

EILEAN A CHEO WARD FORUM

ACTION NOTE FROM THE MEETING HELD ON: MONDAY 1st JUNE 2015 AT TIGH NA SGIRE, PORTREE

PRESENT: Cllr Drew Millar (Chair); Cllr Ian Renwick; Cllr Hamish Fraser; Cllr John Gordon; Christine MacLennan, Struan Community Council; Alasdair MacPherson, Broadford & Strath Community Council; David Hearn, Portree & Braes Community Council; Judith Wallace, Sconser Community Council; Isobel MacLeod, Skeabost & District Community Council; Paul Edwards, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service; Meg Gillies, SLCVO; Insp Lynda Allan, Police Scotland; Bob Mitchell, Transport Scotland; Mark Crowe, Assistant Area Manager (Community Services); Willie MacKinnon, Ward Manager; Marion MacSween, Business Support

APOLOGIES: Moira Scobbie, Waternish Community Council; Alan Knox, Scottish Ambulance Service; Craig Glenright, Kyleakin & Kylerhea Community Council

IN ATTENDANCE: Calum Maclean, BBC Alba; Alastair Jupp, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

MAIN TOPICS : Transport Scotland – Trunk Road, Works Plan 2015-16

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION	LEAD
1	Welcome, introductions & apologies	Cllr Millar Apologies – Please see above	
2	Police Scotland – Review of Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently embarking on Summer 2015 drink/drug driving campaign. • Drink driving offences down by 29%. This may be in part due to new drink driving limit. 7 cases last year and 5 cases this year. • 95 fixed penalty road traffic offences in and around Skye – e.g. speeding, non-wearing of seat-belts and using mobile phones whilst driving. • Wildlife Crime campaign ongoing – few issues on Skye. • Increase in Mountain Rescues – 12 since last Ward Forum and 19 this year so far. Currently call outs every other day. • Recent and upcoming local events requiring police input – Skye Live festival; Ceol on the Croft festival; Skye Highland Games; plus sports event in Plockton 	

		<p>area. No significant issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing – new police constable starting in Lochcarron 22/06/15; new police constable starting in Portree 15/07/15; recent presentation by senior officers to acknowledge retirement after 36 years of Andrew Gillies, special constable on Isle of Raasay. • Eight bedroom police hostel in Portree should be complete by August this year. Looking to keep a couple of rooms free for summer secondments to force. • Cllr Millar asked if secondments were necessary due to staffing numbers. Inspector Allan responded that staffing establishment was fine but secondments were very useful to assist in the extra staffing of events and keeping a high profile of Police Scotland presence in community. • Inspector Allan reported she has now met with most Community Councils in the Ward – this was ongoing. 	
3	<p>Scottish Fire & Rescue Service – Update from Paul Edwards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change since last Forum – no house fires, deliberate fires, road traffic accidents. • No casualties or fatalities. • No major false alarms and no further action required. • Recruitment of retained firefighters is ongoing via My Job Scotland website – applicants can complete application for any station though some are more in need of retained staff than others. • A national campaign which includes Skye is running currently but always a problem recruiting due to size of community. • If anyone present knows of any local people interested, they can also contact Paul Edwards direct for more details. • Training – over next 2 months training staff are being recruited to carry out training rather than watch managers. This is considered to be a more effective way of providing training. • Four exercises still pending with each station to be involved in at least one. • Since the last Ward Forum, Paul Edwards has been redeployed to another area and on his departure Alastair Jupp will become the point of contact (based in Kyle). This is a short-term measure as Alastair is shortly moving to south of Scotland. • Cllr Millar asked if financial gaps in Fire Service could result in stations closing or being amalgamated. Paul Edwards responded that although some stations 	

