

Morvern Community Council (MCC) Meeting held on
Tuesday January 9th 2024 at 7pm, Lochaline Village Hall

Present Community Council representatives: Clara Montgomery (CM), Henriette Laidlaw (HL), India Boulton (IB), Jenni Hodgson (JH), Helen Jones (HJ)
and Members of the public x 11

1. The chair, HL, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Miles Welsh and Kevin Laurie.
2. AOB requests were taken by the chair:
 - a. MCC have been approached by Urram who are doing a survey on community housing needs, to request help to distribute the survey. Leaflets will be put up around the village, which have a QR code on which leads to the survey. A drop in session will also take place on the 22nd of January in the Village Hall from 1- 6:30pm, following a Let's Do Lunch event, where individuals will be able to fill out the survey in person.
 - b. Previous MCC had correspondence with the owners of the West Pier, Iggesund. Annabel Lawrence has noted that there has been some discussion with Iggesund about managing the pier, and she has been informed that a management plan exists, but that access to see such a plan has not been granted and that the community have not had the opportunity to feed into such a plan. HL will follow up with Iggesund to request community consultation on the management plan of the West Pier, Lochaline.
3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising
 - a. Co-opting of Council members: HL proposed Douglas Taylor be co-opted onto the MCC and IB seconded this vote.
 - b. Local Place Plan funding: HL updated that MCC have identified potential funders for the creation of a Local Place Plan (LPP). HL reminded that this is to follow on from Live Life Morvern (LLM) to be a clear part of the planning process. We will use the same consultants for the LPP as for LLM. HL will reach out to members of the community from a range of groups to form a steering committee for the LPP.
 - c. Marine protection under LPP: Annabel Lawrence put forward a request to dovetail marine spatial planning into the Local Place Plan. Currently the Scottish Government is seeking engagement from communities on what they would like to protect their marine environment and Live Life Morvern indicates that this is something important to our community. HL raised that this is also relevant for our community because numerous of our planning requests are related to fish farms. AL queried if MCC can write to the cabinet minister to get an understanding if this is something we could add into our LPP. A reminder was raised on Lochaber being one area bid as a National Park, with our marine area being included; something to consider as a community, if having a National Marine Park would be beneficial to the community or not. Action for MCC to meet with AL and Caolas to garner understanding on how marine protection can fit into LLP, from which a query will be sent to the cabinet minister. HL has invited AL to be part of the LPP steering group.
 - d. Marine management plan: Annabel Lawrence informed that the Scottish Government is preparing a strategy "to support the preparation and implementation of a new National Marine Plan for Scotland's seas (NMP2)". AL noted the use of marine management to create jobs locally, such as the three posts which have recently become open regarding the reintroduction of

native oysters. Action for MCC to meet with AL and Caolas before the next meeting to discuss marine management planning and the community.

- e. School update: Janette Cameron noted that numbers remain the same. The head teacher post has now been published but the current head teacher is still in place.
- f. Village Tidy Update: CM noted that progress has slowed with this project over the festive period but that the current plan moving forward is to initially categorise village tidy suggestions based on three main considerations; 1) Volunteer opportunity/Consultant or Contractor required, 2) Environmental impact, 3) Alignment with Live Life Morvern plan. Priority to move forward quickly with suggestions can occur if they are a volunteer potential with little environmental impact and fit into the Live Life Morvern plan. Suggestions which require funding for contractor/consultants, or environmental consideration, or which divert from the Live Life Morvern plan will require further consultation. CM will continue to sort suggestions into categories, seeking advice from local specialists in village maintenance and the environment, with a goal to have volunteer projects running in the spring. MCC will arrange a meeting with Tracy Lambert, Scottish Wildlife Trust's 'Creating Natural Connections' Project officer who has been involved in the Cumbernauld Living Landscape project and has expressed praise on Morvern communities' enthusiasm on the village tidy project. Correspondence to MCC outlined funding which may be relevant to Village Tidy projects, including 'Community DIY funding from Screwfix Foundation' and 'Paths for All'.

John Montgomery has offered to volunteer in removing invasive Rhododendron from around Lochaline village using the Lever and Mulch technique. MCC are happy for him to go ahead, CM will pass this on.

- g. Morvern Futures: HL has written to the Highland Council's Flood Risk Management Team to relay the communities' concern on increased flood risk in the area with climate change and is awaiting reply. Annabel Lawrence noted that the catchment restoration project on the river Aline, led by Ardtornish, will assist in the mitigation of flooding from riparian planting. However, the area of current focus of this project is not nearby roads and houses and positive impact will be long term. Correspondence to MCC outlined funding of up to £500 is available to Community Councils who want to create resilience plans. It was raised by several that £500 is not a significant amount of money.
- h. Royal Mail address change: HL conveyed that MCC have received a response from the Post Office informing that if MCC withdraw their approval on the removal of 'Morvern' from Lochaline addresses then the Post Office will not go ahead with this change. HL will contact the Post Office to withdraw MCC support for this change, noting that it was never given in the first place.
- i. Àrainn Shuaineirt Management Committee: HL noted that a review is taking place on learning opportunities that are provided locally, which have dropped in recent years. Sam Firth noted that someone used to be paid in Morvern to organise educational workshops, funded by UHI. Some courses held in the past were; tree pruning, willow weaving, etc. SF also noted that everything that was organised was popular and well attended. SF noted that Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG) are still providing courses. There is an online form which can be filled in to request the sort of courses community members would like in our area, provided by UHI. MCC will post this link on MCC and Lochaline Facebook pages. HL will reply to Kendra Turnbull at UHI reporting

from this meeting that there is enthusiasm from the community to get local courses back up and running as soon as possible.

