

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Business Meeting held on Thursday 2nd April 2009 at the Inverkip Hotel at 7.30pm

Present: Innes Nelson; (chairman) Hugh Ritchie; (vice chairman) Ron Potter; (treasurer) Harold McPherson; Brian McArthur; Liz Roders and Lynne Chambers (secretary)

Apologies: PCs Jane Perratt and Billy Gray

In attendance: Stuart McMillan MSP; Cllr Gerry Dorrian; Cllr Ciano Rebechhi; Head of Planning and Housing, FraserWilliamson; PC Barry McNeill; PC Colin Mitchell; John McKernan; Tracy McKernan; Malcolm McGilvray; ? McGilvray; Robin Hyland; E. Kane; S. T. Ramage; Elaine Stewart; Ewen Cameron; Ronnie Gill; Maria Potter; Scott Miller; Cliff Lyons; Stephen Skirving; Eleanor Tinney; Liz Murray; Calum Murray; Gregor Gillespie; Berni McIntyre; Penelope Hof; Sandra Skirving and Mhairi Kerr

3. Police Matters

Crimes reported in March

Murder	1 reported	1 detected
Reset	1 reported	1 detected
Drugs Possession	1 reported	1 detected
Vandalism	6 reported	2 detected
Offensive Weapon	1 reported	1 detected
RTA offences	1 reported	1 detected
Assault	2 reported	0 detected
Explosives offence	1 reported	1 detected
Theft	2 reported	1 detected
HBWI	2 reported	0 detected
Theft HB	3 reported	0 detected
Littering	1 reported	1 detected
Bail Offences	6 reported	6 detected

28 crimes reported, 16 detected – a detection rate of 57%

While the officers were in attendance agenda item 9 –Dog Fouling – was brought to their attention. Vice chairman Hugh Ritchie said he was also a member of the Kip Village Residents' Association and he'd been asked to bring up the matter at the Community Council Business Meeting. He has raised this matter before, but Kip Village residents are now sickened by the actions of thoughtless dog owners. Hugh Ritchie said it was particularly unpleasant finding a way through dog excrement on the bridge over the A78. Visitors from overseas had been appalled he said. Others present echoed his complaint. The officers said it was difficult for them unless they actually saw an owner behaving irresponsibly, though it's a problem the police can target. If the offender is known a report should be made to the police who would

follow it up. Cllr Rebecchi said a photograph of the offending deed could be taken on a mobile phone camera and used as evidence of the act. Those in attendance were urged to report or photograph owners who don't clean up after their dogs and the CC would take it up.

Hugh Ritchie also asked the officers about youngsters coming off the train and causing trouble in Inverkip. The officers replied that a lot of work had been done at the station and they thought there had been positive results – they were not aware of any ongoing issues at the present time.

Ron Potter asked if there had been any interaction between the officers and the recently formed Young Person Alcohol Team. PC McKenzie said he'd heard of the initiative but as yet had no personal experience of the Team. Lynne Chambers said a letter had been received from the Team asking if a representative could attend the next CC meeting. It was agreed she should write to extend an invitation to a Team member.

Maria Potter took the opportunity of the officers' attendance to talk about the policing of young people from upper Inverkip. She thought there had been a stronger police presence in the last 2 to 3 months, plus 2 community wardens. Children in the area now seem to be having a difficult time, she said. They're not getting into trouble but are being suspected – they're not able to roam freely. They're not allowed at the swing park and she had attended the meeting to find out if there is anything in the pipeline to provide facilities for 10-16 year olds. When they vacate the park and make their way home, they are watched going home. At the beach they are asked by officers where they've come from, where they're going and do they belong to the area. But she added, kids will be kids. The constables replied that as to the young people being hounded, there is no curfew in Inverkip and they were here representing the community officers who were unable to attend and that Inverkip and Wemyss Bay isn't their beat. There had been specific complaints about drinking in the swing park. But it was part of a community officer's remit to have interaction with the community – to get to know the young people and encourage them to feel comfortable chatting to the officers. And just because they're speaking to people doesn't mean they're pointing the finger at someone. Good citizens have nothing to fear.

