

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Business Meeting held on Thursday 1st October 2009 in the Inverkip Hotel at 7.30pm

Present: A/Chairman Hugh Ritchie; Treasurer Ron Potter; Brian McArthur; Liz Roders and Secretary Lynne Chambers

Apologies: Cllr Gerry Dorrian; Cllr Ciano Rebecchi and Harold McPherson

In attendance: Cllr Innes Nelson; Inverclyde Council Community Safety Team Leader Louise McVey; Sgt Allan O'Hare; Tracy McKernan; Telfer Ramage and Cliff Lyons

3. Police Matters

Sgt O'Hare reported there had been 22 crimes reported in September and 9 detected

- 5 Vandalism (1 detected)
- 3 Misuse of Drugs Act (all detected)
- 2 Breach of the Peace (all detected)
- 4 Theft by House Breaking
- 1 Attempted Theft by House Breaking
- 4 Theft (1 detected)
- 1 Forgery & Uttering
- 2 Road Traffic Act (both detected)

He said crime figures were up on the previous month but said the thefts accounted for the increase. Sgt O'Hare said six Anti Social Behaviour Tickets had been issued. Lynne Chambers asked what the Tickets were and was told the Ticket carried a fine of £40, if not paid the fine is increased and if still not paid the offender is reported. Sgt O'Hare said it was a quick and efficient way to penalise offenders – much less paperwork and court time – and was proving effective. In addition he said there was a positive line of enquiry in relation to the thefts and housebreakings – the enquiry is with CID. It appears an opportunistic thief has been entering houses through unlocked doors and stealing whatever is immediately available to him. He suggested residents should be more vigilant and urged householders to make sure their external doors were locked even when at home.

Ron Potter asked Sgt O'Hare if he was aware of a disturbance the previous week in Cullen Crescent, Inverkip. Evidently at around 1am a car spluttered down the road and the occupants knocked on the door of a woman resident and asked to be driven to the nearest filling station – the householder was unknown to the occupants of the car. Ron Potter said a rammy ensued and the car rolled back into a lamp standard. A police car arrived, then another four followed by an unmarked police car. Sgt O'Hare

was unaware of the incident as he was just back on duty but will check up on it. Cliff Lyons asked if he had any information about a series of incidents in Smithy Court, Inverkip. The sergeant said there was more to the story than had appeared in the press, but the family in question had been moved to Port Glasgow. Brian McArthur asked who the letting agents were and said they should take much more care in vetting prospective tenants.

4. Presentation by Louise McVey, Team Leader for Community Safety within Inverclyde Council's Safer Communities Services

Hugh Ritchie introduced Louise McVey and said the previous Saturday an Inverclyde Community Safety Partnership information day had been held. Unfortunately no Community Council (CC) members had been able to attend and Ms McVey had kindly agreed to come along to the Business Meeting to update members on the event. She said the aim of the event had been to pull together CCs, Tenants' and Residents' Associations and Neighbourhood Watch groups. She was trying to set up 6 community safety partnerships across Inverclyde to come together with a joint voice, to hear what's happening in the local area and how services are delivered.

Ms McVey said the communities had identified three main areas of interest:

Establishing neighbourhood watch schemes

Changes in licensing hours

The Scottish Government's No Knives Better Lives initiative

She said her colleague Ian Hanley would be happy to come along to speak to groups about setting up neighbourhood watch schemes. Lynne Chambers said she and Hugh Ritchie had recently met with a group of local residents who either have or are about to set up a scheme and said she would pass this information to them. Cliff Lyons also took a note of Ian Hanley's name for the Marine Court Residents' Association. She said there had been a lot of discussion and debate about the new Licensing Act as alcohol is one of the serious issues in Inverclyde. There are licensing officers in the Safer Communities Services and they can liaise with the Inverclyde Licensing Forum and raise concerns. Violent crime is another issue in Inverclyde and the No Knives Better Lives initiative – on radio, billboards and telephone booths – says that those who carry and use knives don't only damage their victim but their victim's family and friends and their own family and friends. There's an education package being introduced to schools and is being piloted at St Stephen's High School in Port Glasgow. In addition a hard-hitting DVD showing medics' point of view when having to deal with victims of knife crime will be shown in cinemas – aimed at the younger age group and warning of the dangers of carrying a knife.

