**Tiree Community Council Minutes Meeting 6th May 2020**

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|  Date  |  Wednesday 6th May 2020  |
|  Time  |  7:05PM  |
|  Venue  |  Via Zoom (web/telephone conference)  |
|  Present  | Councillors participating: John Holliday (JH) – Chair Phyl Meyer (PM), Ian Gillies(IG), Alison Clark(AC), Gerard McGoogan (GMcG), John Patience (JP)  |
| InAttendance  | Estimated 28 Members of the Public ( MOP) Don McKillop ( DM) (Calmac representative)Dr Mike McIver Tiree medical Practice Dr Lindsay MacGregor Tiree Medical PracticeMinutes: Jacqui Bennett |

 **Welcome and Apologies**

John Holliday welcomed all to the first Tiree Community Council meeting by video conference (Zoom)

There were no apologies

 **1.0 Minutes of Previous Meetings**

1.1 Minutes of 4th March 2020.

 PM apologised for the delay in posting . Proposed and seconded by AC and PM.

 1.2 TCC held Councillors Meetings ( by Zoom ) on 18th March 2020 and the 3rd April 2020 to discuss a number of issues associated with the lockdown, including the setting up of TAIC ,the arrangements for banking facilities, the Annual Accounts and the potential/procedure for convening a public meeting by video conference ( Zoom ). The minutes of these meetings will be posted on the TCC website.

**Action : PM**

**2.0 Correspondence**

2.1 Primary correspondence over the previous weeks has been in response to COVID-19..

 2.2 Argyll and Bute Council

Argyll and Bute Council have confirmed that by-elections for Community Councils have been cancelled.

A and B Legal guidance is anticipated soon in respect to holding an AGM using the online format.

A and B have forwarded the Community Council allowance for the year to 2019 -2020 .The allowance for year 2020 -2021 is anticapted in the near future .

 2.3 Loganair

The CC sent a courtesy letter offering to provide a letter of support to Loganair if this was deemed to be of political assistance . John Hinkles, Managing Director of Loganair responded stating that they had political aspects covered and that they are receiving support from Transport Scotland.

Loganair also confirmed that they have set up an arrivals and departures lounge in its own hangar at Glasgow. This is in anticipation that should there be any cessation of links to planes to Barra, Tiree or Campbeltown via the main terminal building, these would be run from the hangar instead. The letter ended with thanks to the Community Council for their concern and support.

 2.4 Key Worker Testing

Jeane Freeman, Cabinet Minister for Health and Sport , in response to a letter from JH, has confirmed to TCC that Island based doctors and key workers ( who had initially been refused testing) can now be tested in Glasgow before coming to the Island.

 2.5 Essential Maintainence Work –Scottish Water

Scottish Water had advised that they require to send a maintainence team to the Island to change 3 filters in the pumphouse. TCC raised concerns about keeping incoming workforce separate from the local workforce and sought assurances that the work was essential. Scottish Water responded that they had carried out a Risk Asseesment and outlined their proposals for implementing the work. The details was considered to be acceptable and TCC will advise that this work can proceed.

**Action : JH**

2.6 Government Guidelines on Mask Usage

TCC has received correspondence from an islander, presenting a compelling case for mask usage in accordance with the current SG recommendations in shops

The writer asks the Community Council to endorse the policy, and JH has consulted the COOP staff who consider the use masks in the shop to be acceptable.

JH requested a response from the other councillors.

JP supported the principle and advised that if masks were required to be made then, that could probably be arranged. JH advised that wearing a mask reduces the risk of passing on the infection.

PM also supported the wearing of masks especially by those who were when shopping for TAIC as this can take considerable time.

IG stated that if face coverings are being worn, in accordance with the recommendations in public areas, crowded transport, and shops, then care needs to be taken when removing, and immediately wash in 60’C. A little education may be needed to be effective.

Dr Mike McIver advised that there is no actual hard evidence base on the imapct of wearing face coverings, compared to hand wash or gel which has a strong evidence base. However he accepts that as evidence changes, and as part of releasing lockdown, masks may become more recommended.

JH proposes that the community council reiterates the SG’s recommendations and leaves it to the individual to decide on use .TAIC volunteers will be given education on that recommendation and from the 7th May be given masks.

2.7 Police Report

11 incidents since 5th Feb. No actions taken.

Any concerns about COVID-19 restrictions should be referred to Police Scotland by ringing 101, rather than the local police direct.

 2.8 Tiree Hardship Fund

A letter was received from an islander about setting up a hardship fund and suggesting that everyone should receive a flat rate rather than identifying individuals who may require assistance.

