

Minutes of the AGM held on the 1st December 2002 at
3.00pm
at the Prince's House Hotel

Apologies: J Barnes

All Community Council members were present.

Fiona Stoddart, chairperson, welcomed all to the meeting and commented on the great turnout of villagers.

Treasurer's Report

S Coffey provided copies of the accounts for the year ending April 2002 and took a few minutes highlighting the income and expenditure. It was agreed that these were an accurate account of the Council's finances.

Review

F Stoddart then proceeded to review some of the changes and events that have taken place in the last year.

Community Council elections took place in October and only one member stepped down. The Community would like to thank Kevin McCaulay for his efforts over the last three years and welcome Grahaeme Young as a new member.

The Back Track upgrade was completed earlier this year and all agreed that this upgrade was successful. R Powell highlighted the need for infill works on the lower part of the back track, which has deteriorated over recent months due to heavier traffic volumes. A grit bin has been purchased by the CC for the top end of the Track and the Highland council have agreed to fill this as necessary.

The new paths at Callop have been completed with some signage work still to be completed. Comments were made by residents who had walked the paths

were made by residents who had walked the paths, stating that under wet conditions the wood chip paths could be dangerous. The Secretary had already written to the Forestry commenting on this but had received no response. A further letter will now be sent.

Planning permission for the new notice boards had been received. It is likely that these will be erected very early in the New Year. Fr Roddy mentioned that there was some space at the church close to the new church sign to accommodate a notice board, if we wanted to.

Social Events

It was agreed that several social events during the year had been successful. Quiz nights, Senior Citizens' party and the Easter event. The biggest event this year was the Jubilee celebrations. A certificate had been received along with a commemorative magazine with all events detailed.

The next event will hopefully be the inaugural walk on the forestry paths along with a sausage sizzle.

F Stoddart then stated that the main objective for the coming year would be an investigation into the possibility of providing a community venue for the village. She outlined the two possibilities as being the renovation of an existing building or a completely new build.

I Morrison for Glenfinnan Growers gave some information into the research he had been doing into the restoration and renovation of the Old Castle building opposite the Church. He had been in contact with the LEC and he was looking to purchase the building to provide office space and a training venue for his business. He also wanted the community to have access to the building for community events. The top floor would be offices with the training venue, toilets etc on the ground floor. A feasibility study had been undertaken on his behalf. He would be looking for the community to get involved and access funding

community to get involved and access funding. Secretary pointed out the R Linton of the LEC has already informed the CC that only if the building was owned or leased to the community council would we be able to access community funding. I Morrison was unaware of this.

A lively discussion then took place concerning a community venue. The points mentioned are laid out below:

Isobel MacFarlane thought that if we were going to venture into this area then she was in favour of a new build.

Charlie MacFarlane was concerned about the effect of a community hall on the income of the two hotels in the Village. Chairperson responded by stating it was unlikely that this would be affected.

Fr Roddy pointed out that the Old Castle is church property and that he was looking to make money from this to provide for the upkeep of the church itself. If he leased it to the community although the community would receive 100% funding the church would effectively lose any real income from it.

Frances White thought it a good idea to do something with the building before further deterioration but she was unsure as to whether a community venture was the answer. She thought that some kind of studio as a commercial venture would be more appropriate.

D Robertson was concerned about the safety aspect of a community venue at the Old Castle due to its position on the bend. Most of the villagers live on the other side and if we were to provide youth clubs etc. there could be accidents.

Fr Roddy also mentioned that parking would be a problem, although the church car park could be used it still comes down to crossing at a busy bend in the road.

The secretary pointed out that in 2003 the Scottish Executive were to undertake a path from Torr-an-Eas down to Slatlach road end.

P Stuart asked Fr Roddy as to the ownership of the Castle as he had seen a property register stating that there were no deeds held for the Old Castle. Fr Roddy was adamant that the Church is the owner. He also pointed out that it is not a listed building but is on the at Risk register.

A comment was made as to the size of the old castle and that its use by the community was very limited.

Following this discussion F Stoddart informed the attendees of a scoping meeting that would be held in late January or early February. Funding bodies such as the Highland Council, the LEC and the Scottish Land fund would attend this meeting. The options available to the community would be discussed and the community could air their views. This will be arranged by the LEC and notification will go out shortly. R Linton from the LEC will also provide a questionnaire for the CC to circulate before the meeting. At the meeting it will be decided as to which option if any, the community would like to see go forward.

A.O.B

F Stoddart then asked for any other business.

G McNeil mentioned that there was a rumour that there was to be a build of sheltered accommodation in the village. F Stoddart said the CC had not been officially notified. Fr Roddy the stated that a group had approached him from Birmingham who have a holiday home in the village 'Heimat'. They have been looking into the possibility of building holiday homes for the disabled on a area of land owned by the church, which starts at the bottom of the Glen at the Car park and reaches back to the church. The land in question is the bottom part of this area. The project is for 5-8 units catering for people with special needs from all over the

catering for people with special needs from all over the country. The CC is to request a meeting with the group to find out further details.

The subject of Broadband Internet access was raised. This will be piloted in Fort William at An Droichead in Claggan. Even though our community is small there is a scheme for rural areas to receive broadband in the future.

J Barnes from the station could not attend the meeting but had several points he wishes to have noted.

There will be an upgrade to the station over the winter and the museum is being registered with the Scottish museums Council in February. If anyone has any ideas for the station, please let John know.

He requests that the CC contact BT/BEAR concerning the telephone box. G McNeil mentioned that work had already been undertaken and steps had now been placed there in an attempt to prevent the flooding.

Following this the meeting was closed. All those attending were thanked and asked to look at the display that had been put together. Tea and coffee were served. The next meeting will be the scooping meeting in January.

