

Morvern Community Council (MCC) meeting held on Tuesday 13th August 2024 at 7pm, Drimnin Village Hall

Present MCC representatives: Henriette Laidlaw (HL), Miles Welsh (MW), Clara Montgomery (CM), Douglas Taylor (DT), Jenni Hodgson (JH), Terra Grier (TG) and Members of the public x 16

Apologies from: Hugh Morris, Nicholas Michie, Helen Jones and Indi Boulton

1. **Welcome:** The Chair (HL) welcomed everyone and briefly introduced MCC members. Great to see such a good turnout in Drimnin.
2. **AOB requests:** Update on plans for a community skip: Rules for skip hire are too complicated. They don't accept tyres, fridges/freezers, gas bottles or any liquids incl. paint. New SEPA requirements for soft furnishings, can't be mixed with other waste; if it gets mixed, you get charged for contaminated waste, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-waste-upholstered-domestic-seating-containing-pops>. MCC doesn't have capacity to monitor it, so community skip can't go ahead.
3. **Minutes of last meeting** were approved by email.

Matters arising:

- a. **Local Place Plan (LPP):** Initial LPP consultation very successful, especially in Drimnin. Steering group still processing first consultations for draft plan. There will be a new consultation based on draft plan. All comments will be included: positive, negative and neutral. Highland Council will have to consult the LPP when approving planning applications. Still aiming to submit end of Sept.
- b. **School update:** nothing to report due to school holidays
- c. **Fiunary fish farm:** Fish farm wants to come and speak to the community about the boat that sank, probably at the next meeting. Any community members are welcome to submit their concerns to MCC now or address them at the next meeting.
- d. **Lochaline telephone box:** The phone box in Lochaline has been renovated. Official opening will be announced soon, with a potluck picnic, preferably on a Sunday lunchtime, and a souvenir for the children (to give them a connection to the phone box). Heritage society would like to make use of the phonebox (e.g. dial into stories from the phone box). **Action: HL to book Lochaline Village Hall for a picnic event. Action: HL to get a quote for a plaque to commemorate the renovation of the phone box.** Phone box Drimnin is also done up.
- e. **Village tidy update:** Village tidy survey done. **Action: CM to select a few suggestions that are easily achievable and organise community event.**

- f. **Air Ambulance location:** 3 areas selected locally: Kirk Brae, Ardtornish, distillery. Also looking into getting floodlights (to be stored at fire station)
- g. **Street lights:** Lots of streetlights are in awkward places, e.g. shining into people's windows. CM has asked Highland Council about these and whether they need to be on all night. Waiting for a reply. Suggestions: Can we have some Christmas lights instead? Can we also ask CalMac to switch their lights off overnight? **Action: CM to chase this up & contact CalMac re question.**
- h. **Public transport costs:** Public transport currently very expensive, but hardly any available. CM had contacted Kate Forbes, but the answer only covered the lack of public transport. Free bus travel for young people is no use if there aren't any buses. Suggestion: "Highland Travel Card" for residents, to include discounted travel on ferries? MCC will organise a meeting with the Community Council on Mull to see if public transport can be improved (e.g. bus/ferry timetables to be matched up). **Action: CM to follow this up.**
- i. **Forestry:** CM has contacted Forestry & Land Scotland, who did a community consultation in Morvern in March, but have not shared a draft of their plan yet. CM has emailed them to ask them not to finalise their plan yet until our LPP is done. HL received communication from FLS today re potential expansion of quarry near Inniemore, but no details. **Action: HL to ask for clarification re quarry expansion.**
- j. **Roads:**
 - i. MCC regularly informs Highland council re condition of roads, for example large hole A884 halfway down Liddesdale, road to Rahoy nearly impassable in a normal car, Drimnin Road in bad state especially near Rhemore, Wishing Stone and where the logging lorries go. Some of the Torr na Faire road has dropped so far that people's cars are being damaged going up their own drives. Last year's resurfacing of Drimnin Road was badly done: lots of gravel in the middle of the road is dangerous for (motor) cyclists.
 - ii. Can the 20mph zone in Lochaline be extended to Kiel Church and the graveyard? Can Drimnin be included as well?
 - iii. Lack of sign posts for passing places: approx. 100 missing or broken on A884.
 - iv. More information for tourists needed re driving on single track roads.
 - v. Footbridge next to Lochaline Primary school is rotting and the wall next to Village Hall needs repair as well, so Council should come and assess.
 - vi. Bollards/chains blocking the road between mine and Ardtornish. Mobility scooter got stuck and had to be rescued. **Action: HL to contact Ardtornish re access/blocking road between mine and Ardtornish.**