TC Councillors, who agree in principle, have discussed this with the Trust but confirmed the distribution of any available hardship funds is a matter for the Trust.

**Action : JH to write to the Trust referring to the correspondence**

**3.0 Report by Doctors : Tiree Medical Practice**

3.1 Tiree COVID- 19 status

The Dr’s advised that no cases of suspected COVID-19 have been seen for over three weeks. One patient has been tested, Dr Lindsay confirmed that the results of the test are negative.

3.2 Testing and Analysis

Testing availability will increase on the Island and blanket testing at the nursing home will be implemented

Testing is done via swab ,then the sample is inserted into a vial of viral transport medium and packaged The sample goes via plane and courier to labs with an average of 24hrs from test to results. There are issues with testing providing false negatives as the tests are not foolproof, particularly with asymtomatic individuals

The Dr’s do not anticipate being able to carry out test analysis on the Island as this will be cost prohibitive. Any patient tested must remain in isolation until the test results are known. Sending tests to Oban will be slower than Glasgow as the ferries aren’t daily. They may decide to store samples and send on the weekly plane instead.

MOP agrees testing has limited use. NHS24 is seeing lots of false negatives. There is only a certain window where tests are positive.

 3.3 Contacting the Practice

The Drs’ stressed that islanders should contact the practice on any matter that they would normally. The consultation might be face to face, phone, or using a NearMe video conference.

The “excess death rate” (the rate of deaths above the normal average level for the time of year) is extraordinarily high, not just because of COVID, but also from other illnesses that would normally have been treated. It is important that any health matters which are not associated Covid 19 should still be referred to the GP’s

Dr Lindsay explained the NearMe system The GP emails a link to the patient, who then uses their phone, tablet, or PC, to click the link and that puts them in the virtual waiting room. The GP can see them waiting and the consulataion is like a normal video conference. It’s useful for seeing things without possibly exposing someone to anything at the surgery building e.g. for rashes, and also for chronic disease management.

There may be issues with technology access for some demographics on the island but as the use of the NearMe is still at the early stages, the actual numbers are unknown. JH confirmed that there is a proposal between the Trust and the TCC to provide technology to those who are currently without online access and asked that the Dr’s contact the “no one left behind team ‘ if they identify individuals who would benefit .

JH thanked Dr’s Mike and Lindsay for attending the meeting providing the information.

 **4.0 Transport Links**

 Report by Don MacKillop – Calmac Area Operations Manager for the Argyl and Lochaber Area

Introduction

Don McKillop, Senior Organiser and Area Operations Manager for Calmac, based in Oban is responsible for the Argyll and Lochaber area

DM confirmed that he was comfortable to proceed with a Q and A session

4.1 Timetable and Essential Lifeline Service ( ELT)

IG: How is the company faring with the “winter minus timetable” and what's the view of timetable as we move forward?

DM : Calmac is currently operating an “essential lifeline timetable” as a reduced service across the whole network. This is set to operate until the 14th May at which point the government advice and Transport Scotland, will make further decisions and the ELT may be extended,by a further 2 weeks.

This timetable is based on demand, and since the lockdown, Calmac has seen a 97-98% drop in traffic, 80% in cars, 40% in commercial vehicles, and 100% in coaches. Given that drop has been sustained in the last 5-6 weeks there is unlikely to be a significant change in ELT for next couple of months and may continue through the summer in accordance with the ‘rules’ on travel. It is anticipated that island communities are strongly expected to remain in the vulnerable category for some time.

Currently Tiree sees three services a week and Calmac are waiting for info from Transport Scotland, and a substantially new timetable is expected to be in place by Summer 2021.

Any changes in the near time might be driven by community request.

4.2 JH : What is the procedure for buying a ticket in Oban and ferry booking?

DM : There is a barrier at the counter in the ticket office to maintain distance where manual transactions can occur. Calmac is not accepting cash, has moved to contactless and tickets and receipts are placed on the counter, for passenger collection. Social distancing is practiced in the departure lounge .

Proof of island residence, or proof of key worker staus must be presented. Both vehicles and foot passengers are checked. Calmac have no legal right to refuse people, but the Police at the port can intervene if Calmac staff think a person is travelling unnecessarily.

Due to the success of the social media regarding the message on ‘non –essential travel’ , Calmac are not currently having to turn away passengers at any of their ports.

 4.3 JP : Online bookings are disabled at the moment, will this change?

DM: Currently no bookings can be made up to the 7th July. This will be reviewed nearer the time.

