

# GURCA OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Glenurquhart Rural Community Association



**MONDAY 14<sup>th</sup> March**  
**Community Action Plan POP UP 6-7pm**  
**Meeting from 7:15pm**

## **Glenurquhart Public Hall**

**Present: Susan Clark (SC) Chair, Carolyn Wilson (CW) Secretary, Monique Riddle (MR) Treasurer, Dan Light (DL) Community Development Officer, Gordon Watson (GW), Gordon Findlay (GF), Fiona Macdonald, Margaret Davidson (MD), David Fraser (DF), Miranda Service, Jan Bell, Alan Bell, Dianne Fraser, Julie Dell, Jessie Kane, Dave Stone, Anne Macdonald, Charles de los Santos, Barbara Shaw, Peter Bellew, Frances Lawrence, Adrian Varwell, Margaret Varwell, Erik Trelfer.**

### **1. Welcome**

SC opened the first meeting since 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021, a meeting planned in November 2021 was cancelled due to a rise in Covid cases in the Village

### **2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

CW summarised the minutes from 21<sup>st</sup> June including finances, Shinty Lease, Village Hall, DTAS funding, Woodland Right to Buy, AEDs, the Old Shop Site, Constitution Changes etc. These were proposed by Miranda Service and seconded by Gordon Watson

### **3. Treasury Update**

MR gave a summary of the activity since the last meeting, due to the timing of the financial year a full update will follow in due course. Income from Etape, Fireworks, Bulletin Sales, Market on the Green were all healthy, the Christmas Market was disappointing due to poor weather (stall prices reduced to compensate for this)

The Hall's revenue is still affected by Covid. Loch Ness Hub rental is now coming in, as is a small rent from Blairbeg Park (and GURCA no longer incurs grass cutting expenses for Blairbeg Park)

Rising Utility Bills are a concern as we plan for next year. Significant time and thought is going into to planning budgets for the future.

GURCA has also looked and will continue to look at match funding grants where possible.

The GURCA accounts now include the Hall Accounts. In recent months GURCA has attracted over £180,000 funding.

#### **4 CAP Community Action Plan Survey**

Launched on the 11<sup>th</sup> January this collaboration between GURCA, Soirbheas, and GUCC has been encouraging people to have their say on the Action Plan Survey to produce a plan to help groups here decide priorities over the next 20 or so years. A steering group has met regularly to work with the consultants Bryden Associates and Rowan Tree Consulting – this has helped publicise the survey to a wider audience and enabled improvements to be made in the process including the Commonplace Survey which was recognised as not intuitive enough for online users especially mobile phones.

A series of Pop Up Events, Social Media Posts, QR codes, Posters and Video Clips have been produced to raise interest and hard copies of the survey made available at these events. The last of these pop up events runs at Market on the Green: 9<sup>th</sup> April and the Survey is expected to close afterwards. A series of 1 to 1 interviews and focus groups are taking place to gain a range of views from a variety of stakeholders.

Recent statistics from the Commonplace platform have recorded that over 600 individuals have visited the site, with a 16% conversion rate for responses. Paper Copies and QR codes have been issued at Pop Up Events, and to some local clubs and groups, and we are awaiting the return of these surveys.

The Action plan report should be ready by late Summer for publication in the Autumn.

#### **5. Hall – repairs and improvements**

**Windows** - HIE (Highland and Islands Enterprise) identified a fund – Greening Community Assets and a successful application was made- £11,240 was successfully awarded and matched by Soirbheas Tier 2 grant of £3,220. Replacement windows have been ordered and will hopefully be installed in the next 6 weeks.

**Roof** - Place Based Investment Programme of £45,000 (Scottish Government Fund) via the Highland Council has just been awarded to allow for repairs to the main roof. GURCA is awaiting the conditions of the grant before proceeding further. This required some great teamwork from trustees working together over the Christmas period.

These repairs and improvements are part of the wider plan to redevelop the hall and will not need to be duplicated or changed as and when further development takes place. This demonstrates credibility moving forward and fits well with the Hall's Business plan as we seek more funding.

Patch Repairs to the roof at the end of 2021 have held up well especially in February's stormy weather. These include areas in the main hall where the Top table would be placed at a wedding function, and areas that leaked significantly before the one of Children's Parties.

## **6 Woodlands Community Right to Buy (CRtB)**

CRtB process carried out for 2 plots of woodland adjacent to the Hall. This process included a great deal of background work including Valuations, Title Searches, Ecological surveys etc. Petitions were signed at events. Due to land going on the open market a timeous application had to be changed into a late application. This made for a more onerous application process, however, the threshold for more than 15% of residents signatures was met and electoral registers checked on a number of occasions. Unfortunately, the land was sold subject to contract just before the applications were submitted. However, all is not lost as the documentation still stands and there is an opportunity to work with the new owners once they are identified. This process may take longer than expected due to delays at the Registers of Scotland.

