

Minutes of the R.A.G.S Meeting - 29th April
at the Salen Hotel at 7.30pm.

Present:

Charlotte Mellis (Chair)
Ruth Hawke (Secretary)
Eve Eckstein
Jessie McQuary
Cliff Moisey
James Hilder

Apologies:

Linda Cameron
Mary-Jean Devon
Mike Hogan
Norma Dowling
Paul Forster
Finlay Christine

Update:

We have all read the Oban Times which stated that the A848 had been put on hold. Hi-Trans has been disbanded for the time being and the ability to fund major projects has been removed temporarily. A strategic review could be announced in August and the money could be back on the table then so Mull Community Council is trying to make sure that the Mull roads including the A848 are high on the shopping list. They are asking for £15,000,000 to upgrade the existing roads and a further £15,000,000 be spent on the new road.

R.A.G.S is supported by MCC and has become a member of Transform Scotland. To date we are still looking for an engineer to help give our alternative plans some teeth. James said he will put an email on the networks with MICT to see if anyone out there who is having the same problem may be able to get in touch with us. Charlotte will contact Transform Scotland as well. She had no luck with the Institute of Civil Engineers.

We now have 823 members, over half of which are Mull residents and have had some success from the mail shot sent out last October with over 700 letters being sent to Councillors. Cliff thought that the Council don't have to do anything about pro-forma letters but it was recalled from the last meeting that they must acknowledge every letter sent to them which gives a name and address – however no one appears to have received a single acknowledgment from the Council perhaps due to the high number received. Most of us who wrote to Jim Mather MSP did get a response. The 130 letters of objection made when the planning application was shown in the Oban Times in 2006 means that this application will need to go to a public enquiry. R.A.G.S will need to contact all objectors and ask them to attend a strategy meeting to discuss individual and group plans for the public enquiry. An engineer's report will be essential to make our presentation valid. We are asking all members to help find an engineer.

A question was asked if the Planners have re-submitted their Environment Study to the SNH? James said that it may have to be re-jigged and updated but it will have to be re-submitted. Can we write to SNH to see if they can look at the saltings again?

Charlotte showed the pamphlet that Mike Hogan from Aglarond has designed and printed for R.A.G.S and asked for suggestions to improve it. Several ideas were put forward and agreed. The idea behind producing the leaflet is to help clarify what RAGS is about. There still seems to be some confusion which we would like to clear up. Charlotte has employed Mike Hogan to re-do our website also. His charges are: £162 plus VAT and £40 for printing the pamphlets. All support was given to this. There is £952 in the bank.

James suggested we send a report of the meeting to the Oban Times, attention of Hugh, with emphasis on the website. Mike Hogan (Aglarond) will have the new look website up and running by mid – May. It will be an interesting site to visit and we need to spread the word re web address.

Charlotte called for suggestions on recruiting people for the committee. We need a Treasurer also. Jessie suggested Cliff but he declined owing to work load.

We need to get an estimate and fund raise for the services of an engineer. James offered to speak to Martin Caldwell as through his contacts he might know how we can get a link to an engineer.

R.A.G.S owes June Anderson £24 to update the data base. It was decided to send a plant with thanks to Maureen Hilder for her hard work in creating the data base. We need to look at ways to keep the data base up to date and James will ask Bev Maidment if she would be willing to take over the management of it. It can be done in batches but it is essential to get the emails addresses correct. Charlotte will ask Mike to contact James re an email service through our own website.

The problem of where to hold future meetings was discussed but nothing concrete was offered.

Charlotte proposed a new strategy for the new road – R.A.G.S is suggesting we retain the single track road to the old pier with a wide viewing area. **We will need an engineer to validate our suggestions for the alternative route.** James said we would need to look carefully where to put the viewing area. It shouldn't be right at the boats and will need to come off the single track as coming off the two lanes would need a longer sight line. The brief for the engineer will be to keep the integrity of the saltings and offer tourists a wildlife viewing area.

The meeting ended at 9.30.