Lynne Chambers asked Maria Potter if she was connected to whoever posted anonymous flyers delivered to houses in upper Inverkip about the lack of a multi-sport area provision for local youngsters. She said she was, and represented some concerned Inverkip residents who have expressed their concern to Inverclyde Council and to David Cairns MP regarding the lack of playing provision for children over the age of 7. The flyer said there is no area for children over this age to play safely and without fear of recrimination. Children of this age are being persecuted and criminalized for playing group sport games in their own neighbourhood. David Cairns had written to IC and he forwarded to the CC copies of the replies from the Council. The Corporate Director Environment and Community Protection, Neil Graham, said there are no plans to create new sports facilities within Inverkip and said the proposed upgrading of facilities at Gourock Pool and at Ravenscraig Stadium together with the sports facilities available at Inverclyde Academy for community use outwith school hours should all prove a benefit for residents in Inverkip. The Corporate Director, Regeneration and Resources Aubrey Fawcett had written to David Cairns to outline the millions being spent by Inverclyde Council on various projects across the area (none in Inverkip, LC) and said there will be a network of pitches, meaning that

no-one in Inverclyde will need to travel far to have use of high quality pitches regardless of their sport. Wemyss Bay, the letter said, will have a new 3rd Generation 7-a-side facility opened in late summer (though the Wemyss Bay facility has been on the cards for years and is funded separately. LC) Ms Potter said she had invited the community wardens – their first time in Inverkip - into her house to inquire why they were there. Ron Potter explained restrictions had been lifted on community wardens only working in deprived areas of Inverclyde. Once they had familiarised themselves with the area probably they will not be seen again. The officers were thanked for their attendance

4. Stuart McMillan MSP –

Stuart McMillan reported further on his A78 consultation exercise. He said following the Inverkip consultation he undertook another exercise in Wemyss Bay after Christmas. He said results differed as to responses between the villages – for the Inverkip exercise he had the funds for reply paid envelopes, but not for Wemyss Bay. However, 131 people responded. The questions posed were similar to those asked in Inverkip, but tailored for Wemyss Bay.

To question 1 – *Do you feel that traffic calming measures are required on the A78 (T) Inverkip Road?* – 35% said yes, a roundabout; 31% said yes, traffic lights; 21% said no and 13% other/don't know

To question 2 – *Do you think the Inverkip Road speed limit should be reduced?* – 60% said yes; 37% said no and 3% n/a

To question 3 – *Do you think the entry and exit from Wemyss Bay on to the A78 (T) is suitable and satisfactory?* – 53% said yes; 43% said no and 4% n/a

To question 4 – *Do you think that further development in the Wemyss Bay area should include improved traffic measures?* – 76% said yes; 21% said no and 3% n/a

Stuart McMillan said constituents had contacted him to tell him of their concerns about the A78 and accessing the road from the two villages.. He wrote to the Transport Scotland minister inviting him to come to see the road problems for himself, but he declined. Since then he had contacted IC to see if any work is planned to move the issue forward. He was told to contact Councillor Moran. Cllr Dorrian claimed he had kicked off complaints about the road in association with Duncan McNeil MSP, and had sent accident statistics to the Minister for Transport and had no reply. In effect there are not enough fatal accidents.

There were complaints about a lack of 'cat's eyes' at the Brueacre run-off and the run-off was dangerous to exit and enter.

One couple attending the meeting said they had put their house up for sale. It takes at least forty minutes to clear Greenock travelling from Inverkip in the morning. The lack of a decent road, they said – with regret – meant they were going to leave the district. They thought IC shouldn't try to attract people into the area – as they had been attracted – without regeneration and road improvement plans. They asked the councillors if there was anything they could tell them that would encourage them to stay in Inverkip. The councillors said the road issue should be dealt with in Edinburgh, and they lobbied constantly. Vice chairman Hugh Ritchie thought the councillors should do more. Cllr Rebecchi said Amey was in charge of the trunk roads and they should be lobbied by MSPs, councillors and CCs.

