

## NOTE OF MEETING DRAFT 18 October 2010

### CHANONRY POINT ADVISORY GROUP (First Meeting)

Black Isle Leisure Centre, Fortrose

Thursday 30 September 2010 at 4.00pm

#### In Attendance:

Aileen Fraser	Resident
James Cornwell	Fortrose & Rosemarkie Community Council
Alan Murray	Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club
Arthur MacArthur	Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club
Cllr Billy Barclay	The Highland Council
Cllr David Alston	The Highland Council
Kathryn Logan	Moray Firth Partnership
Sinclair Young	Moray Firth Partnership
Alice Mayne	WDCS
Charlie Phillips	WDCS
Colin Simpson	The Highland Council (Planning and Development – Tourism)
Ian Goode	The Highland Council (Education, Culture and Sport)
Philip Waite	The Highland Council (Planning and Development – Access)
Diane Agnew	The Highland Council (Chief Executive's – Ward Manager)

#### Apologies:

Cllr Isobel McCallum; Bryan Stout; Gary Slupek; Cllr Craig Fraser; Elizabeth Brown; Mr and Mrs Galloway; Bill Taylor; Gordon Ireland; George Hamilton; Kenna Chisholm; Duncan Bryden; Greg Doctor.

#### Action

- 1. Welcome and Introductions** – Cllr Billy Barclay welcomed all to the first meeting of the Chanonry Point Advisory Group. The Group was to come together perhaps twice a year ideally pre and post the main season with a remit to review progress and advise only i.e. no executive role. The group to be made up of interested stakeholders in order to share views, promote understanding and inform progress. The Advisory Group is principally to improve communication between stakeholders. ALL to note

- 2. Update on What Done to Date  
ROUND TABLE UPDATES**

Cllr Billy Barclay and Di Agnew, Ward Manager updated the group on progress made to date on certain actions agreed previously

Visitor Management Option Study funded by Leader, THC (Planning and Development Service, The THC Black Isle Ward and the Fortrose COMPLETED

and Rosemarkie Common Good Fund)

<b>Public Meeting</b> hosted by Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council. Meeting held on 28 April 2010	DA COMPLETED
<b>Establish an advisory group for Chanonry Point</b> to share in an integrated approach to management. First meeting to take place 30 September 2010	DA COMPLETED
<b>Reshape and expand existing car park.</b> Funding package agreed (The Highland Council (THC) Tecs and Black Isle Ward); Planning Permission in place; work to be completed by end March 2011. (Plan tabled). Wooden barriers on grass area not being moved inwards (as requested by residents) – agreed at site meeting.	DA/BS/GS TO BE COMPLETED BY END MARCH 2010
<b>Discuss with Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) under grounding of power lines</b> Discussions very successful. Funding package in place SSE, THC Tecs and The Black Isle Ward. Wayleaves in place. Work estimated to take place end October / November 2010.	DA/BS Scottish and Southern Electricity
<b>Tackle litter and dog waste more effectively</b> THC Tecs Dog Warden and Waste Management Officer contacted. Dog Warden visits site regularly.	Nell MacDonald Rolfe (NMR)
<b>Path Infrastructure at point to be improved</b> – This item to be discussed as part of agenda. THC Access Officer, Phil Waite present to put forward proposal to take this item forward.	PW/F&RCC
<b>Real time electronic signage in Fortrose</b> Feedback has been against this proposal	ALL TO NOTE
<b>Seasonal Park and Ride</b> Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council looked into this proposal however was not possible to implement short term. Following further discussion it was agreed that Cllr Barclay would approach private mini bus operators and landowner of land for potential parking with view to running a trial park and ride next year. The Group suggested it may be worth considering park and ride to include other tourist/leisure sites such as Groam House, the Cathedral, the Black Isle Leisure Centre.	BB
<b>3. Update on how people feel it has gone over the summer</b> Cllr Billy Barclay asked all round the table to give an update from their perspective on how they felt this summer had gone.	
Members of the group felt it was important to know exactly where the cables are underground so that we know for the future. DA to advise Scottish and Southern and THC Tecs Service of this action.	DA/BS/GS/ Scottish and Southern Electricity
The Golf Club felt this year had been similar to other years (no worse, no better). At times they have had to put up ropes and to prevent cars parking. Week of Sea Watch particularly bad. Three point turns on the fairways. Very difficult to stop people in buses turning.	

Billy Barclay did not think it was quite as bad as last couple of years.

Aileen Fraser agreed and stated it was like status quo no worse than other years.

Golf Club felt that there were many locals who visit Chanonry Point who are just going for “a wee run”. It was important that they could continue to do this.

Billy Barclay said that programme Wild life Around Britain will be on BBC in April. Although this was very much welcomed there was also concern that this publicity would encourage even more people to visit Chanonry Point.

#### 4. Next Steps/Priorities

There was a general open discussion on the next steps and priorities for Chanonry Point.

**Signposting** – Colin Simpson offered to co-ordinate a Sub Group to review interpretation and general signage. Some funding may be available for replacement or improved interpretation signage.

CS/IG.AM/CP  
/PH/BSorGS

It was agreed the Sub Group re Interpretation and general signage would include Ian Goode, Alice Mayne, Colin Simpson, Charlie Philips, Phil Waite.

Billy Barclay advised the Group that there was a possibility of land swap with the Golf Club and Common Good Fund but it was early days and the general public would have to be consulted on this and it would be a full Council decision should this possibility be progressed.

Sinclair Young stated “we do not want to discourage people coming to the Black isle”.

