**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY MEETING OF TIREE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (TCC)**

**8 February 2023 7pm**

**via Zoom**

1. **Present**: Phyl Meyer (chair), Dr John Holliday, Jacqui Bennett and Tim Arkless. 15 members of the public were in attendance, including Sandy Neil from the *Oban Times*.
2. **Welcome**: PM welcomed everyone
3. **Apologies:** Cllrs Jim Lynch and Willie Hume
4. **Declarations of interest**: none declared
5. **Minutes of last meeting**: JB said that her surname was spelled Bennett; she herself is not on the Parent Council but her husband is; point 16 ‘possible’ should be ‘possibly’. These changes would be made. Proposed PM and seconded JB.
6. **Matters arising**:
* Banking signatories. **JB is still working on this**
* JH has approached Discover Tiree, the fishermen and the NFU. A crofter has agreed to come onto TCC under ‘Use of Local Skills/Knowledge’ (item 7 of *Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Argyll and Bute*). He will attend when crofting and farming matters are on the agenda
* PM will approach the Parent Council at its next meeting
* JH has written to Coll, Iona and Mull CCs to see if they were interested in a meeting. Iona CC had agreed. The others have yet to meet
1. **Councillors’ reports**: none present
2. **Letter from estate about sand and gravel extraction from Tiree’s beaches**: this letter had been posted on the TCC website. The estate is concerned that excessive amounts of sand and gravel is being taken from the beaches, some of it for non-crofting and even commercial purposes. We agreed that TCC’s constitutional duty was to represent the interests of local people, of whom over a third are crofters. JH had talked to some crofters, who had pointed out that sand and gravel extraction had, at times, been considerable in the past: for example, creating all the wartime buildings, roads and runways, and many of the island’s houses. Sand is also currently used as bedding for housed livestock, so its use is often an animal welfare issue. On the other hand, damaging erosion was a risk in a few places, and it was plausible that sand and gravel could contribute to this. We agreed the following statement:

TCC is very clear in recognising the value of crofting and farming to the island’s economy, culture and population. TCC is also clear that local sand and gravel currently play a key role in making this industry more economically viable here, and in improving the welfare of livestock. We also recognise that it is obviously in the long-term interests of our community, including crofters and farmers, for such extraction to be sustainable, and avoid potentially contributing to future damage of homes, businesses and roads.

Tiree Community Council (TCC) shares the concerns of many of our constituents about the erosion of parts of the island’s coastline. The extent to which sand and gravel extraction is a significant factor in this is currently unclear, and we would strongly urge the responsible authorities to do more research into the matter and provide useful guidance.

Serious allegations have been made about excessive sand and gravel extraction from beaches that go beyond reasonable crofting purposes. TCC would encourage Argyll Estates to work constructively with the crofting community to provide more clarity on what constitutes acceptable and sustainable use, and guidance on locations where long term impact on coastal erosion would be minimal, or entirely balanced by natural replacement. If we can be of assistance in helping to disseminate such information, we would be glad to do so.

There was one message of support for this in the ‘Chat’ and no dissenting voices. **PM would send this statement to the Estate.**

1. **Reports from meetings**:
* There has been one meeting about the community garden with two volunteers. Three others have indicated an interest and others will be welcome. Tiree Community Business is happy for the project to go ahead after the delays of last year. Further funding may be available
* JH had attended Mull CC, but there was nothing to report.
* PM had met with the Digital Team at Argyll and Bute Council. Funding was available to supply equipment for wi-fi in public buildings and equipment for hybrid meetings
1. **Ferries**: there has been a recent run of docking failures due to the transfer of the *Clansman* to another route, leaving us with the less powerful *LOTI*. **PM will write to protest about this**. CalMac had added visitors with a confirmed accommodation booking to their ‘Advanced Standby’ system, joining key workers, those with medical appointments and those making shellfish deliveries. TCC strongly disagreed with this last-minute addition. Mull CC had felt the same way. The upcoming HIAL strikes would only add to this transport pressure.
2. **Council Customer Service Point closure threat**: JH had talked to Jim Lynch about this, re-emphasising that it was a red line for TCC. It was not just a cut, but a complete removal of service. The cut, from full to half time, happened a few years ago. It was also a relatively small sum: around £8000. Tiree Community Business was also willing to be flexible with the rent. Several helpful testimonials had been sent to us. **PM has not written to the Scottish Government yet. JH would post our letter to ABC against the cut on the website.**
3. **Planning**: there were two applications for Tiree: 22/02565/PP in Scarinish and 22/02630/PP in Crossapol. There were currently no issues with either that triggered our planning policy.
4. **Hynish project update**: JH gave a report on this, one that would appear in *An Tirisdeach* the following day. The Open Day in Hynish would be on 4 March. If the community supported a new local Trust to run Hynish, this would happen.
5. **Correspondence**:
* Police report for Coll and Tiree**:** there had been four calls in January, including the theft of 800 litres of domestic heating oil on Coll. There was nothing else of significance
* Jane MacLeod, the Lord-Lieutenant, had written to seek our support for celebrations to mark the coronation of King Charles III. Grants were available from the Lottery. We would publicise this request so that the island’s community groups could prepare, but TCC itself would not be the prime organiser
* Douglas Hendry had replied at the last minute to our request for a Review of Argyll and Bute Council’s decision not to do an Island Community Impact Assessment on the appointment of the Executive Head Teacher at the school last year. This was not questioning the appointment itself, but the way the Council had approached its duty to consult the community. Hendry’s Review decision was that an ICIA had not been necessary. There were two issues. First, it is unsatisfactory for any review to go back to the same body, in this case the line manager of the person who made the original decision. We had made representations about this to our MSP, but had received no answer about this. It was a serious weakness in the Islands Act. Second, if the Council had spent as much time and effort doing the Impact Assessment as it had spent refusing to do one, it would understand Tiree a little better. JH stated that he felt that the Islands Act was ‘a failure’ for Tiree
1. **AOCB**: nothing else was raised.
2. **Date of next meeting**: this will be on 8 March and will be an in-person hybrid meeting with online access and streaming available. The value of recorded meetings was illustrated by the fact that there had been 291 views on Facebook of our streamed meeting withing 24 hours.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

Dr John Holliday, 9 February 2023