When Bankfoot roundabout was mentioned Cllr Dorrian said Amey claimed the roundabout is under redesign.

Cliff Lyons thanked the MSP for the work he's doing. Stuart McMillan said he hoped to have meetings with IC. It's no good he said to have survey results sitting in a filing cabinet when people want something done. He said he was happy to push the issue – he's in power for a further two years and will do his best to take the matter forward. Stuart McMillan was thanked for his attendance and for his efforts relating to the remedy of flooding in Inverkip

5. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 5th of February 2009:

The Minutes were proposed as accurate by Ron Potter, seconded by Innes Nelson

There was no Business Meeting held in March

6. Secretary's Report and Correspondence:

From Inverclyde Council – paperwork for the National Review of Community Councils – a major document for the CC which will have to be studied as it will affect the way the Council operates in future. It would be helpful, Lynne Chambers said, if a meeting could be organised in advance of a meeting Community Services Manager Willie Wilson will be having with other local authorities to gauge their reaction to the document so that IWBC's responses may be known.

From the Association of Scottish Community Councils – information about their insurance scheme but treasurer Ron Potter confirmed the CC was insured by IC's scheme; a request for renewal of our annual subscription – to be paid - and information that a National Development Officer, Dr Nicola Welsh, has taken up her post with the ASCC. Ron Potter said there had been changes in the operation of the ASCC – the Secretary has taken over. There was a request for an Inverclyde representative for the Association and a member of Gourock CC is in place, though there is no reason why IWBC shouldn't have more of a say

From Willie Wilson at IC – details of a National Spring Clean

From Inverclyde Licensing Board – The Chartroom at the Kip Marina is applying for a premises licence – there were no objections

From Scottish Natural Heritage – their public statement for owners and occupiers of the SSSI at Dunrod Hill – SNH is looking for views on their statement. The CC had no particular view

From IC – paperwork re the Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee to inform the committee of the successful outcome of the formal consultation on the draft

Inverclyde Core Paths Plan, towards adoption of the Plan

From Eila Roberts in Wemyss Bay – details of the Spring Bat Walks

Letter from Joe Pearce, Alcohol Community Worker, of the Young Person Alcohol Team saying he would like to speak at a CC meeting about the extent of young person problem drinking in our area. The secretary was asked to invite Joe Pearce to May's CC meeting

The Scottish Government asked the Centre for Scottish Public Policy to gather views on the key challenges and opportunities for town centres across Scotland. Following their consultation, a document containing the emerging key points has been sent to the CC

Save Your Regional Park Campaign March newsletter

North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority newsletter

Letter from IC with details of the revocation of the Traffic Regulation Order on Millhouse Road Bridge in Inverkip. The CC had no comments to make on the revocation

Feedback form from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde – the secretary will complete and return

The CC website was copied into an email from a local resident to an IC planning officer re a lorry heading for the Stewart Milne site using Station Avenue instead of the permitted Spey Road

From IC – a report by the Corporate Director Improvement and Performance responding to the economic downturn. Passed to Hugh Ritchie

The secretary replied to an email sent to the CC website re the surface and camber at Bankfoot Roundabout. The Secretary will write to Amey to discover the state of play of the re-engineering of the roundabout and report to the correspondent

Newsletter from Stuart McMillan MSP

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde newsletter

Two items of correspondence received too late by the secretary to action –

An invitation from the Greenock Telegraph to attend their Inverclyde Knife Crime Conference – however as the CC has supported Mr John Muir in his Damien's Law campaign from its early days it is hoped non-attendance by the CC will be forgiven