MD suggested GURCA and the GUCC work together with this as part of the process for the local plan and to protect these areas as amenity zones.

## **7 East Lewiston.**

GW explained this is still an ongoing situation with the land between Loch Ness Park and East Lewiston. There have been legal delays and with the possibility of a conflict of interest the answer may be a change in legal representation – advice so far had been pro bono.

## **8 Litter**

GURCA member Charles de los Santos has arranged some dates for litter picking. These will be starting from the Blairbeg Car Park on Fridays at 16:00 some equipment will be provided. The first of these is on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March. These will be advertised on Social Media, What's on Listings etc. Villages around Loch Ness are hoping to work together to publish dates as part of a wider process.

Charles hopes to work with the School over concerns about litter in the general area, it was also noted that there was litter in the area around Scotmid – this seemed to be a regular occurrence.

MD stated it is possible more equipment will be provided via the Highland Council to help this process. Contact details Highland Council have been passed onto Charles

DF announced there had been also considerable efforts between Balnain and Corrimony to clear rubbish. Litter is a longstanding and significant problem.

## **9. What's on Glenurquhart**

DL has been contacting groups and organisations throughout the area to raise the profile of groups and activities taking place locally. Much of what happens locally is word of mouth so it is hoped this will help groups recruit new members and get people here connecting again.

Slides have been produced and have been displayed on the Hub TV screens, and posters produced for noticeboards. Social Media is also being used to aid this process as will the

website. It is hoped this will encourage connection as we move forward and also interest in spaces like the hall being used more frequently.

This will be a regular monthly process.

## **10 HTSI funding (Highland Third Sector Interface) - Mental Health and Wellbeing**

SC announced funding of £9,840 has been awarded after an oversubscribed Wellbeing and Mental Health and Wellbeing fund was extended.

DL explained that two events are to be run, these include a Lunch 'Bite and Blether' and Men's Social evening 'Laddies Night' both starting on Tuesday's in April.

Bite and Blether aims to attract a different demographic from the Church Groups' monthly Community lunch – its aim is to provide a free lunch and support, especially for those struggling with Isolation, loneliness, the increasing cost of living etc. It also aims to provide opportunities for signposting attendees to services that can support their needs and that talks will be offered on helpful areas as we move forward.

Laddies Night was described as a youth club for older blokes – again an opportunity to get together and support each other. Activities such as Cards, Dominoes, Skill sharing, etc. will take place along with Tea, Coffee and Cake.

It envisaged that we will work with the local GP practice where possible to signpost these events.

These events also help to strengthen the Hall's business plan which has a wellbeing strand at its core.

## **11 Cnocan Burraidh**

DF has been a stalwart for this project which has restored the memorial to its former glory. The terms are being worked out but as with the John Cobb memorial GURCA is aiming to take on the maintenance liability relating to this monument, DF suggested that £2000 residual funds should be available to help this process. Volunteers have also been helping to keep the site and path in good order. Signage and Information Boards are to go up and a short video released in April (DF will confirm the Date)

## **12 Website**

GURCA volunteer Brad Garrison has been instrumental in helping to track down the domain registration for the Website which is now back under GURCA's control. Brad has also moved content over to the Wordpress platform – a user friendly web page publisher so GURCA will be able to keep the site updated. A soft launch of this is due and improvements to its appearance and functionality will be made over time.

### **13 AOB**

DF confirmed news from earlier in the day that the appeal for Planning Permission for the Old Shop Site from Highland Housing Alliance had been turned down. GF expressed concern about Heras fencing at this site and also around the village in general at this present time due to stalled developments.

GW stated that paint has been supplied by the council and volunteers recruited from Shinty practice to improve appearance of the playparks at Kilmore and Balnain. GW will look at dates after Easter. DL updated on conversations that have taken place about funding for Druimlon Playpark and how it could be developed as a quieter space especially with the access path going in soon to improve access for all, and a niche found with community growing of food. It is hoped that the painting of the Kilmore and Balnain parks will give some community momentum to get behind the Druimlon refurbishment.

Susan Clark expressed her thanks for the huge efforts of all volunteers for their hard work to make the Children's Parties, Fireworks and Market on the Green such a huge success during the last few difficult months. These efforts have really made a positive impact on life here. The income from Market on the Green has been of real benefit and this is very much an event in its own right, and here to stay.

**Next Open Meeting will be scheduled as an AGM Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June at Glenurquhart Public Hall**