As for alcohol the problem seems to be with off- licences rather than licensed premises. And a big issue of high concern is adults buying alcohol for underage drinkers. Brian McArthur said he'd been approached outside an off-licence by teenagers asking him to buy alcohol for them. Cliff Lyons said a reliable neighbour reported seeing an adult bringing in carrier bags of alcohol from Greenock and distributing them/giving them to teenagers. Young people had also told Ms McVey some underage friends had alcohol bought for them by their parents. It was also revealed two off-licences in Inverclyde are licensed to deliver alcohol. It was reported taxi drivers deliver alcohol to teenagers on Tower Hill and to homes where 'mum isn't in at the moment'.

Ms McVey said neither her department nor the police had funds to visit every CC, residents' and tenants' association and neighbourhood watch schemes in Inverclyde. But she suggested all groups could get together every 2 to 3 months. She asked the CC how it would like to see the Ward 6 Community Partnership working. Cliff Lyons – pointing out he was not a community councillor - said it was important to communicate with the community. It was important to represent what the community wants not individuals. Hugh Ritchie thought it would be a good idea to put contact details of how to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme on the CC noticeboard and website. The secretary will contact Ian Hanley to ask him for a form of words for the notice and will have it posted in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay

Ms McVey said she would continue her contact with the CC, and she was thanked for her attendance – as was Sgt O'Hare who had remained at the meeting to hear the presentation

5. Minutes of Business Meeting held on Thursday 3rd September 2009. Matters arising:

Footpath access/playpark, Spey Road, Inverkip

Ron Potter and Lynne Chambers had a meeting with Inverclyde Council's (IC) Head of Planning and Housing, Fraser Williamson on Tuesday the 15th of September. The issue was discussed thoroughly, but Fraser Williamson maintained his stance that the footpath is not a right of way, but was prepared to be proved wrong. He believed before further discussion can take place it must be established whether the footpath is a right of way or not. Lynne Chambers spoke to Catriona Davies, Access Enquiries Officer at ScotWays on the morning of the meeting with Fraser Williamson. Ms Davies said that following a letter from Inverkip and Wemyss Bay Community Council (IWBC) with various enclosures including maps she was of the opinion the footpath may meet all the criteria to be a right of way. She followed this opinion with a letter expressing this belief. Fraser Williamson said he was interested to hear Ms Davies' opinion and both have indicated a willingness to debate this issue. It was suggested in a letter to Ms Davies that perhaps she could meet with members of the CC/or continue the discussion by email. The secretary awaits members' views. It was agreed that one more item of information should be gathered to send to Ms Davies and then suggest that she and Fraser Williamson take the matter further. Telfer Ramage said he was shocked to hear what the residents living close to the playpark had been subjected to but thought until the matter is decided the path should be re-opened and said all it needs is a gate. Hugh Ritchie said the CC was not in a position to take further action until the right of way issue is cleared up.

A/chairman Hugh Ritchie and Lynne Chambers met with residents who support the continued closure of the footpath on Friday 26th September to hear their views of the matter. Hugh Ritchie said they'd also heard that parents whose children use the playpark were sometimes concerned when small children disappeared behind the hummocks in the playpark and would be even more concerned if the fence was opened up. Ron Potter explained that when Stewart Milne Homes (SMH) lodged an application to build houses further up the hill a playpark was envisaged at Betty Burn. With the change of permission they were still obliged to build a playpark and decided on this portion of greenbelt within SMH's ownership. IC granted permission for the re-siting of the playpark. As far as IC is concerned and from their drawings there was

never free access through the farmlands. Cllr Nelson said ultimately it could be a sheriff has to decide the matter.