4.4 PM : As the boats are not running at capacity is it likely that Islanders turning up could travel? ( subject to current travel restrictions )

DM : There are no challenges on volume or deadweight on any boat across the network. There is spare capacity in commercial, foot, or car.

4.5 Restrictions onboard the ferries

JH : What is the maximum no of passengers that can travel under the guidelines and how does Calmac maintain this?

DM : The Clansman has a maximum of several hundreds, but in order to comply with 2m exclusion zones, it would be less than 100. Currently there are very few vehicles/passengers travelling on the routes.

4.6 JP : Calmac has had the title “gatekeeper” thrust upon them. Have you been given any guidance on controlling who can and cannot come as lockdown is ?

DM: Not yet Community expectations, as well as guidance from Holyrood, will structure how Calmac approaches the issue. There may be more need for intervention where police can say “turn around and go back”. Feedback from the communities is crucial in understanding necessity.

4.7 : How do you validate multi ticket purchases by single individuals

DM : Clamac has limited authority, staff don’t want confrontation, and will refer issues to the Police as necessary.

JH opens discussion to the public

4.8 Passenger and Vehicle Statistics

MOP stated that 15 cars came off a single ferry and the comment of “very few’ travelling is an understatement.

DM : MOP to provide a specific date to JH to check this.

(Post meeting note : Calmac provided figures for Tiree vehicle /passenger numbers which will be posted alongside these minutes. These statistics at that time show **no date in which cars arriving on Tiree exceeded 8 during the lockdown period**).

 4.9 Contingencies for Ferry Cancellation

Dr. Mike McIver : Is there any contingency for storm rescheduling if a boat is cancelled ?

DM : With the low current demand across the network and some boats tied up ,there is a storm cancellation contingency. Calmac can also increase freight tonnage as required, and as daylight hours are extending, there is more opportunity to accommodate cancellations.

4.10 Ambulances and Emergency Vehicles on the Ferries

Dr. Lindsay MacGregor: Could Carers and Dr’s going to and from the island stay on the car deck and what is the procedure for using private vehicles as temporary ambulances?

DM : Passengers can only be allowed to remain in their cars on the car deck if the transit time is below 60 minutes and the ferry is open decked. The exception is a vehicle designated as an ambulance (or an ambulance) with a pre-arranged agreement and are subject to a number of guidelines for the safety of the passengers and the crew. Each circumstance may be unique and Calmac have a policy of assessing on a case by case basis.

JH thanked DM for his significant contribution to the meeting.

**5.0 Summer 2020: easing the lockdown on Tiree**

5.1 How is this going to work?

JH presented for discussion, a number of questions in respect to the easing of the lockdown

Should the islands be treated different from the mainland?

Will Tiree’s voice be heard alongside the larger island groups?

Should we simply allow the Scottish Governments national guidelines be the exiting tool or would it be possible to have a set of ‘island’ rules ?

Should the CC report to the SG as a representative body on the island with views on these questions?

The Scottish Government is running an online consultation ( Proposals for decision making exiting from lockdown) until the 11th May submission and MOP’s were encouraged to present their ideas as individuals

PM stated that makes sense to adhere to national guidelines generally. However, there may come a time where there are particular arrangements that might make some things possible in a controlled way on the island which we could manage as a community that might not be practical elsewhere, and a bespoke solution may be worth considering. He indicated an example might be the use of the play park could possibly fall in to this category – perhaps if the island remains locked down with cases under control the community could decide to re-open it with the social distancing guidelines being followed? He also stated that he welcomed the Dr’s recent public statement recognising that there are more health concerns to consider than just the virus,

GMcG expressed concern about writing our own guidelines as he does not feel that there would be sufficient time to do this justice before the SG proposals for exiting are published at the end of May. He advised that the press have reported different rules for the Western Isles for lockdown exiting. He also stated that it may be difficult for the TCC to be the author of Island guidelines as the Councillors may not be fully representative of the population of Tiree as a whole

AC indicated that supporting a Western Islands exiting policy as an alternative to the SG’ guidelines will make it difficult to control . Risk Assessments for Island activities may be possible but not practical with visitors

Following calmac’s presentation, JH indicated that it becomes apparent that visitor numbers may be significantly reduced over the summer and that this will have an adverse affect on the letting economy .

IG stated that the island economy may already be in serious trouble and the forthcoming relaxation of rules may allow some economic resurgence which will bring visitors to the island. However it is appreciated that the Chancellor is caught between disease control and the economy and it would be prudent therefore not to have mixed messages between the mainland and the island and between locals and guests.

IG referred to the earlier comment on the playpark and advised that as a member of Tiree Community Business, the playpark is owned by Argyll Council Housing Association, they made the decision to close it. So there is currently no insurance if a mishap happens in the park.