An invitation from Larkfield Community Safety Group to attend their meeting

7. Closure of footpath at Spey Road, Inverkip

The background to the issue – access between Everton Road and Hill Farm has recently been blocked by a six foot high fence at a play area. Fraser Williamson, IC's Head of Planning and Housing said the closure of the path was part of the builder's (Stewart Milne Holdings) plans. Residents said they had heard the police had asked for the path to be closed – Fraser Williamson said it was not a police matter. Innes Nelson distributed information about Hill Farm access from Everton Road. He said from the emails the CC had received it was evident some residents are against the closure and some very pleased the path has been closed. He continued that the matter came down to planning and whether the closure complies with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, which legally promotes public access over land.

Residents remembered when the area was an enclosed field for cattle and the path used as access to the guide and scout camp. Fraser Williamson said the area had been designated for development since the 1970s and there was a lot of debate about where the boundaries should be. He doesn't believe the Land Reform Act will prevent development because the relevant planning took place before the introduction of the Act. He said there is no question of asserting a right of way as the criteria have not been satisfied. Changes to the overall planning of the area resulted in the proposal for the play area at the end of Spey Road. As part of the planning application the question of formalising the path through the site was considered but it was decided the entire play area should be fenced off to prevent children straying on to the road or to the burn at the back of the site. Fraser Williamson said the tarmac path formed across the site arose as part of the consideration temporarily to close Finnockbog Road to facilitate building and IC's Roads Service required an alternative path be provided. The temporary path was to be removed when Finnockbog Road re-opened and the fencing round the play area, required as part of the permission, had been erected.

When considering access he was of the view the other path down Finnockbog Road was sufficient. The terms of the application had been complied with. He was not aware there was a formal path there – but was happy to be corrected. It may have been local people used it day and daily but it was never the intention there should be a formal path. There followed a very heated discussion – mothers saying the closure meant it now took ages for their children to walk to school; complaints from people who had their dog-walking route fenced off and others whose houses and persons had been subjected to dreadful vandalism and abuse claiming they had their lives back now the fence prevented troublemaking young people making their lives a misery. The question was asked – who was responsible for the maintenance of the play park. Fraser Williamson said the residents of the Stewart Milne houses were responsible. Innes Nelson asked to whom the fence belonged and Fraser Williamson responded it belonged to Stewart Milne. Various alternatives were considered. One mother said problems had nothing to do with the path, but the children, and it was reported youths from Branchton and Larkfield came off the train and up the path, and stopped at the play park to cause trouble. Cllr Dorrian urged that some compromise be reached, then an approach made to Stewart Milne and Redrow. However, it was pointed out any change to the application would have to come from Stewart Milne. Moving the play park was supported by several of those attending the meeting. There are a number of issues from the CC's point of view – and consultations should take place with the police and the planning department. Fraser Williamson said he would be reluctant to approve a path to an unlit and unadopted road. He said the first plans submitted had not clearly shown the fence and went back to the builders for clarification. But the fence is shown clearly on the plans available for viewing in his office. There were complaints about landscaping at the play park, and Fraser Williamson said if it was not as per plans he would take up the matter. Some residents said they wouldn't have a problem with the path if the play park was removed or re-sited – it was a magnet for youths with drinking going on until one in the morning. Since the fence has been erected there are no teenagers in the park. Innes Nelson said this was obviously a big issue – he said further investigations would be carried out and a public meeting organised. Many said the lack of any leisure facilities in Inverkip – particularly for young people – contributed to the problem. Cllr Rebecchi said the CC should have a look at the plans – there were, he thought, at least 30 conditions and he said they should be checked. Fraser Williamson was thanked for his attendance