Lynne Chambers said she has continued to keep residents informed of developments. The secretary asked CC members if they thought it was appropriate to pay an annual subscription to ScotWays – a charity. It was agreed she should discover the annual payment and relay the information to the CC but members were generally in favour.

Inverkip Power Station site

From Stuart McMillan MSP – a press release and copy letter of his submission to IC following a site visit. Cllr Nelson also attended the site visit. In addition there was a document outlining the results of the survey the MSP had conducted in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay about the Power Station site. In the letter the MSP says there is a lot of constituent feeling that any development at the site should not be excessive as over housing will only exacerbate the problems of road safety on the A78. In addition Stuart McMillan said if proposals are accepted he feels the following should be enacted:

Improvements to slip roads

Improved public transport

Reduction in the number of domestic properties coupled with an increase in the number of industrial units

Increased provision for leisure facilities

Sailing facilities should be included – this in line with an article in the Greenock Telegraph in which the director of the Kip Marina – supported by MP David Cairns - said the Scottish government should do more to promote sailing in Scotland to bring in even more people to Inverclyde. Cllr Nelson said this was a matter Stuart McMillan had already brought up with the Scottish government.

Finnockbog Road, Inverkip

It was reported by a resident at September's business meeting that Finnockbog Road was not a suitable alternative to the closed access footpath (see above) as there was no street lighting at the village end of the road and there was a cross-over stretch between the SMH/Redrow sites. The secretary inspected the site, then wrote to Gary McKinnon, SMH's technical manager. Receiving no reply she wrote further to IC and Alan Swinton promptly took up the matter. The site was visited and he responded by saying the metal plates at the crossing point seemed to be in good condition. In addition, site personnel assured IC officers that during 'peak' pedestrian movements no heavy plant vehicles crossed over and a banksman is on duty at 'peak' pedestrian use periods. SMH has agreed to energise the street lighting missing link and has instructed its contractor accordingly. Work should be carried out in another week or so. Telfer Ramage said some tarmac has been laid at the crossing point and light units have been placed on some lighting poles. Ron Potter commented he seldom saw banksmen on duty.

(Inverkip Brueacre Recycling site)

Cllr Rebecchi in a conversation with the secretary suggested she contact Alan Swinton about a lack of replacement for the burned out rubbish bin at the Inverkip Brueacre recycling site. Alan Swinton passed the information to his Cleansing Department colleagues. The secretary can report there is now a bin at the site

Inverkip Goalposts

Further to learning at September's business meeting from Cllr Rebecchi that while IC cuts the grass at the football pitch in Inverkip it is not responsible for the maintenance

of the goalposts, the secretary approached Cllr Rebecchi to ask if the CC took on the painting of the goalposts as a community project would IC pay for the paint. Cllr Rebecchi came up with the idea that if the CC paid for the paint and thinners, he had negotiated an agreement that offenders undertaking Community Service would sand down and prime the goalposts, then apply Hammerite paint. The secretary received the go-ahead from the CC and the cost to the CC will be around £14-£15.

Review of admissions and placement requests in Inverclyde schools

Cllr Rebecchi said further to chatting to local scouts at the weekend he would suggest again if the CC has had concerns expressed by parents or if Community Councillors are sufficiently across the proposed changes that a written submission should be made to IC. He still believes that any child admitted to Primary 1 should be able – without the need of a placement request – to move with its peer group to the appropriate secondary school, if in accordance with parental wishes. The CC has received no expression of concern from parents.

The Minutes were approved as accurate by Brian McArthur and seconded by Ron Potter

6. Secretary's Report and Correspondence

Letter from CC to Skelmorlie CC responding to their letter requesting the engagement of IWBC in support of a conference to prepare a draft contingency plan for accidents and incidents on the A78T from Greenock To Monkton. The letter contained the CC's willingness to be involved.