- j. Street lights: CM has been in contact with Andrew Campebell from Roads and Transport at the Highland Council. AC fed-back that changes to street light patterns of function are possible with community consensus. AC referenced a community near the Kyle of Lochalsh which has their street lights off from midnight to 6am. CM has since written to AC to get clarification in writing exactly which options are open to Lochaline for altering street light function and what the process is with moving this forward.
 - k. Public transport costs: CM has yet to contact Kate Forbes about very high public transport costs for Highland residents, this action rolls onto next meeting. At the end of the meeting Sam Firth informed CM of an idea discussed by the Morvern Community Woodland (MCW) group to form a car share WhatsApp group for Morvern. CM will follow up with MCW in creating such a group.
 - l. Community calendar: CM noted hitting a hurdle with only 8 modifying users available in the online calendar, with more community groups/businesses than this that would benefit from hosting public events. It was agreed in discussion that community groups should take priority and local businesses can be asked to share a local business event account. CM and IB will reach out to all groups with an invite to join the calendar.
 - m. Community audio trail: CM passed on the support shown in the previous MCC meeting to Jennie Robertson at the Morvern Heritage Society and Kendra Turnbull at UHI to move forward with adding an audio component to the mine trail. A suggestion was also raised to have a portion of this funding dedicated to repair two audio stories at Aoineadh Mòr historic township. CM will raise this with JR and KT.
 - n. Forest access: CM has yet to contact FLS and JAME Forest LLP to discuss forest access for recreation, this action rolls on to the next meeting. Angus Robertson noted that David Robertson from FLS is the best person to contact. During the discussion Janette Cameron requested to add to the correspondence to FLS that signs requesting no access due to sea eagle nesting be positioned in more visible locations (at the head of paths). Sam Firth noted that the forestry management plan for Morvern is having to be reviewed early due to larch disease *Phytophthora ramorum*. This is therefore a valuable time to request a discussion of community interests with FLS. CM will work with the MCW group to facilitate such a discussion. MCC will also put out a request on Facebook for a list of paths/cycle paths past and present in Morvern.
4. Planning applications: HL noted that the planning authority takes a break over the festive period, so there are no new planning applications since the last meeting. CM noted an email from Hugh Raven informing that Ardtornish Estate has submitted an outline planning application for three houses South West of Torr na Faire, to the west side of the road between the West Pier and Torr na Faire.
 5. MDC Update from HL: The adjourned AGM of the 6th of December was reconvened on 6th January 2024. At this reconvened AGM Kevin Laurie, Angus Robertson and Sam Firth were elected onto the board. Immediately following the completion of the AGM the new board held a meeting in which they co-opted Keith Laidlaw onto the board.
 6. Treasurer's Report: JH noted incorrect account figures being reported in the last two MCC meetings. Correct figures of last meeting were: general fund £896.63, common good fund £7600.96, total £8497.59. Since the last meeting costs which have come

out of the general fund have been to the village hall for rent £11.25 and primary school for Christmas card £5, meaning the current total is £8481.34.

7. Other correspondence - CM
 - a. Final Ardgour community place plan available: CM will put this on the MCC Facebook page.
 - b. Dementia care conference 2024 (March 26th): CM will put this on the MCC Facebook page.
 - c. Forestry extraction, felling Permission Application Killundine Estate: No objections or comments raised.
 - d. Defibrillators Morvern: Janette Cameron is looking to define where all defibrillators are in Morvern. JC noted that not all defibrillators are registered on the defibfinder.uk website, and not all that are registered have accurate map pins. JC reported defibs to be: 1x at Lochaline Stores, 1x Lochaline Harbour, 1x LQS mine office (inside), 1x LQS mine underground, 1x Drimnin village hall, 1x Ardtornish Estate offices (inside hall but unlocked). JC will follow up getting these accurately registered on defibfinder.uk.
JC also noted that the air ambulance has 4+ safe landing sites now but these are not yet updated on the website. Noted is the need for lighting for night time landing. JC has reached out to Morvern Community Trust (MCT) to request if they would top up any funding needed for purchasing lights. JC's contact, Chris at Babcock will do all actions on obtaining lighting.
Immediately following the meeting Nikki Jones informed the chair that Colin Thwaites is the first responder coordinator in Morvern and Claire Holohan and herself are also in the team, though it is largely disbanded at present. The defib by the shop is checked by NJ and is on "the circuit " which means all ambulances know where it is and that it is in working order so they can direct 999 callers to it.
 - e. Grit bin at Miners Court: CM has followed up with Highland Council on this. A request was made by previous MCC member Annie Tordoff in January 2023. Shirley Shaw noted that some consideration needs to go into where such a grit bin would be placed to maintain usability of pavements by Miners Court residents.

Upcoming Meeting dates

2024

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