

Nether Lochaber Community Association Meeting
Thursday 18 August 2022 at 7.30pm by Zoom

Attendees	C. Barnett, R. Barnett, L. Glaze (Chair), I. Jenner, G. Macintyre, G. Milne, B. Pearson, S. Pearson, K. Spierling
Apologies	None

1. Apologies

None received.

2. Minutes of last NLCA meeting Proposed and seconded

Partial minutes proposed and seconded. Others notes to be completed.

3. Treasurer's statement

£8,389.09 balance as of this afternoon. From this we need to pay the bill for Creag Mhor, of around £3,500. The quote for strimmer and brush cutter comes to around £900. This amount of around £4500 will be a significant dent in the funds. Some are concerned that the wording from the council leaves open that they could increase the charges to £3k. They say that it is unlikely to change but it is slightly worrying. Councils are risk averse and will put such wording in their documents.

4. Inchree Project

There was a meeting with Rebecca Carr and Philip Coghill to discuss legal fees. In summary, we will have to fund some ourselves. The MoU is not legally binding and still needs to be discussed. We cannot buy the barn now, as we really need to complete the feasibility study before we can purchase it. Rebecca Carr has not been kept in the loop until now so C Barnett will keep in touch with her.

There was a meeting with Andy Milne, Inch Architecture, at the barn. He suggested that we need to make the barn watertight, otherwise any damage will push up the cost of redevelopment. We are putting together applications to fund a local builder. The repairs do not need to be extensive or expensive, just enough to make the building wind and waterproof. Stephen Singer (Community Links) has put a questionnaire out to the community. He mentioned the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, for which we would have to apply through our local authority. We need to build a good relationship with the Council to have a chance of getting a good amount of funds.

We met with the surveyor. It costs £300 for an open market valuation which he will do as late as possible as the survey cannot be more than 3 months old for some funding applications. We need a building survey and a cost plan. Which we can apply for at stage 2. We will get three quotes for all of these. David Mee's invoice has been paid and he has been given feedback on why his tender was not successful.

The solicitor, Gary Somers, has agreed to pause legal work as the MoU is not legally binding and therefore the solicitor does not need to be involved until we have a final draft that we are happy with. He estimates he has done work in the region of £1K up until now, so we will need to raise funds to cover that.

The Aviva Community Fund application was very short. They will be in contact within 5 days, which meant they will likely invite projects once they have sifted through these applications.

C Barnett is keeping track of the time she spends on Barn related work. This can be used as match funding in-kind.

There was a good meeting with two green party members – Councillor Kate Willis and MSP Ariane Burgess. They were shocked at the state of the road and the size of the lorries using it. They have asked for information on the volume of traffic. Councillor Willis had a meeting with a senior road engineer and has asked a forestry officer to investigate. An inspector will also look at the road. In theory, Forestry Scotland could build another road which does not go through a built-up area. She can't promise anything but will try. This would make life easier in the village. I Jenner suggested we could secure the barn by purchasing HERAS fencing which would keep the Forestry people inside. We would need to raise funds for this. He suggested contacting Chris Black (Bunree) who is a roofer.

In terms of delivering paper surveys for Stephen Singer (Community Links) we have progressed well and there are some gaps to be filled. We will check how far we get at the weekend. All the survey results will go to Stephen.

5. Village Hall

No comments.

6. Tubs, garden areas

All agreed to purchase strimmer. The advantage is that the purchase is being made locally (Oban) so that if there are any issues then it can be looked at quickly. This would leave around £600 of the grant to spend. We do not require a spare battery as the high power one has over an hour's run time.

7. Creag Mhor

Ward discretionary fund. There have been delays because of the council. Previously the councillors agreed to pay the council legal fees. Therefore if the fees increase we should then speak to them and highlight that the previous funds received were not enough. G Milne does not believe it will increase significantly, as the final searches may only add an extra £200.

Another 5 metres of wall have been built by I Jenner and G Milne, and G McIntyre offered to help.

8. Picnic site

No rubbish lying around when checked. However, R Barnett said he saw someone camping there!

9. Activity day

This was very poorly attended. It may be better not to have an activity day in August as there are always other events taking place.

September Activity Day: Meet at the Village Hall; aim to paint benches and tidy up Cuilchenna cross. At that stage we should have purchased the brush cutter. Date: Sunday 4th September.

10. 500 club draw

Will be drawn later.

11. Correspondence

None

12. AOB

Crowdfunding

R Barnett circulated a paper in advance. Crowdfunding does not cost much up front, and the charges are up to 3% of pledges. There is a special rate for charities. There are a list of administrative tasks to be met in order to set up an account. However, they do expect us to have our own email address (e.g. not gmail, Hotmail etc.) Website costs were discussed. The cost depends on the size of the site and activity. It would cost around £300 to set up a basic website with a couple of pages and email support. Email would cost about £45 for two email addresses.

R Barnett can set up the domain name and email. Afterwards we can approach Chris Boles to build a website. We will need photos and possibly videos so that people are encouraged to donate. All agreed that the domain name should be: netherlochaber.org.uk R Barnett will set this up.

Water Tank

G Milne was concerned about costs and the significant dents in the CA finances. Though the process may take some time, we will still need to bear costs in mind. I Jenner will speak to Malcolm McGregor at St Bride's School now that they are open again, and ask if they are still interested.

Group Funds

Linda and Marie MacLachlan would like funds for the old folks lunch. G Macintyre asked if there is CC grant funds available for this. We received £2000 and the intention is to fund projects like this. We need to consider what amount we will offer.

Can we encourage people to become affiliates/associate members of the NLCA e.g. old folks lunch, parent/teacher council? There would be no costs involved for the groups, however their support would give vocal support to our project aims.

Highland Council Nature Restoration Fund

Eradication of invasive nonnative species. Does anyone have any ideas if this could be used? Wednesday 31st August deadline. I Jenner will consider this but it is too soon for water tank project. We should keep this in mind for the future.

Councillor Kate Willis is looking into funds for new access roads within Forestry.

13. Date of next meeting

Thursday 15th September 2022. 7:30 pm by Zoom.