Letter from Poppy Scotland (The Earl Haig Fund Scotland) outlining its urgent need for an Inverkip organiser forwarded to the CC by Duncan McNeil MSP's assistant. The secretary contacted Inverkip Parish Church; Inverkip Community Enterprise and the information was posted on the CC's website and Inverkip noticeboard

Email from a local resident expressing dismay about the overgrown trees at The Point, Inverkip, obscuring the fine view of the marina and the river. The secretary visited the site and wrote to the Ward councillors about the site. She also expressed her own concern that the rusting rotting picnic tables didn't look too safe. Cllr Dorrian passed on the information to IC's Bert Muir as did Cllr Rebecchi. Cllr Nelson wrote to Bert Muir saying he too had been contacted by a resident and confirmed the trees along the area in front of the east end of the car park are too big to allow visitors to take advantage of the views. He also thought the picnic tables were in a poor condition and should be replaced. The resident was also upset, he said, about the seating alcove at the back of the lavatory being boarded up. He learned the reason the alcove was plated over is that it was used as an informal lavatory out of hours. However, he understands the trees will be lopped back in around three weeks and Liz Roders said she noticed lamp-posts were being erected at the site.

Email from Nigel Willis of Save Your Regional Park (SYRP) campaign asking the CC to consider objecting to an application for a large industrial sized Anaerobic Digester Plant in Glenlora within Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. As the CC is opposed to inappropriate industrial development within CMRP, with the CC's approval the secretary sent off a letter of objection

Letter from Renfrewshire Council acknowledging receipt of the objection as above
From the Association of Scottish Community Councils (ASCC) details of its annual national conference to be held in the Parliament building in Edinburgh on the 14th of November

From Stuart McMillan MSP – a copy of the A78 Inverkip Review of Junctions conducted for Transport Scotland by Amey. As reported in the Greenock Telegraph and from a press release from Stuart McMillan both he and MSP Duncan McNeil have expressed disappointment that after a 3 month survey it would appear Transport Scotland has rejected the options of traffic lights or a roundabout and settled for a package of low cost accident investigation and prevention measures. Ron Potter said he was unhappy about some of the information in the report. He said the skid resistant surface at all three joining points has zero life left, and the photographs included in the report showed the best possible views from all junctions supporting the report. Tracy McKernan said it was so dangerous to run on at the Brueacre Junction. Hugh Ritchie said the CC wanted to thank Stuart McMillan for the very good job he had done on this matter including getting responses from the public. He had worked most diligently. The CC has written to the MSPs asking for meetings with them to discuss how best to progress safety matters on the A78T. Hugh Ritchie said the main Inverkip exit road was by far the more dangerous, and Brian McArthur said there had been numerous accidents because of drivers not seeing oncoming traffic.

Email from community councillor Brian McArthur to Stuart McMillan re problems with the traffic light system on the A78 at Inverclyde Academy giving priority to the side road whenever a vehicle approached, holding up main road traffic. Brian McArthur said within a week of writing the problem appears to be resolved, though Liz Roders said there are still problems at the next set of lights.

From Fraser Williamson at IC – details of the Draft Interim Supplementary Planning Guidance for Wind Farms and seeking representations if desired. Cllr Nelson observed that he thought it was a good document.

From Fraser Williamson at IC – Inverclyde Local Development Plan – engagement is required with a variety of national and local organisations, community and specialist groups as well as private sector developers and businesses. The secretary will contact IC to discover how best the CC should proceed in this matter

Newsletter – Inverclyde Elderly Forum

From YourVoice – Inverclyde Community Care Forum – two invitations – Mental Health Awareness Week – drop in for a coffee and chat on Tuesday 6th October and Inverclyde People’s Day – Drugs, Alcohol and You – Thursday 8th October

From IC – Audit of IC’s Annual Accounts 2008/09 – report by Chief Financial Officer. Passed to Hugh Ritchie

From IC – Inverclyde Libraries – an invitation to attend a showing of Inverclyde on Film on the 3rd of October. Cliff Lyons observed the transfer of the film was of poor quality. Passed to Hugh Ritchie who’ll endeavour to attend

From Fraser Williamson at IC – Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy – this strategy coordinates all housing activities within Inverclyde. IC is beginning its work on the consultation process and requests permission to attend a meeting. The CC decided to invite a representative to the next meeting.

