

Morvern Community Council (MCC) Meeting held on
Tuesday February 13th 2024 at 7pm, Lochaline Village Hall

Present Community Council representatives: Clara Montgomery (CM), Henriette Laidlaw (HL), Miles Welsh (MW), Douglas Taylor (DT), Helen Jones (HJ), Terra Grier (TG) and Members of the public x 5

1. The chair, HL, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Jenni Hodgson, India Boulton and Janette Cameron.
1. AOB requests were taken by the chair: None raised.
2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising
 - a. Local Place Plan: HL reported that we now have a full steering committee for the LPP; Douglas Taylor, Sam Firth, Sarah Jones, Peter Lawson, Annabel Lawrence, Shona Wood, Megan Whyte and Henriette Laidlaw They will meet before the end of February and one of the first aims will be to refresh the Morvern community with the Live Life Morvern action plan. Funding applications are under way.
 - b. School update: JC updated that the interim headmaster, Andrew Kent, has now received the full time position. Lochaline Primary School has been approved to have Gaelic as part of the curriculum, which could lead to the option of Gaelic medium.
 - c. Village Tidy Update: CM has nothing to update since the last meeting due to being away for the month for work.
 - d. Morvern Futures Flood Risk: Highland Flood Risk Management Team noted that although it is correct that there is an increased likelihood of flooding impacts on local flood plains in the coming years, any mitigation would require large capital investment and thus is unlikely to take off. They noted areas affected by the road closures should be considered for Emergency Resilience Plans which can be developed by Community Councils. MCC noted in response that we currently lack capacity for building such a plan due to focus on Local Place Plan and village tidy projects. Maintenance of road culverts will be incorporated into each of these other projects. Regarding culverts any areas of specific concern should be marked up on a plan and submitted to the Area Road Operation team (Kristen Macleod is the Community Works Officer for our area).
 - e. Air ambulance location: JC has no update.
 - f. Royal Mail address change: HL updated that the communities' displeasure to remove 'Morvern' from Lochaline addresses has now been registered with Highland Council and this will not be going ahead.
 - g. Àrainn Shuaineirt Management Committee: CM reported that the UHI survey on what the community would like to see in terms of training locally has now closed. Both Michael Foxly and Kendra Turnbull have been informed directly of the keenness of the community to receive more training/courses.
 - h. Street lights: CM noted no response has been received from the Highland Council to the email sent in January, enquiring about various community requests to reduce brightness/constant running of streetlights through the night in Lochaline.
 - i. Public transport costs: CM received a response from Kate Forbes that the concerns regarding public transport costs in the Highlands have been raised with the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) and she will let us know of the response that she receives in due course.