Action: HL to find out who contact is at Highland Council re roads, as no communication coming back to us. Action: HL to mention danger for (motor)cyclists in communication and ask to add Drimnin as a 20mph zone.

- k. **Fouling:** Wishing Stone car park and Lochaline Hotel beach: problems with human waste. Main gate to the hotel beach has now been closed to stop this. *Action: CM still to contact FLS to ask for a bin at Wishing Stone.*
4. **Communication Highland Council:** Communication is difficult. MCC keeping track of all correspondence sent/received.
5. **Youth Update:** Still pursuing coordination of bus/ferry times to enable young people to travel more easily. Morvern on the Move could potentially help, but MCC will need to come with a proposal. *Action: Youth counsellors (TG/HJ) to speak with other young people about how often/when they would need transport and come with a specific proposal of what they would like to see.*
6. **Lochaber Redesign project:** Hospital redesign project and new Lochaber steering group to look at wider Lochaber area and what is needed in terms of health/social care.
No progress on the Hospital project at the moment. Still no plan B for Dail Mhor. Kate Forbes meeting with various health/social care professionals this week. Push from the community that it's critical to keep the residential units in Lochaber open (also came up a lot in the LPP consultations).
7. **Housing:**
 - a. MCC is trying to put pressure on owners of empty houses, e.g. Scottish Sea Farms (SSF) on Morvern Crescent Lochaline, being empty and in disrepair, but SSF are now discussing options with MCTC. Community members to let MCC know if there are any other empty houses that we could pursue.
 - b. Housing needs should be included in LPP and look at what can discourage second home ownership. (E.g. put burden on new houses being built?)
 - c. Housing opposite Kirk Brae: update, still no planning decision from Highland Council. Can MCC send a letter to support their plan? *Action: MCC to ask MCDC for draft support letter re housing.*
 - d. Achnaha View: affordable houses from Communities Housing Trust (CHT) to be bought by tenants after 5 years, but no bank will give them a mortgage because of Housing Burden. *Action: MCC to also write letter to CHT in support of mortgage issue re Rural Housing Burden on Achnaha View*
8. **Planning applications:** Nothing submitted in the last 2 months
9. **MCDC update:** Café due to reopen soon. There are candidates for the Operations Director post.

10. **Treasurer's report:** Cash in bank June 2024: £9,237.24. Expenditure: £110 sponsorship to Morvern Games and Gala Week, £15 for Village Hall, £5K to PAS for LPP. Many thanks to Ardtornish for their £5K contribution towards the LPP.

Funding needed: MCC agrees to apply to MCT for funding towards grass cutting. **Action: ?**

11. **Other correspondence:**

- a. Lochaber Geopark: MCC has been notified that the sign has fallen off. HL has asked for clarification of what is expected of MCC.
- b. Police update: Report of drugs being used at licensed events in the area. Also: illegal trapping of pine martens.

12. **AOB:**

- a. Corran Ferry: Kate Forbes is also chairing a meeting re Corran Ferry this week in Ardgour. We are still pushing for a sustainable solution. Existing Corran Ferry not reliable: hospital transport driver having to go the long way round. HL to represent Morvern CC at the meeting. We need a solution that is affordable and achievable asap.
- b. Bottlebanks need to be emptied more often (and lack of bottle bank in Drimnin!). **Action: HL to let HC know**

Date of next meeting: 10th September 2024, 7pm Lochaline Village Hall