Billy Barclay highlighted that access for all requires to be improved. On one particular day he had visited the Point and there were four people in wheel chairs and they could not get access to a place where they could see the dolphins.

PW and F  
and RCC JC

Phil Waite reported that there had previously been presented two possibilities for improvement of access (approx £10,000) Boardwalk or type one stone and whin dust surface, or a third option of a combination of two to achieve the correct gradient. Phil highlighted that there was funding available through LEADER (made easy) via THC Planning and Development Service. Community Councils and voluntary groups or partnerships could apply for this funding. Funding for 2010/11 had been committed but there was still funding available for future years. The Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council had previously received application forms and

guidance notes. Members of the Group agreed that F&RCC would appear to be the best body to take forward an application, and specifically asked James Cornwell to present the case at the next Community Council meeting, and ask whether they would be willing to front such an application. It was agreed that PW would resend the application form to JC and copy to Di Agnew. JC agreed to take this request to the next meeting of the Community Council on 13 November. If not the Community Council then the Black Isle Partnership or the Moray Firth Partnership could consider applying for the funding and working in partnership with The Highland Council.

BS/GS

Phil Waite stated there should be an effort to make as good an access to the beach for disabled people as for able bodied people.

Kathryn Logan, Moray Firth Partnership asked whether there would be specific disabled parking bays located adjacent to the disabled access route to provide safe access / egress. Tecs, Bryan Stout or Gary Slupek to be asked this question.

James Cornwell asked “are we relying too much on evidence based on the number of vehicles?”

Councillor Barclay confirmed that the data on vehicle numbers in the Bryden report had come from vehicle counts commissioned by the Moray Firth Partnership over the course of the previous year as part of its Sustainable Marine Recreation and Tourism Project. Additional people counts at the Point had also been carried out in conjunction with Bill Taylor, Aberdeen University and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society.

James Cornwell asked “is there a negative effect on people visiting because of press about no parking?”

The Group felt this might cause people not to visit although there was no evidence of that, and programmes such as Spring Watch and Coast which highlight the dolphin activity have contributed to increased visitors to the Moray Firth.

Sinclair Young, Moray Firth Partnership confirmed that recent surveys and studies of tourist visits to sites such as Chanorny Point has a positive impact on local business.

Councillor Billy Barclay asked the Group if they were content with the way the development of Chanorny Point had been handled to date? Was there anything anyone wished to contribute to improving how things are done?

The Golf Club reminded the Group that they have 756 members and that all interests must be encouraged, not just wildlife watching. It was stressed that we have to look wider than just Chanorny Point.

The Group agreed.

Sinclair Young, Moray Firth Partnership felt that the way the development of Chanonry Point was progressing was the best way – in phases beginning with the extending of the car park and undergrounding of the cables; and now moving towards refurbishment of core path and improving the signage.

Kathryn Logan, Moray Firth Partnership advised that MFP had commissioned a report to look at the value of additional tourism income generated solely because of the presence of bottlenose dolphins. The dolphins' range extends from the Moray Firth at the most northerly point to beyond the Scottish Border . The report was to be launched the following Monday giving results of survey work carried out in conjunction with five council areas – Fife, Dundee, Angus, Aberdeenshire and Highland. As well as showing a multi million pound income, the report would highlight potential areas requiring further work. There was to be a meeting with stakeholders following the report launch to discuss sustainable dolphin related tourism issues, including improving interpretation etc. It was thought some of this might best be done jointly on a cross-area basis, so there was potentially considerable cross-over with the proposals being put forward for Chanonry Point.

Charlie Phillips of the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society stated that Chanonry Point has unique geographical features both on land, because of the way the shingle lies, and sub surface where the tide movements are very important and assist the dolphins to feed. He felt this makes Chanonry Point a suitable candidate World Heritage site

Charlie Phillips said that WDCS would like to have an increasing presence at Chanonry Point, rather than just at the current centres at Spey Bay and North Kessock, and are happy to be part of a Group looking at signage and interpretation panels.

Colin Simpson, Planning and Development showed the Group a copy of the Highland Council published Booklet "Wild Coastal Trail" which has been very well received by the public.

DI/CS

There was a discussion on how other local facilities could be included in such a booklet in order to encourage visitors to spend more time and money in the area.

Colin said this could possibly be included in a future leaflet / booklet.

CS

Ian Goode would like to promote the Black Isle as a whole. Perhaps the Park and Ride could devise a circular route to visit other facilities in the Black Isle.

The Golf Club would also like to have the opportunity to comment on any proposals.

Di to send through contact details to Colin Simpson

DI

The WDCS centre at Kessock acts as a gateway to the Highlands, and would like the Group to consider providing clear direction on what to say to visitors in coming season as regards where to park, etc..

Following a question from Aileen, the Golf Club representatives confirmed they would prefer people used the path / beach on the Rosemarkie side of the course to walk to the Point, to avoid coming into range of golfers using the course at key holes.

Questions re charging for parking

Colin said the Ben Nevis parking charges had generated over £20,000 when applied on a voluntary payment basis, and were expected to generate £60,000 per annum since compulsory charges were implemented in April 2010, but there the charges covered use of the visitor centre, toilets etc. whereas there were no such services at Chanonry Point and visitors might be less willing to contribute.

Is there any merit in having a voluntary payment scheme for parking? Councillor Barclay suggested that this was not something the Council could undertake, but that it could be contemplated by a local group if there was a clear agreement as to what the funds were to be used for – eg paying for the park and ride service or improvements to access.

There is a need to identify a Community Group to take any such developments forward

**5. AOB - None**

Agree to meet in March 2011

BB/DI