Berneray Community Council

Minutes of Meeting 7th April 2025

Berneray Community Hall, 7.30pm

Present: Margaret MacLean (Chair), Donald MacLean (Vice Chair), Sharon MacPherson (Treasurer), Lorna MacKillop (Clerk), Eilidh Carr, Billy Fraser, Councillor Mustapha Hocine, Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Cassandra MacLean & Andrew Ross (Bays of Harris Buyout Reps for Berneray).

Members of Public: Keith McIntyre, Neil Cameron, Loriana Pauli & Craig Jump

Apologies:

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

Minutes of 24th February 2025 read.
Proposed by Councillor Mustapha Hocine and seconded by Craig Jump.

1. Matters Arising

a) **Loch Bhrusda** - Keith McIntyre - in contact with Factor and background work ongoing. Berneray Development Group reforming to move forward with Loch Bhrusda in the future.
b) **Buyout Questionnaire** – Andrew Ross & Cassandra MacLean – no recent update on current stage of Buyout other than the commission for the Estate's own valuation is in progress. **Questionnaire / survey** – Andrew explained the first public version was circulated to various community groups on the island for feedback on content / layout of listed topics and questions. Responses received back from Berneray Historical Society, The Church, Rushgarry Township & Habitat Berneray. Changes were made within the relevant topics / questions. Next step to print out and circulate – with a 3 to 4 week return deadline. Questionnaire will be available on Berneray website to download or also as paper copies. Completed forms to be dropped off to box at Berneray Shop.
c) **Berneray defibrillator** – Using allocated Crown Estate Funding, Berneray Community Council has purchased a new up to date Cardiac science G5 defibrillator, external cabinet, spare pads, rescue kit, premium carry case & associated signage. This will replace the aging defibrillator currently located at The Nurse's Cottage at Backhill.
d) **Berneray defibrillator training** – Margaret MacLean organised a training session – 8 people were trained to use a defibrillator – a mixture of Community Council committee members & also members of the public to gain confidence & knowledge to use in an emergency. Another training session to be held later in the year to meet demand.

2. Councillors' Reports

Councillor Uisdean Robertson
Hebridean Air Services – larger sized plane to start on inter isles route, 4 days a week & can carry 9 passengers. The plane recently visited on trial between BEB /STY and BARRA/STY.

Calmac Timetable for Little Minch – new timetable proposals has received a large amount of feedback from CNES, local businesses, accommodation providers, grocery stores etc. Uist has asked for 3 sailings per day, while Harris has requested 2 sailings a day. Harris ferry capacity and requirements are different with no freight - mostly local business / tourist traffic. Lochmaddy main point of entry for freight & haulage into Uist. Also more frequent sailings to tap into the annual one million visitors to Skye. Support and thoughts from Community Council to be discussed.

Cemeteries – Both Berneray & Kilmuir (North Uist) cemeteries are to be extended. Archaeological work has begun & quotes from suitable tenders for work have been received at CNES.

Uist Health Services meeting – a Community Representatives meeting to take place in Balivanich on 15th April 2025, 2 – 4pm (2-3pm closed session with 3-4pm open session). Jackie Baillie MSP, Deputy Scottish Labour Leader & Shadow Health Secretary and Torcuil Crichton MP to host meeting to focus on local health services concerns and aspirations etc.

Calmac waiting room – CNES to share costs of maintenance etc.

Cultural – linguistic opportunities for funding Gaelic.

Councillor Mustapha Hocine

Visitor Levy – Consultation meetings held on 17th March 2025 in Balivanich Hall and also on 19th March 2025 in Stornoway Town Hall. An online meeting for Barra only was held on 20th March 20525. Only one public meeting was scheduled for Stornoway but due to demand from members of accommodation and others, a face to face meeting held in Uist too. Comments and thoughts at the meeting were negative towards the proposed Visitor Levy and the process. Suggestion of port of entry fee collected through Calmac rather than each individual accommodation.

Levelling Up Fund – funds of £20M is available for the Western Isles with 75% to be spent in Uist and Barra. Projects to include infrastructure, piers, roads, community projects & buildings etc, that will last a lifetime and for generations to come. £3M a project.

Crown Estate Funding - named Coastal Community Fund for 2025-2026. Berneray Community Council application to be submitted by 12 noon on 2nd May 2025. £1M of funding has been allocated to support communities. Over £90,000 approved for North Uist and Berneray council ward, with £15,000 allocated for Berneray.

Mustapha Hocine acknowledged email received from Keith McIntyre regarding Local Development Plan policies and decision making on recent planning permission for Campsite, 8 Rushgarry. This email has been forward on to Planning Department in Stornoway. Also Keith shared a leaflet recently received in the mail, ‘Shape the future of the Outer Hebrides’ regarding a new Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan. Many members of the public and Committee at the meeting had not received the leaflet and were unaware of the information. Keith expressed his wishes that a member of the planning department were invited along to a meeting to discuss and share more.

3. Correspondence
Subject matters received in two emails were discussed in topics above –
i.e. Calmac and Buyout questionnaire.

4. Treasurer's Report
Sharon MacPherson presented monthly report for period 1st to 31st March 2025.
Community Council accounts to be sent to Stornoway in April to the Comhairle.
Margaret MacLean (Chair) thanked Sharon for the report.

5. A.O.C.B

a) Post Office – Postmistress Mary MacLean is retiring after more than 35 years running Berneray Post Office and has diligently provided an essential and important service. The last day of business will be Monday 28th April 2025. Berneray Post Office will close leaving Lochmaddy or Bayhead as next available locations to use. Community Council to write a letter on behalf of the community to find out more information and raise concerns the community & businesses express of being left without a Post Office or its associated services on the island. Berneray Post Office busy and well used.
b) Berneray War Memorial, Church Road – repainting of lettering to be completed in May by John Hearach.
c) Signage – work on new skip signs discussed at a previous meeting are progressing. Signs at seal point for no overnight parking needs replaced, plus new signage for seal haul out etc.
d) North Uist & Berneray Area Forum – meeting may be at short notice next week when Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive will be visiting Uist. Details to follow to invited members.

6. Date of Next Meeting Monday, 19th May 2025, Berneray Community Hall, 7.30pm.