From IC – from Willie Wilson – CC financial returns – the Treasurer will explain*
Newsletter from Stuart McMillan MSP

From IC – Inverclyde Alliance – copies of the Single Outcome Agreement for distribution to CCs

From IC – details of the Big Man Walking event – 6-7th November

From SYRP – receipt for annual subscription

From SYRP – September newsletter

From IC – Inverclyde Licensing Board – application for variation of premises licence – Sainsbury’s Store, Inverkip – no objection

From Wilson Dunlop at Inverclyde Forum of Community Councils – request for two nominations from the CC to the Forum. Agreed the nominations would be Hugh Ritchie and Ron Potter

The secretary had distributed welcome leaflets to new residents at Ardgowan Rise in Inverkip with the details of IWBCC. Perhaps there should be a wider distribution in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay the secretary suggested

The secretary has obtained permission from Wemyss Bay Primary School for notices to be posted on the noticeboard on the railings outside the school

7. Treasurer’s Report

*Ron Potter explained the current situation with CC finances. The CC had heard from Willie Wilson, IC’s Community Services Manager, that all Inverclyde CCs had made their returns for the last financial year. IC’s finance department is too busy to look at them, so they’ve taken photocopies which they’ll peruse at their leisure and let the CCs have their comments if required. A fortnight ago Willie Wilson said he was releasing all further monies to CCs. Nothing has arrived as yet, Ron Potter said. Cllr Nelson declared himself unhappy about the delay and will inquire why there is a delay in paying the monies due. The current balance of the CC’s account is £944.46. He is unhappy that not a penny of interest is being paid currently on the CC’s treasurer’s account and intends to move the account to the Royal Bank of Scotland as it pays interest on the Inverclyde Forum of CCs’ (IFCC) treasurer’s account. The treasurer also said IFCC has now said expenses for attending meetings and functions may be claimed from the Forum rather than individual CCs. Ron Potter explained the new method of allocating funds to CCs – no longer based on the Voters’ Roll but on the population of those over 16. Brian McArthur said short of knocking on every door the population would be changing all the time and surely it would just be easier to make an informed estimate. Ron Potter said what IC has been working on is a headcount but the Planning Department is having a problem establishing which postcodes are where and how many people there are in each postcode. Brian McArthur asked Ron Potter how much there was in the pot for CCs. Just over £20,000 he was told between 12 CCs. Cliff Lyons said two CCs had disbanded and asked what happened to their money. Ron Potter said at the end of the financial year that money was divided between the 10 CCs and that an additional £300 had been paid at the end of the last financial year. Cliff Lyons asked how much extra the treasurer expected to receive from IC. At least £150 he replied but it may be more. Ron Potter said he was on IC’s CC Working Group trying to establish new boundaries for CCs in Inverclyde. In Inverkip and Wemyss Bay there’s not a problem as the IWBCC has agreed boundaries with Gourock and Larkfield CCs. IWBCC’s boundaries are quite secure at the moment.

8. Planning matters

Further to last month’s business meeting A/chairman Hugh Ritchie has pursued information from IC relating to the application for a green waste treatment station at the former Water Treatment Works in Inverkip. Green Waste was defined as kitchen

and garden waste. Environmental services will investigate whether there will be any smell from the plant and as to any run-off the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) will issue a licence if they see fit. The SYRP campaign having investigated the application discovered the proposed site is just outside CMRP so will not be objecting, but it is adjacent to a Core Path and an objection may be lodged on that account. Charles Woodward of CMRP will also be informed.

