

Berneray Community Council
Minutes of Meeting 1st December 2025
Berneray Community Hall, 7.30pm

Present: Margaret MacAskill (Chair), Donald MacLean (Vice Chair), Lorna MacKillop (Clerk), Eilidh Carr, Billy Fraser & Councillor Mustapha Hocine.

Members of Public: Alastair Cormack, Andrew Rodger, Pat Haskell & Neil Cameron.

Apologies: Sharon MacPherson (Treasurer) & Councillor Uisdean Robertson.

Margaret MacAskill (Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Minutes of meeting – 15th September read and adopted.

Proposed by Donald MacLean and seconded by Margaret MacAskill.

1. Matters Arising

- a) **Bays of Harris Buyout** – ongoing, a recent bereavement in the Hitchcock family but we are told this should not adversely affect or delay the Buyout.
- b) **Seagrass Restoration Project, Andrew Rodger** – presentation with maps and photographs. Andrew presented his seagrass project in a whole and emphasised the importance of seagrass through improved habitats, cleaner water, oxygen levels, environment and also creating local employment. Previous bid for funding unsuccessful as in early stages but received alternative funding to carry our survey / research work as a next step. New application has a two week deadline. 1/3 of Scotland's seagrass found around the coast of Berneray. Seagrass areas diminishing over the years, approx. 190 hectares lost. Maps with drawings show changes over the years, and up to 2025. (New area of concern identified at meeting, as dredging for new Sound of Harris ferry may destroy a good area of seagrass bed – to be looked into further). New application now in with more evidence presented. Marine License now needed and also permission from Crown Estate owners to lease seabed for restoration project. Plan to harvest from healthy seagrass donor beds and transplant to other areas with less. Project now for 1 season – 2026 or 2027, April to August with a team of 4 workers / 2 helpers over 8-9 months with possibility to follow on. Andrew requested support from Community Council via an email / letter to help with consultations with wider local community on moving the project forward.

2. Councillors' Reports

Councillor Mustapha Hocine

- a) **Local Housing Strategy, 2025 – 2030** – further information coming soon.
- b) **Calmac** – online Ebooking system has many issues, currently being looked at.

- c) **Tesco Funding** - projects improving school playgrounds, biodiversity, growing and food projects, outdoor play and adventure, community arts projects and purchasing kit for healthy activities.
- d) **HHP Housing** – Local contractors interested in Phase 2 at Lochmaddy, HHP are resistant as they say no need for further housing on Uist. Only 6 on current wait list, while other islands have much larger / longer wait list.
- e) **SVRP Phase 2 (Small Vessel Replacement Programme)** – idea to have 2 ferries on route, 1st berthed at Berneray and 2nd berthed at Leverburgh. Mapping of route, surveys needed as deeper draught. Some areas of channel may not be deep enough and will need further dredging / work completed.
- f) **Library and Sport & Health Community Consultations** - meetings to be held across different island locations during December 2025. The public are invited to attend to discuss ideas, ask questions, and help shape the future.
- g) **Mobile phones in school** – new policy in place for mobile phone use.
- h) **'Pride in a place' - Government Project** – 3 areas put forward for funding by CNES, Uist & Barra 1 of 3 areas. Worth £20 million - £2 million over 10 years.

3. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) **Seagrass Project** – written update from Andrew Rodger.
- b) **Community Council Powers** – from Michael Gallagher, Perthshire.
- c) **Brusda Road** – ongoing concerns of deteriorating bad road condition.
- d) **Funding News, Tesco** - funding opportunity across island network.
- e) **Mobile Library** – concerns of cuts to services (consultation meetings).

4. Treasurer's Report

Copies of treasurer's report shared for viewing. Income: £4500 received from CNES creditors & £50 from Loch Duart. Expenditure: £1500 payment to John MacDonald (Memorials) for work on War Memorial and £2678.78 payment to Alasdair A Morrison for Harbour Toilets, phase 1. Plus small payments for sundries. Also full report of Crown Estate Funding – 1st Round (2024 – 2025) circulated. Quote back for new verge mower for tractor unit - £3450 + vat. £500 to be matched & donated towards memorial bench for Janet MacDonald.

5. A.O.C.B.

- a) **Brusda Road, road condition concerns** – by email, local residents raised their ongoing road condition concerns such as potholes, worsening condition of the road surface and are worried of damage to their cars / cost of these repairs. Eilidh to send email to CNES roads department to highlight issue.
- b) **Library and Sport & Health Community Consultations** – Local residents concerned there may be cuts to services. Pat Haskell and Neil Cameron hope to attend the meeting held at Carinish Village Hall on 08/12/2025, 12:00 – 13:30 and will feed back findings to the Committee.

- c) **Breakwater, Berneray fishing harbour** – concerns and questions asked to Councillor Mustapha Hocine regarding the damage and condition of the breakwater – this will be looked into further as was not aware before today.
- d) **Nurse's clinic, Church Road** – rotten wood / disrepair on building. To be looked into further on what can be done moving forward with repairs etc.
- e) **Ferret situation, Rushgarry** – an update will be provided for next meeting.

7. Date of next meeting:

Monday 12th January 2026, Berneray Community Hall, 7.30pm.