

29th. September 2008

Community Council

At the recent Community Council meeting several matters were discussed.

Further moves are to be made to contact the owners of Tourist Information Centre regarding trying to make arrangements to allow some of the findings in the Feasibility study to be carried out on the centre. The community have registered an interest with the Scottish parliament under the land reform Scotland Act. The potential of the Centre was highlighted in this study but without clear future security for any investment it is unlikely funds could be available.

The community council are to seek the possibility of acquiring the old Village hall site in the village square for an environmental improvement scheme and work with the square Highland Small communities Housing trust to identify housing needs and alternative sites.

A Development Group update was given and reported an application for interpretation at loch Croispol School has been submitted to Highland Legacy, Heritage Lotteries and Historic Scotland and Registering for a Department of Agriculture Business reference number to allow application under the rural development programme for the Renewable energy project.

A separate meeting was arranged to discuss the LEADER Development Plan and a response form the community council was sent to Sutherland Partnership.

The approved minutes of meetings are displayed on the local notice board.

MOD Meeting

The 29 Durness MOD Cape Wrath range Liaison group meeting was held last Wednesday night. Support was received from councillors and Niall MacDonald (assistant to Rob Gibson MSP) and assistant to Mary Scanlon who attended. A letter read out from Rob Gibson MSP regarding community concerns and the advice that was ignored regarding the dangers of fires on cape side.. The meeting was left

with very little doubt about the discontentment of the people of Durness regarding the consultation and liaison that actually happens at these meetings. There is little evidence of the outcomes of the meetings being listened to at higher levels and while questioning the relevance of the meetings it was apparent that nothing the community was concerned about was being considered when planning operations were in progress but huge amounts of information regarding the complexities of the process was the given response. There was great weight put on the current communication between Lord Thurso MP and the Ministry of Defence about the concerns of the community being recognised and taken into account. The MOD representatives assured the meeting they took the concerns to their seniors in the chain of command but was having little effect except that a combined and continued persistence could eventually have meaning. The main disquiet is regarding the dates of large scale activities in May 2009 which will now not be changed.

Cape Wrath range

Cape wrath range including Garvie island will be active with various combinations of air bombardment, naval gunfire support and helicopter operations during the following dates: 17 – 20 November 2008, 12:00 to 22:00 21 – 22 November 2008, 12:00 to 17:00 (road closed) 24 – 27 November 2008, 12:00 to 17:00 (road closed). When the range is active, red flags/lights will be flown/displayed and sentries positioned on the u70 road. All efforts will be made to keep the u70 road open. However due to the nature of some practices and in the interest of public safety, closure may be necessary. Access advice can be sought from the sentries, who will be in contact with the range officer conducting the firing, or by contacting the freephone number. However, whatever the nature of the practice, under no circumstances is any person to leave the road or proceed anywhere onto the land, particularly the land north of the road within the range area, when the red flags are flying. For further information on the opening and closing of the road and military activity telephone the range freephone number.0800 833300 / 01862 892185

Village Halls

Durness is to host a village hall seminar for the village halls and community buildings in North West Sutherland this Saturday. The seminar is designed to enable all those involved in running

community buildings to share knowledge and experience. The day will offer the opportunity to discover the aims aspirations and achievements of the communities in connection with these buildings. There will be an outline of all the buildings followed by presentations about the Scottish Rural Development Programme by Mark Brennan, Jon Priddy from Community Energy Scotland on Renewable potentials. Highland Council Ward Manager Andy Mackay explaining the Discretionary budget and Lawrence Jamieson Area Community Learning & Development Officer Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross - main source of HC ECS funding. David Inglis will explain the new licensing act in relation to voluntary groups and alcohol sales.

A presentation on Training and submitting applications for funding by Kirsty Bateson a Funder Finder Demonstration and review of the Community toolkit a resource that has been developed for and with the help of community groups to help improve skills and knowledge and bring benefits to local communities.

Sheep dog Trials

The annual Durness sheepdog trials take place at Keoldale farm this Saturday. The event starts at 8.30 am and continues throughout the day. People are welcome to come along to watch the dogs and handlers in action. There are refreshments available on the field.