- j. Community calendar: CM noted thanks to Indi Boulton for taking over on the community calendar while CM has been away for work. Community groups in Morvern should now have all been contacted to gauge interest. CM will follow up to get all interested groups set up on the community calendar.
 - k. Forestry consultation (FLS & Scottish Forestry): CM noted that a Forestry and Land Scotland community consultation is taking place on 14th February. Members of MCC will attend and CM will raise requests from the community to have recreational paths maintained and paths looped into circuits. Minty Mackay noted that Drimnin coffin road is currently impassible. CM will contact Drimnin Estate about access.
 - l. Iggesund West Pier plan: HL, JH and Keith Adams met with Iggesund to talk about issues at the West Pier with waste being left by fishing parties. The meeting was positive but there is currently no funding to make changes. Currently proposed is to fence off the pier to have a separate public access route through from the village to the haul road. Also discussed was that the lorries offloading the timber should not be using the main road through the village. HL will contact the council about what legal obligations apply to the use of timber lorries on single track roads.
3. Young people's update: HJ noted that the main challenge to young people here is the lack of public transport leaving the village; with buses only leaving Lochaline on a Tuesday and Thursday. HL will contact Morvern on the Move and MDCD to enquire about the possibility of having a community bus to connect Lochaline to other regular bus services from Strontian.
 4. Rainbow Rural Areas: HL has been contacted by researchers at the Hutton Institute about their wish to use Lochaline as a Scottish case study for an EU project looking at how to build resilience within small communities. Lochaline has been selected as the Scottish case study representative for a study into Imaginaries, Beliefs, Opportunities for Lifestyles and Work. This research group would like to produce something for the community in return, and one proposal has been to assist in the production of a "brochure" for Morvern (could be a movie or whichever format we feel is appropriate). Funding has not yet been acquired so this will not be moving forward until the end of the year.
 5. Lochaber Redesign Project: HL noted that the plan to build a new Belford Hospital has been shelved due to the lack of funding. Lack of government funding means that the spending of all capital costs such as these have been paused. HL will respond with the displeasure of the community and to note that we would not like the project to be dropped entirely.
 6. Meeting with Sarah Fanet: HL and SF discussed transport and the lack of public transport, as well as high costs to get to Mull, which is problematic due to the switch between Highland and Argyll and Bute councils. They also discussed the need to increase the school roll. One proposal was to extend the 20mph speed limit of the village from the edge of Kirk Brae to Kiel Church, to create a safer route for people visiting the church from the village. Also mentioned was the quality of gritting and the timing of the gritting in order to make the school runs possible.
 7. Glensanda: HL met with Glensanda to discuss the stipend which used to come to Morvern Community Trust to repay for removing a Morvern mountain. It looks like the majority of funding will remain to come to Morvern and Ardgour. HL noted that Glensanda representatives were impressed at how the community use the fund. In future the Morvern Community Trust will communicate more to Glensanda about the ways the funding is going to keep showing its value. Thank you to both Angus Robertson and Keith Adams for fighting the corner on this.

8. Housing: MCC would like to gather a list of houses which are sitting empty throughout Morvern, to work with landlords to make these houses available to people in the village. We recognise that there is a need for local houses, and hope to work with landlords to address this.
9. Planning applications: MW noted that MCC have commented on a PIP application for three new houses in Torr Na Faire: ([link](#)). The Highland Council response can be found at:([link](#)). MCC took a neutral position on the application but expressed possible concerns that important wildlife habitats may be damaged and an expert assessment should be made if planning went ahead. With reference to Live Life Morvern we expressed concern that plots would be used to build holiday homes. No other planning applications for Morvern.
10. MCDC Update: MCDC board held a public meeting on 7th February. The main update is that the housing planning application is under review, MCTC is looking for a new tenant to take on the Cafe.
11. Treasurer's Report: The only expenditure in the last 4 weeks is £11.25 to the Village Hall.
12. Other correspondence - CM
 - a. Live Life Morvern has been nominated as a finalist for Scottish Planning Innovation awards in the category Sustainable.
 - b. Drimnin Post Office is closing down on Wednesday 21 February 2024 at 17:30.
 - c. Calmac winter timetable consultation: Was not received in time to include in a meeting, we have responded to Calmac asking for 2 months notice in the future. If anyone has pressing concerns over the current ferry timetable they are to contact us and we will still press for change.
 - d. Highland Environment Forum are looking to map nature-rich land in the long-term care of communities and conservation organisations. This will be included in village tidy and LPP projects and will be sent out to the community for input.
 - e. Scam awareness: Please be aware of possible scams using QR codes that may have been placed at Forestry Commission car parks. These car park sites do not usually have QR codes advertised and it is usually payment via a RING GO App. Sites usually ask visitors to download the RING GO app rather than provide a QR code for other payment options.

Upcoming Meeting dates

2024

March 12

April (no meeting)

May 14

June 11 (AGM)

July (no meeting)

August 13

September 10

October 8

November 12

December 10

MCC Treasurer's report for period		£
Opening Balance at: 20/11/2023		£8,510.24
	Income Less Expeniture During the Period	-£27.50
Closing Balance at: 9/2/2024		£8,482.74