From the information he has discovered Hugh Ritchie has lodged a letter of objection on behalf of the CC. The end product is compost, but as the estimated cost of the plant is half a million pounds and the intention is to process 20,000 tons of waste per annum, it is not a small scale operation he said. Around 8,000 tons of waste will come from IC – 4000 tons of kitchen waste and 4000 tons of garden waste. It is estimated around three 15 and 20 ton trucks (fast track vehicles and trailers) will be delivering waste each day, plus the return journey. Concern was expressed about the narrowness of the roads to the proposed site though it is not known what route is intended. It was noted these heavy lorries would add to difficulties at already dangerous junctions in Inverkip. Hugh Ritchie also said the application goes on to say the compost when rotting generates heat that will be captured and used to heat greenhouses to grow plants that will be sold on. Brian McArthur said there are far better sites in Greenock for this plant. It was observed while the tanks on the site may be perfect for this use, the location is not. Liz Roders said she lives in one of the areas in Inverclyde where the kitchen waste scheme is being piloted. She said she had seen a programme on TV and kitchen waste recycling is becoming big business. Hugh Ritchie felt he hadn't received full information when he'd spoken to the planning officer at IC. Lynne Chambers said as this was a new area for the Planning Department she was concerned the application hadn't been fully investigated and that the planning committee may not have all the details presented to them. It would also appear IC has an interest in the application. It was agreed Hugh Ritchie would write again to IC.

From the Scottish Government – Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals – notice of a public local inquiry re the application by Community Windpower for 6 turbines at Dalry. The CC objected to the application

From the Scottish Government – Directorate for the Built Environment – Planning Decisions Division – Planning Appeal – erection of wind farm (16 turbines) at Black Craig, Glenstriven Estate, Toward. The Scottish Ministers dismissed the appeal and refused planning permission. The CC objected to the application.

Ron Potter expressed disquiet that under the new planning laws, in respect of wind farm applications, above a certain number of turbines the decision will be made by the Scottish government and taken out of the hands of local authorities.

9. Venues for Business Meetings

The CC continues to look for alternative venues to hold the monthly business meetings. While the Rogues Room at the Inverkip Hotel is a good venue, the stairs accessing the room make it difficult for those with mobility problems. The Friends of Wemyss Bay Station have indicated they would make their rooms at the Station available and it was agreed that would be a suitable meeting place, but the problem of having to pay £3 for parking has to be overcome. Not fair, Hugh Ritchie said, to expect residents to pay to attend a meeting. It was felt that at 7.30 in the evening there may be on-street parking available and the matter will be investigated. In the

meantime the secretary will book – if available – a room at Wemyss Bay primary school for the November meeting and at Inverkip primary school for the December meeting.

10. Date and time of next meeting (Thursday 5th November 2009 at Wemyss Bay primary school – t.b.c.)

11. Any other business

Cliff Lyons of Inverkip Community Enterprise reported that 15 people attending the Afternoon Club at the Inverkip Pavilion had raised £65 for good causes. He also said 16 people over 60 were attending computer classes at the Pavilion

Liz Roders said she had reported a dead deer lying on the road to the Power Station. She had phoned IC's cleansing department who said it would be picked up. However the carcass remained there until it became more or less a skeleton. It was observed the road to the Power Station may belong to Scottish Power and therefore be outwith IC's remit, but Cllr Nelson will follow up

Telfer Ramage reported the condition of the road at Beatoch Place to Everton Road in Inverkip was appalling with very large potholes. If not attended to he feels IC is leaving itself open to claims against it. Cllr Nelson will pursue

Tracy McKernan inquired whether Inverkip had a gala day. Cliff Lyons said Inverkip Community Enterprise had organised a gala day for two years, but the duties of running the Pavilion meant there was no time to continue running gala days.

Tracy McKernan said she was studying event management and was keen to organise a gala day for Inverkip on the last Saturday in May at the Ardgowan Estate. Various events and options were discussed for such a day and Ms McKernan said she'd come along to the meeting to seek the support of the CC for such a project. She was told the CC would be supportive and Cliff Lyons said Inverkip Community Enterprise would also support such a venture.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.20pm.