Minute of a Meeting of Holm Community Council

Held on Thursday 21 March at 7pm at Holm Primary School in person and online.

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

Present: Community Councillors: Alan Stewart, Gail Beveridge, John Horne, Margaret Irvine & Murray McCheyne

Councillors - Alasdair Christie & Andrew Mackintosh.

3 members of the public, 1 online

Apologies for absence: Councillor Jackie Hendry & Becky Speight.

1. **Welcome and Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

Murray welcomed everyone. No new conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Approval of Minutes 25 January & matters arising

The minute of the meeting on 25 January having been earlier circulated were approved. Matters arising were:

(1) It was commented that presentation from Mike Youatt, CAB was worthwhile.

(2) The speed limit on Dores Road (adjacent to the Maples development/ Drumblair Stores) being reduced to 20mph might enable the chicane traffic calming to be removed. That arrangement continues to cause problems and is considered by many dangerous as it often results in traffic passing the junction at Moriston Road on the wrong side of the road.

3. Traffic management at events passing through our area

A member of the public raised concerns about the traffic management arrangements for the recent half marathon which commenced the day before the race began whereby bollards were deployed on the Dores Road roundabout on Saturday, restricting lanes. This seems entirely unnecessary. It was also commented that for many in our area, especially residents at Ness Castle, on race days -of which there are three routinely in any year, the half Marathon, Etape and the Marathon - there is significant travel disruption. After discussion it was agreed Murray would contact the event organisers to relay the concern raised, asking if the temporary restrictions could be deployed only just before the event begins.

4. Finance Report

John reported that with payments since the last meeting the overall bank balance was £6379.90, with £1885.07 of that figure being designated funds for Holm Grown. No questions arose. Murray mentioned he expects a grant application to be made soon by Holm Nursery for funds towards a poly tunnel project.

5. Local Place Plans

Murray mentioned that the next meeting of the Inverness Community Council forum will be addressed by Highland Council planners who will explain more about Local Place Plans. This is likely to lead to us seeking to make our own contribution, about which more will be said before the next meeting, including how we might conduct public consultations, both in person and by online survey.

6. **Promoting Active Travel**

An active travel hub provided by CoMoUK has been located at Tesco Ness side since January, which has had Hi Bikes available for public hire. It has perhaps been a more challenging time of year for the facility to have been best tested as anecdotal comment suggests it could have been better used.

7. **Community Garden / Growing space at Ness Castle Primary School**

A public meeting has been arranged for 27 March at 7pm in Ness Castle School to explore what could be done on the surplus land next to the school. It is open to all and will inform how this project might go forward.

8. Holm Play Park

Improvements and maintenance of the park (bush cutting, washing of the basketball court area etc) paid for by the ward discretionary fund is underway at present. The replacement bin in the smaller park is still awaited, as is the bin for Holm Grown. It was agreed if HC won't fund the cost of anti-vandal paint for the shelter HCC will provide that, so that the generous offer from a neighbour to cover the recent graffiti can be taken up. Murray and John will take this forward.

9. **Graffiti on garages at Ardness Place**

Murray reported two of the three householders whose garages had been graffitied some months ago had positively engaged to his letter enquiring if permission would be given to paint over the graffiti following complaints from a near neighbour. It was agreed therefore that the Community service team would be asked if they could help, failing which HC would provide paint to Murray and any other volunteers willing to help.

10. Community Litter pick

The date for the next community litter pick will be Saturday 20 April, 10am to noon.

11. Flooding at access track to Ness castle from Torbreck road.

After the flooding Monday 5 February a request for help was received from two owners at the south end of the private track leading to Ness Castle asking that we in turn might ask HC to investigate and if necessary, repair / replace a block culvert under the track. The blockage had contributed to at least one of the properties close by very nearly being flooded. HC have inspected and discussions are on going regarding what is causing the problem and whose responsibility it is to fix it.