		<p>were not running to full establishment there were categorically no plans to close or amalgamate any of them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Millar wished Paul well for the future. 	
4	<p>Transport Scotland – Trunk Road, Works Plan 2015-16 (Bob Mitchell, Transport Scotland)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bob Mitchell began by reporting good news regarding the investment in the A87 trunk road. <p>A87 Trunk Road</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1.7m has been invested for roadworks, some of which have already begun by Bear Scotland : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A87 Tilhill – machine patching in April ▪ A87 Skye/Lochalsh boundary – machine patching in April/May ○ Programmed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A87 Cluanie Inn – machine patching in May/June (currently ongoing) ▪ A87 Pine trees to Glen Shiel – machine patching in June ▪ A87 Glen Shiel – machine patching in June ▪ A87 North of Kyleakin to Lusa – machine patching in June/July ▪ A87 Scalpaidh Bay – resurfacing in June/July ▪ A87 South of Sligachan – resurfacing June/July ▪ A87 Loch Cluanie – replacement of safety fencing in late Summer ▪ A87 Breakish – verges works in Autumn • Design work is also ready in order to take advantage of any further funding that becomes available. • Re potholes – we will never get rid of all of them but constantly working on it. If members of the public notice any trunk road defects please call Scottish Government report via Bear Scotland call 0800 028 1414 or enquiries@bearsotland.co.uk For the council road network call 01349 886601 or report via the online enquiry form on the Highland Council website Road faults Road faults The Highland Council. • Plea that CCs encouraged all members of community to abide by speed restrictions and convoys during current works – for safety of all inc the workforce. Police will be contacted if any drivers seen breaching rules. He conceded that roadworks happening during busy driving season was not ideal but this was best time of year for such works to be carried out when weather 	

warmer and days longer.

Skye Bridge

- At the beginning of the year various agencies including expert meteorologists met to discuss high winds and concerns about increasing number of Skye Bridge closures and to see if wind closures could be managed better. Weather conditions were discussed and analysed to try to account for some of the recent bridge closures.
- Discussion included whether last winter was windier than other years; were people in official capacities acting more promptly than before (when things were possibly done more informally) due to more stringent guidelines; is there a need for more weather stations; were they in the right position; testing and replacing them; looking at having manual input to the process of closing the bridge when threshold reached; variable messaging signs – investigating locations/what messages can be displayed.
- Plans to put up a couple of wind socks – they won't tell what the wind speed is but may be more visible to public than the high wind warning signs.
- High sided vehicles – no definition on this which makes it difficult for authorities to manage. Looking at how to better define what is safe and not safe.
- Other bridges tend to do their own thing which may work for them. All locations unique – e.g. Skye Bridge is lower level and not staffed.
- Transport Scotland have a very good working relationship with local councillors and aim to provide a report on this by the end of the Summer.
- Cllr Fraser commented that there appeared to be fewer closures now even though winds were of similar speed to before. He suspected that weather stations on bridge and modification of equipment (that had not previously monitored direction) had eased closures.
- Cllr Millar said that public needed to accept the occasional bridge closures in the interest of public safety.

CC response

- Sconser Community Council – concerns regarding the Sconser stretch of A87 and would resurfacing include seaward edge of the road.
Bob Mitchell assured that it was edge to edge.
- Sconser Community Council – several directional black and white arrow signs