8. Remedial work to sewers, Main Street, Inverkip

Lynne Chambers reported she and Ron Potter had attended a meeting on the 19th of March at IC's Roads department to learn more about the plans for the upsizing of the sewer in Main Street, Inverkip. All agencies concerned were in attendance and Ron Potter was able to give a local perspective to their deliberations. It is intended the work will take 10 weeks, in various phases, including the closure of Main Street for 7 days. McGill's Buses are making arrangements for passengers and will publicise their alternative routes. The contractors, Carillion, have undertaken to keep in touch with the CC, offering maps for the CC notice board and updated information for the CC website. Carillion agreed they would contact householders along the route of the work giving them information, probably by leaflet. The contractors have been made aware of the need for access to the hotel, deliveries to properties in Main Street and

access for emergency vehicles – and the safety issues surrounding getting children in and out of school

Innes Nelson expressed the CC's satisfaction that this work was being undertaken at last and thanked all those who had lobbied to end the problems of flooding and raw sewage in Main Street – local residents affected by the flooding; the CC; councillors MSPs and MP David Cairns

9. Dog fouling

Dealt with under Agenda item 3 – Police Matters – above

10. Venue for IWBC Business Meetings

Various venues are to be considered for CC Business Meetings – the hotel, school and perhaps rooms at Wemyss Bay station

11. Treasurer's Report

Ron Potter said new legislation governing the way CCs undertook their business was to be implemented soon. The legislation covers a scheme for the establishment of CCs in Scotland; Standing Orders; Code of Conduct and a Constitution
Treasurer Ron Potter asked Stuart McMillan if he would let him know – following his consultation exercise – the number of residents in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. He said the reason for asking was because IC claims it is unable to give figures for residents, and given the CC annual payment is based on the number of residents only £750 has been paid in the financial year 2008-2009 instead of in the region of £2000-£2500 that should have been paid. It was agreed IC has no right to withhold funds. He said the balance of the CC's account was £204.16

12. Planning Matters

The secretary said she had written to IC's Head of Planning and Housing, Fraser Williamson, further to the application by Stewart Milne Holdings to defer the requirement to construct the railway bridge and mark out parking spaces at Inverkip Station until prior to the occupation of the 166th house. The inquiry was about any change there may be to the payment of planning gain. Fraser Williamson replied there would be no change to the trigger points for payment of the planning gain.

Inverkip – application by Stewart Milne Homes Ltd for the substitution of house types and changes to ground levels at their development at Hill Farm

Wemyss Bay – erection of 5 dwellinghouses at land at the rear of Cardell – following IC's refusal of outline planning permission, an appeal was considered by a Reporter. The Reporter has allowed the appeal, and planning permission has been granted. This has been a protracted affair and the CC regrets construction of the dwellinghouses will now go ahead

Inverkip – 4 Lapwing Grove – erection of a single storey extension and formation of timber decking to rear of dwellinghouse (decking in retrospect)

Wemyss Bay – 33 Leapmoor Drive - erection of side and rear extension and erection of timber fence – application granted

From IC – a report by Fraser Williamson to the Safe Sustainable Communities Committee – Modernising Planning – New Regulations

Letter from MSP Duncan McNeil about the Scottish Government 'E-alert' system. He wrote it had recently come to his attention that no Community Councils in Inverclyde had registered for the 'E-alert' scheme – the system updates CCs on planning consultations, the most recent of which included proposals to allow householders to build extensions without planning permission. He says in the letter as few as 10% of CCs in Scotland are aware of the system and he is disappointed the Scottish Government has allowed such a situation to develop. He gives the website address to register for the E-alerts. The CC will register

13. Date and time of next meeting – Thursday 7th May 2009 at 7.30pm

14. Any other business

Ron Potter said the CC is required to draw up an action plan for next year, its aims and objectives, the timescale, who will be responsible and what resources there are. Cliff Lyons asked what the timescale would be for the new regime. Ron Potter said as soon as local authorities could get their heads together – he said a reasonable implementation time would be the end of the first quarter next year. Hugh Ritchie brought up the desolate look of the felled trees behind Bridgend, and wondered about new planting. However, it would appear the ground has to settle before new trees can be planted

There being no further business the meeting ended at 10.20pm