



HARRIS | FORUM

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Pursuing development through community connection

Title	Harris Forum Business Meeting Minutes		
Date	25/03/2025	Time	7.30pm
Venue	North Harris Trust Meeting Room		
Distribution	Harris Forum Member Organisations (MOs)		

Present	<p>Member Representatives: EVA KREILEDER (EK), HFDO – Minutes North Harris Community Council, NHCC: FRAN MILLAR (FM); Chair of the HF AGNES MORRISON (AM); Scalpay Community Council, SCC: SHAUN BLOOMFIELD (SB) South Harris Community Council, SHCC: DONNIE MACDONALD (DMD), SHCC; North Harris Trust, NHT: CALUM MACKAY (CM) West Harris Trust, WHT: - Harris Voluntary Service, HVS: BARBARA MACKAY (BM) Harris Development Ltd., HDL: ANGUS J MACLEOD (AJM) Western Isles Community Care Forum, WICCF: - Scalpay Community Association, SCA: - Community Learning & Development, CLD: - Sport Harris: - Rionnagan Òga: - Leverhulme Community Hub: - Councillors: KENNY MACLEOD (KM, Cllr)</p>	<p>Agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Welcome2. Apologies3. Approval of Minutes of Meeting 28th January 2025.4. Matters Arising5. Continuation of the HFDO contract (current contract ends on 31/03/2025)6. HFDO Update<ol style="list-style-type: none">6.1 Local Place Plan6.2 Cruise ship tourism6.3 Tourist levy7. Member Organisation Reports8. North Harris Trust - Short overview of their projects (housing project and cruise ship arrangements)9. Request of support from HF for Uist Beo, project of HVS10. Councillor Report11. Transport Update12. Any other competent business (AOCB)13. DONM
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Agenda Item		Summary and Action	Who?	When?
1	Welcome from the Chair	All MO representatives welcomed.		
2	Apologies for absence	PAUL A. FINNEGAN (Cllr) GORDON MACDONALD (MD), Sportharris; KATHLEEN DUCE (KD), Rionnagon Oga; MARION NICHOLS (MN), Rionnagon Oga; CATRIONA MACLENNAN (CML), Leverhulme Community Hub; NEIL MACDONALD, (NM), West Harris Trust ANN PARRY, (AP)), West Harris Trust PEGGY MACKAY (PMK); Western Isles Community Care Forum GORDON NESS (GN); Scalpay Community Association MAIRI MACIVER (MM), Community Learning & Development		
3	Previous Minutes 28 th January 2025	Proposed AJM, Seconded AM. KM, Cllr will check in relation to the wider strategy document for tourism management.	KM	May
4	Matters Arising	-		
5	Continuation of the HFDO contract	Funds for DO's role has been secured from HIE for 5 months with the 7months being sought from HIE application from ScotGov. Hopefully this will be approved later. Both will cover 75% of the total costs for salary and overheads. The 25% will come from the £35K HF allocated from the CE fund last year. The named employer will be Adhartas Trust who will cover management payroll and admin, all free of charge.		
6	HFDO Update			
6.1	Local Place Plan	Part 2: Consultations are all done. Summary needs to be done and published. Part 3: Input will be converted onto the overall map of the Local Place Plan (LPP). With the Draft, meetings will be held with the members of the Harris Forum to discuss the first draft and make amendments. The HFDO will get in touch with the various members. The 1 st edition of the LPP will be published and exhibited in various locations of Harris. Overall current timeline is attached to the minutes.		
6.2	Cruise ship tourism	- The DO reported about the North Ronaldsay way of dealing with the cruise ships. They are in direct contact with the cruise ship providers and offer a full experience package of the island for £30/head. The bookings are announced 6 months in advance. - At the cruise ship event in Stornoway, the Stornoway Port authority assured that even the use of the toilets and visits of the beaches in Harris should be able to be reimbursed. Process proposed by the Port authority is attached. => full time cruise ship coordinator is needed. Job description: to organise tours, negotiate with port authorities and cruise ship providers, talk with local businesses and local communities. Potential funding through HIE; FM will speak to HIE, EK is trying to arrange a meeting.	EK, FM	April 2025
6.3	Tourist levy	The DO took part in the tourist levy event in Stornoway. The FAQ's answers are attached to the minutes. Due to the wording within the cruise ship levy the possibility of an "entry point levy" is back on the table. <i>Additional information after the meeting:</i> <i>The tourist levy process for the Western Isles, if they would go ahead with the current proposal, would need 18 months for implementation. Which means it would come into force in 2027.</i>		