		<p>at bends are bent.</p> <p><i>Bob Mitchell responded that these chevron signs were most important signs on the road, in recent years they had been erected using single poles. This had not worked and they were now going back to the 2-pole system. There is a signing scheme ongoing at the moment from Kyleakin to Portree and signs are being replaced now and bend assessments being done to see where chevrons best placed. Dubious landslip signs were also being removed/re-located.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sconser Community Council</u> – concerns regarding pedestrians walking on road between Sligachan and Sconser dodging past large number of sign poles. <i>Bob Mitchell responded that when poles were replaced design team would look at placing them further away from edges.</i> • <u>Portree Community Council</u> – is the £1.7m just for patching? <i>Bob Mitchell assured him that it was a full width re-surfacing scheme.</i> • Portree Community Council – re rigidity of bridge closures, assume Police have the authority to let vehicles go, ambulances for example? If a person wanted to walk over could Police stop them? <i>Inspector Allan said Police have not sanctioned any traffic to go across when bridge is closed. She has instructed all staff that under no circumstances are vehicles allowed to cross. If it is closed, it is closed. There could be serious repercussions if exceptions were made and something happened to a vehicle on the bridge. When bridge closed to high sided vehicles only it is the responsibility of driver to make the decision to cross, not the Police. If someone wanted to walk across Police would recommend they did not but they could not stop them.</i> <p><i>Bob Mitchell emphasised difficulty in finding a definition for ‘high sided vehicle’ and the controversy re partial closures.</i></p> <p><i>Willie MacKinnon described the new 3 level system for closures and timescales for each one which can allow it to open more quickly. Decision now goes on next gust speed so bridge could be shut just 10 minutes rather than ½ an hour.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sconser Community Council</u> – concerns re traffic build up when bridge is closed. <i>Bob Mitchell said they were trying to warn as early as possible and looking at putting up appropriate signs further back to allow drivers to divert and minimise queues, e.g. Ashaig airstrip entrance. Cuillin FM has been a great help in</i> 	
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<p>5</p>	<p>Public answer & question session</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Portree Community Council</u> Drew attention to low attendance at Ward Forum and difficult situation they are in re Community Council membership. With re-elections looming, half of Portree CC's committee were not going to stand for re-election. All over 60. There was a need to get younger people interested somehow. Council has to be proactive in making communities aware and an advert of some kind was suggested. September was too late for HC notice going out to advertise the re-elections. Emphasised that CCs were lay people and should not have to make professional decisions. <p>Broadford & Strath Community Council – agreed with above. Alasdair was in attendance today as he was the only one not working during the day. Advised best way to get volunteers is to go to people and ask them directly. Suggested all CCs clubbing together to put large ad in WHFP each month.</p> <p>Cllr Millar agreed that getting the public interest in Community Councils was a problem. Have to look at budgets and getting decision-making powers back into communities. The council are looking at how to encourage younger people to get involved. He gave example of way that the recent referendum inspired a huge surge of interest by young people. Also when an evening meeting was held a very low number of CC members turned up for it. He agreed to approach the Policy Officer to see what was planned re the election notifications and suggest they do it sooner. Questioned if they should review the number of Community Councils in Skye – can't keep expecting volunteers to do everything.</p> <p>Sconser Community Council – suggested taking the Ward Forum to Portree HS. Also pointed out there's a Facebook page for Community Councils all over Scotland. It is very useful and informative.</p> <p>SLCVO – Meg commented that it is part of the remit of SLCVO to support Community Councils and they were very keen to help. Happy to support CCs by including any information in the SLCVO twice monthly bulletins etc. Urged CC's to use it. National Volunteer Week coming up also.</p>	

Inspector Allan – to put information out on Police twitter page.

- Portree Community Council
Commented on local council pothole filling – i.e. a bag of soft tar put in hole and flattened with wheel of lorry – which does not last any time. Also commented on disabled parking spaces in Portree – very difficult to enforce correct use of these as they badly need painted. Is there a problem getting the machine to do this and couldn't they just be hand painted with a template? Also what was Police position re non-disabled vehicles using these spaces?

Mark Crowe responded that not a lot of patching was possible due to the wet weather over the winter. Road inspections are prioritised by their hierarchy, and service are presently working through patching based upon these priorities. However the road needs to be at best damp, but if wet then no matter what method is used any patching will not last. During winter months cold repair material is used as temporary patching, and when the weather is better we use hot asphalt transported in heated insulated boxes. Because asphalt has a life of 40–50 years a lot of roads on Skye are past their end of life, unfortunately current budgets mean that we are looking at surfacing a stretch of road approximately once in every 150 years.

He explained that road marking required hot applied thermoplastic material using specialist equipment, however service are looking into what cold applied marking paints may be available for urgent applications. The service's road marking squad last year were unable to run a shoe over the uneven road surface to mark disabled spaces, but this really requires resurfacing. Service is aware of the need to undertake road markings, but have to prioritise all maintenance works within the budget which is available and this means we cannot afford contractors.

Cllr Millar commented that it was an equality issue but also a council budgetary issue.

Inspector Allan has instructed police officers and traffic warden to prosecute

		<p>anyone caught using disabled parking spaces illegally. It was noted that it was predominantly locals who parked in these spaces. They have a zero tolerance policy on this.</p> <p>Cllr Millar concluded the meeting by thanking all for attending and wishing David Hearn (Portree CC) all the best for the World Power Lifting Championships 2015 which he is competing in shortly.</p>	
6	Date of next Forum	31 st August 2015	