

Ballachulish Community Trust / Forum

Meeting held at Ballachulish Village Hall

7pm Tuesday 19th May

Present (groups represented): Brian Dickie (Community Association); Jan Gosden (Bowmen); Shirley Grant (Community Council, Playparks, Parks, Shinty, Patient Participation Group); Angela Horsnell (Car Scheme); Dave Kitson (Community Council, Company, Boat Club); Sheila MacLean (Community Company); Rob Malpas (Community Association, Council, Scouts, School PTA); Kath Small (Community Council, Car Scheme, Step it up walking); Kevin Smith (Community Council, Company); Mike Smith (Community Company, Car Scheme); Jeanette Watt (Community Association, St John's Church); Jo Watt (Community Association); Peter Watt (Boat Club, Boatsheds); Robert Watt (Boat Club, Boatsheds, Community Association)

Apologies: Lynne Brown (St Munda's Church); Alice MacDonald (Mothers & Toddlers, School PTA); Jenny Newton (Mothers & Toddlers); Laurence Young (Community Company, Catholic Church)

Kevin Smith was nominated as chair, and so welcomed everyone. Rob Malpas taking minutes.

1. Anniversary Celebrations

There are three major anniversaries coming up this autumn. The Village Hall celebrates 30 years on 2nd November; The Fireworks Display celebrates 10 years this year and the Ballachulish Bridge celebrates 40 years on 23rd December.

After Discussion, it was agreed to celebrate all three over the weekend planned for the fireworks, with the following provisional schedule:

- Thursday 12th and Friday 13th November – exhibition in hall of photos and memorabilia relating to the construction and opening of the hall and bridge as well as of the previous village halls and ferry. Further displays relating to the Quarry, Arch and Boatsheds also proposed. Teas & Coffees to be provided. (The boxes/files of old village photos have still not been relocated. Dickie to ask Drew MacFarlane Slack if he knows anything. Also to check with Lochaber Archive in Fort William).
- Saturday 14th November – Fireworks display in the Quarry, with a 'bridge' theme if possible. Dave Kitson to look into getting a suitable projector to put images of the Bridge onto the quarry face prior to and after the actual display. Thought to be given to having a model of the bridge incorporated in the display.
- Saturday 14th November – Community dance (NOT disco) in Village Hall, entrance by ticket only, purchased in advance.

2. Gala Day

Dates have already been booked, and preparations underway for this year, but the meeting were in general agreement that it would be good to bring all of the community groups together for one big Gala day in 2016. This would combine the School Gala Day, Hall Summer Fayre and other similar events, providing all were in agreement. Careful control of money would be required to prevent some of the problems experienced in the past, but each group taking part should get a fair/equal share of overall proceeds. For further discussion.

3. Tidy up – Quarry

The weekend of the 20th & 21st June has been booked for the next phase of the village tidy up, which will focus on the quarry, but include other areas if sufficient volunteers turn out. Kevin Smith has already met with the Ranger, Michelle Melville, and will have another walkabout in the quarry prior to the weekend to ensure we are in agreement over areas to be worked on.

Primary target is area of Gorse and brambles between the ponds (sinks), with a number of trees, (mainly Alders) to also be removed. Chainsaws and other specialist equipment required – Georope to be asked if they can help. Ali at Kentallen to be asked about Chipper.

Flyers to again be distributed around houses, and Shinty Club to be approached about helping out, even if they can't make Saturday due to match (possible labour exchange to help paint pavilion).

Free Lunch for all volunteers to again be provided in hall.

4. Planters

14 Woodblock Planters approx. 1500x500x250mm (5'x1'8"x8") to be ordered at c£100 each by Kevin Smith.

Dave Kitson to order 2 pallets of Compost and Robert and Jeanette Watt to speak to An Aird nursery at Taynuilt for advice on suitable plants providing (as close as possible to) year round colour – they supply both Cabin Garden Centre and Hardware store, who we will purchase from.

Vince has offered to plant Daffodil bulbs around village, to be progressed.

Plaques in/on each planter to commemorate important village events, and possibly provide advertising for any local businesses willing to sponsor them.

Need volunteers to look after each tub once in place, weeding etc. Flyers to go round each house.

5. Inter-group Communications

All present agreed that it was a good idea for the various community groups to work together and support each other.

With a few exceptions, communication by e-mail was preferred.

Rob Malpas and Dave Kitson to investigate installing a community calendar onto the Community Council website. More use also to be made of (community Council & Community Association) Facebook pages for advertising events and supporting groups.

A new Notice Board should be installed outside the co-op soon. It should be double sided, with one side locked for community groups, and the other open for public use.

6. Hydro Scheme

The Community Company are progressing with the Hydro Scheme for the River Laroch. Still a lot to do before work starts on site, but current planned completion date is 2017/8. It is anticipated that the first 15 years of operation will largely pay off the loans raised to pay for it (£2m Budget), with any surplus coming to the community. Predictions after that are of £30/35k per annum for the community. The Hydro scheme at Glenachulish is also likely to provide the community with an income stream (minimum 5%).

An Independent group needs to be responsible for the fair distribution of these monies, albeit including a good cross section of the community and groups within.

We also need a Community Action Plan to be drawn up which will lead to the formation of a Community Trust to fulfil this role.

The Community Action Plan will need to gather information from the community (Questionnaires, Surveys, Focus Groups etc) along the following lines:

- What is good about our community?
- What could be better?
- How can we achieve this?

Steering Group formed (all welcome) to develop the Action Plan document and move forward with Community Trust and Forum plans. **First meeting to be held next Tuesday 26th May at 7.30pm in the hall.**

7. National Scenic Area

Kevin reported from the South Lochaber Community Council Association meeting regarding the proposed changes to the Ben Nevis & Glencoe National Scenic Area by SNH. The program steering group is to be led by the Community Councils within the NSA, of which 4 are in South Lochaber and 2 in Fort William area. Other interested groups represented will each receive one vote. This will hopefully give the communities a bigger voice on the project, and so prevent the money available being absorbed elsewhere.

8. Winter Emergency Shelter

SSE are offering up to £20k for communities to develop emergency winter shelters, primarily for widespread power outages. The form was passed to Jo Watt for the village hall to apply. This will potentially fund a Generator to provide light and cooking facilities in the hall, as well as Torches, blankets and gas cooking / heating equipment to be distributed to households.

9. AOCB

There was no further Business raised.