Agenda Item		Summary and Action	Who?	When?
7	Member Organisation Reports	No additional comments Additional to the reports, each meeting a different member will present projects from within their organisation.		
8	North Harris Trust - Short overview of their projects	Housing project NHT always had houses for rent within their portfolio. The Meavaig Housing project is a new addition to their portfolio to provide affordable houses for the community. The process: The traditional build route was quoted nearly £1M for a 2- and a 3- bed house on a site with services and a pad already provided. On receiving information about Modular West, at the start of 2023 NHT investigated modular-build housing in more detail. The final funding package to build the modular houses totalled just over £800K and was made up: North Harris Trust 46% (~ £380,000) Rural Housing Fund 33% (£270,000) SSE Renewables Hydro Community Fund 18% (£150,000) Other 3% (funding amounts amended at the last HF meeting) Q&A's: - It will be a one of build for the NHT at the moment due to unavailable financial funds - In the process of finding suitable houses, they never had issues with the crofting legislation. - In the past NHT offered numerous house plots to hhp, which haven't been taken as house sites. Cruise ship arrangements Cruise ships came in at Ceann Loch Reasort. NHT provided guided tour. Once so far with 200 people on board. The cruise ship provider contacted NHT directly.		
9	Uist Beo, project of HVS	Request of support from HF for the "Uist Beo for Harris" project. Support has been granted. A supportive letter will be supplied by the HF	EK	April 2025
10	Councillor Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of education announced inspection of the Leverburgh School around the 20th April. - The deficit within the Council is lower than the original expected £7 million, "only" £4 million. - There is potential benefit from SSEN and bigger renewable projects for community funding. - Crown Estate "Coastal Community Fund" is decided by the councillor. The community, through the member organisations of the HF, has a say on where the money should be spent on. - There will be a bigger plane for the connection to Benbecula; this means there won't be fuel problems any longer and the plane is more able to cope with weather issues. - Meeting with three transport representatives (Calmac, Cemal, Scotland Transport) took place. They've been made aware about unhappiness of the Western Isles in relation to their performance. - Northton Road will be resurfaced from 8th April onwards. - Levelling-up fund (~ £20 million) is still about to come out as funding opportunity under a new name. - Due to renewable projects on the Western Isles, accommodations for 1500 workers will be required. Liaison between hhp and SSEN is happening. Houses will be available as hhp houses afterwards potentially. This is the reason for a one year SHIP. 		
11	Transport Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update and information were published in the last Dè tha dol? (article attached) - Reorganisation of the Transport Group to represent all of Harris. - The production delay of the new ferry caused an overall delay of 2-3 months. - On Sound of Harris and Sound of Barra route, allocations for medical appointments and bereavement. 		

Agenda Item		Summary and Action	Who?	When?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group is working on push for the same allocations on island connections as well as connections to the mainland. - At the next meeting: new timetable of the new ferry 		
12	AOCB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cruise ship potentials have been discussed. Focus on big cruise ships but for Harris specific small ones (Majestic liners) who come into Tarbert or Leverburgh and focus on super yachts as well. - Feedback in relation to housing meeting with Luke Fraser and Davie Campbell held on the 18th March all positive. GN and EK have been thanked personally for organising the meeting. KM, Cllr forwarded the information to the housing representatives within the Council. He will organise a meeting with them to discuss options. - CnES under the Fast Followers project will have an energy supply models workshop to discuss local energy solutions for the Outer Hebrides. Date needs to be confirmed but planned on 20th May in North Harris and on the 22nd May in South Harris. 		
13	DONM	Next Business Meeting on 13 th May 2025, 7:30pm, North Harris Trust meeting room.		