Minute of Meeting of Holm Community Council

Held on Thursday 7 October 2021 on Zoom at 7.00pm

Note on Abbreviations: HCC = Holm Community Council, HC= Highland Council

Present: Community Councillors: Gail Beveridge, Margaret Irvine, John Horne (Treasurer), Graham Mackenzie (Secretary), & Murray McCheyne (Chair), Councillor Alasdair Christie and 4 Members of the public

Apologies for absence: Councillor Callum Smith

1. **Welcome**

Murray welcomed all to the meeting and identified new items to be discussed.

2. **Declarations of conflict of interest**

No conflicts of interest were disclosed, based on the agenda issued before the meeting.

3. **Minutes**

The Minute of the previous meeting held on 24 August 2021 were approved. No matters arose other than those already on the agenda.

4. **Ness Castle Primary School Update**

It was reported that work progresses well on the school, with the steel frame being constructed and internal staircases having been fitted. Nothing further has been said following the stakeholders meeting when it was mentioned two further ancient trees may require to be removed because of disease. The name of the school is yet to be decided but the working title is "the new school at Ness Castle." Councillor Christie and Murray are to identify possible groups in the community to visit the site, when possible.

Action Murray & Councillor Christie.

5. **Flooding at Darochville Place**

Murray reported he remains hopeful Highland Council will get action from either the developers or themselves to unblock the choked gulleys, but it hasn't happened yet!

Action – Murray

**6. Holm Grown – a community growing project**

Progress has been made in installing the first six raised beds, a water container and several low beds have been dug. Volunteers have attended to help dig. Some vegetables are already ready for harvest and signs encouraging the public to "help themselves" are now in place. Cost Quotations for installing the central raised beds and paths are being sought. Insurance cover being in place is being checked with Zurich our insurers.

Action Murray

7. **Finance Report**

John reported that since the last meeting's balance of £7029.05 now stands at £15,965.13, made up mainly of Holm Grown restricted funds of £9071.57.

**8. Police report**

A written report covering our HCC area and Lochardil & Drummond was circulated before the meeting. A slight increase in the numbers of reported crimes was noticed, with a relatively good clear up rate.

Incidences of anti social behaviour recently in the flood prevention channel, during the summer months in the fields at Ness Castle and more recently with two motorbikes in and around Ness castle/ the Holm Dell development were discussed. It was highlighted that criminal behaviour should continue to always be reported, although some of the responses have been disappointing from Police Scotland. Suggestions of seeking to engage with the youngsters on the motor bikes including Highlife highland's youth team were raised.

Action: Councillor Christie

A local resident reported that the privately owned access track to Ness Castle has been much more heavily used recently, especially when the Dores Road was closed for the marathon. It was offered that if the home owners on the track would be interested HCC could host a meeting to hear their suggestions as to how the situation could be made better. Improvements might include measures such as bollards or posting "private road, no access" type signs. The discussion really has to emanate from the private householders with an interest in the track and its maintenance.

9. **Ardness Place Path / Safer route to school**

Murray reported having met the safer routes to school officer of HC and her colleague Ian Graham and also that a video survey had been carried out over two days which highlighted motorists jumping the red lights at the pedestrian crossings on the distributor road. A lively debate followed from which it was very apparent that there are diverging views on the issue of improving the surface of the path over the grassed area from Ardness Place to the bus stop on the distributor road, not least because doing so might actually increase a road crossing hazard if a more recognised drop off zone in Ardness Place was established and pupils are at the same time being encouraged to cross Ardness Place more instead of walking along Stratherrick Road and crossing only at one junction of Ardness Place. Parents of school pupils are being consulted over the school holidays but the different views expressed at the meeting would meantime be reported back into the Safer routes to school team. Action Murray

10. **Bus Services**

Margaret reported that further changes to our bus services may be coming, as there is another review underway. Any change would be unfortunate as our area seems to be well served at present.

11. **Housing Developments –**

**Ness-side development**

One of the two planned light controlled crossing is being installed on the west link road. Reports have been received of cars parking over the footpath on the road leading to the Mill lade roundabout which have been raised with Tullloch Homes ltd. Another main road in the Maples is presently with HC for planning permission and the land under the pylons is being cleared of scrub and whins in readiness for the next phase of building.

**Ness Castle**

The Albyn housing development is nearing completion and the first homes are now occupied. Construction of all the bin storage areas and landscaping is not quite complete

The Robertsons development is also nearing completion with the foundations now laid for the final homes.

No further response has been received from Barratt to the concerns previously raised about condensation and insulation problems, but the problems were eloquently demonstrated by a home owner who showed the meeting photos of mould being found behind skirting boards in a recently occupied home. The possibility of reporting the issue to NHBC as matter which must be attended to as a complaint was highlighted, rather than just using their dispute resolution service. In the main it was again emphasised unless and until there is a clear request made of HCC to take on a representative role, it is for individual home owners to take matters up for themselves with Barratt homes.

No further progress has been made yet with the access officer about the closure of a gap in fencing, located close the badgers sett at phase 2b.

14. **Holm Play park**

It was reported that the goal posts had been moved and the worn grass area is being repaired by a local resident who offered to help, using topsoil provided by Tulloch homes. Lynsey Main is to be thanked for the way she pulled a group of interested volunteers together to achieve this.

15. **Litter Bin provision – Holm Dell**

No progress has been made with this.

16. **Correspondence**

The letter Murray was instructed to send to HC about Holm Burn Bridge repairs was well received. Trees are still be replanted.

It was noted HC have issued guidance on how to complain about community councils and community councillors.

A request that a community orchard be considered in Holm Park is unlikely to proceed as HC indicated they would not then maintain the grass surrounding the planted trees.

Murray will complete a survey on cycle usage on behalf of HCC.

Murray to ascertain who within HC is leading on the £10,000 allocated to improving the steps from Boarstone Avenue to Holm Primary School

16. **Joint meeting with other community councils in the revised ward area.**

It was noted with a little disappointed that although all other community councils approached about a joint meeting to discuss the impact of Red John pumped hydro scheme above Dores were willing to meet, Dores and Essich CC declined to participate, for now. It will be revisited again as the issues are too big and affect too many not to be discussed in a wider forum.

Meantime it was agreed that John and Murray meet with John Martin of Dores and Essich CC to discuss possible changes to the Torbreck C1040 road when a request is made for planning consent for more homes at Ness Castle, which will result in consent being sought for a second access road onto Dores road to serve the development. Action: Murray & John

17. **Holm Dell woods**

This was not discussed due to a shortage of time.

18. **Community Newsletter**

It was agreed it would be a good idea to aim to produce an annual newsletter in the style of a report of all that had occurred in the preceding year. Costs for delivery are to be investigated as also the possibility of getting volunteers to deliver it. Murray to prepare a draft for the next meeting.

19. **Co-option of community councillors**

The vacancy for 4 posts was highlighted.

**20. Next meeting date.**

The next meeting with be on 25 November 2021 at 7pm again by zoom.

The meeting concluded at 9.35pm.