**BERNERAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**COMHAIRLE COIMHEARSNACHD BHEARNARAIGH**

**MINUTES**

**3rd of November 2014**

**at**

**Berneray Community Hall**

Present: Andrew Rodger (Treasurer), John MacLean (Vice), Mary McCormick, Margaret Paterson, Ian Hoyle (Clerk).

Apologies: Donald MacLean (Chair), Cllr Neil Beaton, Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Cllr Archie Campbell.

1. Minutes from the previous meeting read and approved.
2. We had a good response to the bus questionnaire, see below.
3. Scottish Water have been busy flushing and cleaning the water pipes to Trealigarry, and have had some success in improving the water there. I have emailed Malcolm McPhaille to express our thanks.
4. The rabbit problem on Berneray is much worse than we thought. There are lots of large, well used burrows in the Rushgarry dunes on West Beach. These will be gassed as soon as is practicably.

Results of the Berneray bus questionnaire.

We had 17 returned forms, each form is for a household rather than individuals, and may not represent the full bus use on Berneray.

4 households had children using the bus for school,

6 households using the bus for work,

7 households using the bus for shopping,

7 households using the bus for other reasons.

The popular buses used were the 7:30 and 9:30 buses to Lochmaddy, and the 1:30 for shopping in Sollas, and finally the 4:20 bus from Lochmaddy to Berneray.

If Tagsa Uist were allowed to take the public, this would be used by locals for shopping in Sollas.

It is apparent that the residents of Berneray do not need all the buses to/from Berneray, but the ferry connections are used by many staying at the Hostel.

We had requests for an 8:30 bus to Lochmaddy, to get people to work for 9:00.

It was suggested that the use of a pre-booked Taxi bus would be a good way of saving on regular buses and allow greater use and flexibility of the bus service.

There is a complete lack of buses in the evenings, allowing access to the ferries at Lochmaddy and Lochboisdale, and for social events. Again, a taxi bus would be very useful for this, and possibly, an evening bus on Friday from Lochmaddy.

There is also a lack of buses to meet the ferries at Lochmaddy on Sunday. This fact is also not publicised at Uig on Skye, leaving foot passengers stranded in Lochmaddy, and preventing people without cars using these sailings.

The most common complaint about the buses was the speed of travel. The bus timetables prevent the bus drivers from driving at an appropriate speed on the narrow bendy routes, with passengers left feeling travel sick.

For school buses this needs to be balanced against the time the children spend on the bus, and any increase of travel time should be avoided.

Balavanich should be a hub for the buses, therefore removing the need for buses to run from Eriskay to Berneray, but instead changing in Balavanich.

A lot of the bus journeys from Balavanich require changing buses 1 or 2 times, inevitably resulting in missed connections in Lochmaddy. If possible, buses should run from Balavanich to Lochmaddy without changing.

With a more direct and therefore faster bus service between Lochmaddy and Balavanich this would be used more, as at present the journey from Berneray to Balavanich and back can take all day.

The Berneray residents appreciate how lucky we are to have the bus service that you provide, and we hope that the results from this questionnaire will help provide an even better service.

Date of Next Meeting 8th December 2014