We will continue to offer what assistance we can, in the form likely of continuing to ask questions of HC and reminding them they recently replaced another culvert close to the same location. It was also commented when the nearby field at Ness Castle is developed for housing as part of Phase 4/5 because all of the land to the south of the existing field being either an existing wetland or prone to flooding too the likelihood of more flooding incidents will be far higher unless significant flood prevention/ mitigation works are done.

12. Ness Castle SUDS

A safety concern was raised about the SUDS basin at Urquhart Road, Ness Castle, which remains unfenced. Over the winter the basin filled with water which then froze. It wasn't clear to the meeting whether the basin was behaving as it should or if the outlet had become blocked. Children's bikes are often seen in it and at the edge of it, and it is a known location where children play, right next to a play park. It was observed the whins which were within it have been recently cleared. Murray was asked to enquire of the Factor of the development what work is being done which might address the safety concerns raised.

13. Potholes

The condition of the road surface of Holm Park, especially around the bus turning circle, was noted. This will be reported by Margaret using HC's online reporting mechanism, but all are encouraged to do so too. The more people reporting it the greater the likelihood of HC attending to the repair.

14. Correspondence

SSE new overhead line

Alan will investigate if a decision has yet been made about the route of the new high voltage Beauly to Peterhead line.

Red John Hydro – now known as Loch Na Cathrach

Murray reported having recently attended an event by Statkraft, the owners and developers of the scheme, which is now fully consented and will commence in 2025. Construction of the £500M project is due to complete in 2029. The chief concern for HCC remains vehicle movements to and from the site during construction passing through our area. No plans have yet been finalised, but we will seek to continue to liaise closely with the developers to ensure traffic is kept off the Essich road.

15. Battery Storage – Slackbuie

It was noted that between meetings we had been asked for and had given our support to Slackbuie Community council's objection to the planning consent for a battery storage facility at Fairways. Our own decision was given by a majority, one of our number not having expressed a view due to a conflict of interest. The review meeting of HC had taken place and by a significant majority overturned the previous decision (made 3/2) to give planning consent. It is not known if the decision to refuse will be appealed further, although that seems likely.

No decision was made by the meeting to change our position of offering support to our neighbouring community council, who clearly had put in a significant effort to their submission. It was noted that fire safety concerns do not, of themselves, represent a valid ground of objection, and the matter at hand comes down to the issue of whether HC's stated and adopted policy of the land being designated green space can be or should be changed to permit the proposed development.

It was observed that this was a highly controversial application on which polarised views seem to be held. Some on social media had commented that the "no campaign" (which we had backed) did not represent their view and the objecting

community councils did not do so in their name. This then sparked discussion about how we ought to have handled the request. It was commented that by being elected (or in our case appointed) community councillors do have the ability to express a view without having to first consult on the matter, such is the nature of how democratically elected representation works in our country. In future though we might be less quick to lend support to controversial issues which do not directly affect those within the catchment area of our own CC without first gauging the views of those in our area.

16. **Date and venue for next meetings**

Although Ness Castle primary school might be available, the lets team have indicated there will be a cost to hire a room there. Both HC councillors present did not think this was accurate or appropriate. If the venue can be hired by us free of charge will look to have meetings in August, October and December there, then reverting to Holm School. The next two meeting on **23 May** which will be our AGM will be at Holm School and the date of the meeting thereafter will be **29 August**, venue to be confirmed.

17. Holm Grown

John reported that Holm Grown has been offered the opportunity to manage some additional land owned by Tesco, namely the two areas of grass surrounded by paving on the concourse adjacent to Holm Grown and a further area of grass. Plans are being made to install a few more raised beds and also a living “Nessie” formed of yew trees.

18. St Columba Church of Scotland

Murray reported that a building project team has been appointed to oversee the construction of a building on the site owned by the Church of Scotland at Dores Road. Amongst the first steps the project team will take will be issuing a questionnaire to various stakeholders in the community, including our community council so that views can be given about what the community needs in terms of space the community could use.

For more information about the work of Holm Community Council,
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