JH asks the Dr’s: For the summer, people coming in are people here being more relaxed? What is their view on this delicate balance?

From a medical point of view, the Dr’s would prefer to maintain the travel restrictions, but allow locals to increase their activities on the island .It is inevitable that more infection will come if we open to tourism. This would be dissapointing after the efforts so far have avoided a serious outbreak of the disease. Dr Lindsay is of the opinion that more physical activity that can be done safely on the island (compared to the mainland ), and that this would improve mental and physical health here.

JP concurs with the Dr’s and stated that if we open up the island too soon, we’ll risk everything done to date. Maintain the outside boundary and relax only the activities inside the island that can be practiced safely .

AC stated that it would have to be clear that any relaxation on the island is only possible while travel restriction is maintained. As soon as that is lifted it would need to change.

MOP: In July/Aug people will come to the island. People in care homes haven’t been looked after on the mainland we must make sure they're safe on Tiree when others start coming.

MOP has been very aware that Tiree has been conducting its own lockdown rules and lots of people meet up, walk, share vehicles. The concern is that if we can’t adhere, to the current SG guidance then it would become “given an inch, take a mile”. It might result in a lax attitude with the obvious consequences.

MOP is worried that this could go on until there is a vaccine and this could be the end of 2021, to 2022. Maintaining lockdown is supported but this does mean not only limiting incoming, but also outgoing. If locals go off and come back, they could bring the virus back with them The biggest risk to the island is the fresh food aisle in Co-Op, as it’s always crowded with traffic, so the priority should be to look at minimising risk to all.

5.2 Role of the Community Council

JH asks if the councillors think we can do anything about it? Nicola Sturgeon has asked for views about how communities can open up.

GMcG doesn’t believe that the CC are capable of writing our own ‘exit rules’, we don’t have the skill set to do risk assessments for everything.

PM disagreed. Locals are just as skilled and capable as mainlanders, plenty with risk assessment skill and problem solving. We should be open to the idea and to discussion about how to bring some elements of normality and life. Certainly not proposing any sort of free-for-all, but It’s important to focus on where actual risks lie. The Coop is our main risk, this has been identified, and more measures have been taken.

IG There are 28 participants here this evening. Good opportunity for people to give their views. So, yes we can make represenation The agencies, particularly Transport Scotland, CalMac, Loganair, will listen to the TCC and we can also respond to Nicola Sturgeon and the SG

DM mentions that CalMac will make a representation to Transport Scotland based on demand, etc. but a community input would help if presented direct to Transport scotland.

JH asks if the councillors think we should not have another meeting to discuss an island wide resonse to the SG consultataion

AC commented that there is not enough time to gather and collate all the diverging views and opinions before the 11th May deadline for the SG Consultation (Proposals for decision making ,exiting from lockdown) response. Businesses, those not financially impacted, health concerns, too many POV to accumulate in a short period of time. AC considers that it would be best to publicise the government portal to people/groups so they can put their POV as individuals

PM suggested that the council could look at, and find, key views and questions, and could discuss them and perhaps make a limited submission

GMcG suggested that we should contact other councils on islands to get their insight, but notes that Mull haven’t had a meeting this year.

MOP: The Community Council cannot do anything unilaterally. They can only follow guidelines set by the government. The Community Council must represent the Governments response and be seen to do so by the community. The Community Council cannot endorse a different set of rules.

MOP stated that they would like to see council come out with 3 ideas to support the most vulnerable people on the island, and put those forward for consultation.

JH drew the consensus view that we conclude there, and try to gather what views we can and aim to get useful conclusions where possible, but accept that there may be some areas we don’t manage this, especially on short timescales.

Following a vote, JH to convene a Councillors meeting within the next 2 weeks to discuss the above

**Action: JH to arrange a Councillors meeting**

**6.0 AOCB**

6.1 Community Council meetings by Zoom

Following discussion with the MsOP, the consensus was that the Zoom format was useful and allowed people to attend who may have been constrained from otherwise doing so by geography or caring responsibilities, etc (even if we were not under lockdown).

It has also addressed the issue of being able to hold a formal TCC meeting while maintaining social distancing. The only concerns voiced were in respect to MOP’s without technology being excluded.

PM clarified that it was possible to join by telephone and has included his contact details in the meeting notices asking people to get in touch if anything can be done to make their participation possible or easier.

**Action: PM to publish a ‘how to guide’ for phoning in for the next meeting**

6.2 JH thanked all the Councillors, Guest, and MOP’ for attending the meeting

Meeting ended. 21:12