walraven mentioned that audio recordings from mine workers have already been collected. CM will suggest to JR that the Morvern Heritage Society continue with this idea.
  - c. Children and Young People's Centre for Justice survey: CYCJ have launched a 2023 Stakeholder Survey, and are keen to hear from community councils on what they think in relation to children, young people and crime in their local area. CM will offer the opportunity to the Junior Councillors to complete this survey.
  - d. Forestry extraction: Correspondence "Scottish Forestry have issued a Statutory Plant Health Notice for felling of larch that have been infected by *Phytothera ramorum* at Carnacailliche." No objections to this operation were noted. During the discussion on forestry it was noted by the public a desire to have 'dead-end' forest paths connected to provide circuits more suitable for recreation by the community, as well as open access to all Morvern forests.

CM will contact Scottish Forestry and JAME Forest LLP to relay these requests. Minty Mackay expressed that the Morvern Community Woodland group would also be interested in following up with this request.

### **Upcoming Meeting dates**

#### **2024**

January 9

February 13

March 12

April (no meeting)

May 14

June 11 (AGM)

July (no meeting)

August 13

September 10

October 8

November 12

December 10