

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Business Meeting
Held on Thursday 4th August 2005
In the Inverkip Hotel

Present: Innes Nelson (chair); Ron Potter (vice chair); Cliff Lyons (treasurer); Paul Maloney; Hugh Ritchie; Harold McPherson; Lynne Chambers

Apologies: Lorraine Marshall

In attendance: Councillor Eric Forbes; Edward Green; Rod Wood; Mr and Mrs Ross; Julia McLellan; Alan Cumming; Isabel Hunter; Fran and Jim McIntosh; N Cupples and Graham Scott

Innes Nelson welcomed all present. At approximately 7.30pm the meeting was opened

3 Police Matters: There was no report as no officer in attendance. As this was the second month running when no officer was in attendance, Lynne Chambers asked whether she should write to Strathclyde Police to inquire why. It was agreed that she should and Cllr Forbes said he would reinforce the inquiry.

4 Presentation by Community Windpower of their proposed wind farm at Leapmoor: Director Rod Wood and Project Manager Edward Green of Community Windpower outlined their plans for a wind farm on the Leapmoor. They plan to erect ten wind generators in the tree line, maintaining the majority of forest, and have been in consultation with SNH and Muirshiel. They stressed that no formal application has as yet been made as they were keen to consult before submitting a planning application. They outlined what they see as community benefits following the erection of the wind farm – the improvement of recreational facilities and work with schools re green power and the environment. The wind farm would be in existence for around 20-25 years. The sound emitted they say is a ‘whoosh’ – there would be no high-pitched sound. Maximum noise of 40 decibels. Legislation requires that no houses should be nearer than 500 metres to a wind farm – on the Leapmoor the nearest house is 650 metres away, and thereafter the nearest habitation 1 kilometre away. Land will be leased for 25 years from the landowner. The organisation is a limited company – with no foreign or national power company investment. Isabel Hunter asked what the company was hiding when offering to dish out so much to the community. And were there any health risks. Rod Wood replied that wind farms had been in existence for 12 to 15 years and there were no health risks. Ron Potter asked where the sub station would be and it was explained they plan to use the existing sub station. The wind farm would produce around 30 megawatts. Why not further into Muirshiel it was asked. Rod Wood said it was a Special Protection Area for birds - hen harriers etc which might be damaged by the wind farm equipment. It was also pointed out that there would be investment opportunities in the company for local people should they so wish. Innes Nelson thanked Rod Wood and Edward Morgan for coming along to the meeting and said perhaps the proposal could be considered

further at a public meeting. Messrs Wood and Morgan indicated a willingness to come along to such a meeting.

5 Minutes: Matters arising

Buses: Cliff Lyons asked Cllr Forbes if any progress had been made relating to bus services in Inverkip. Cllr Forbes reported that a meeting had been organised with the SPT Director of Operations for the 5th of August.

Flooding: Cllr Forbes said it was agreed that management of the sewage system was a problem. There is to be a meeting with Scottish Water and Council engineers and officers and he will report back to the Community Council. Cliff Lyons said that when the road was broken up on Main Street in front of the Inverkip Hotel that the Roads Department said it was a surface problem, but it's sewage water. There is no separation of fresh water and sewage in Inverkip. New developers will have to accommodate flash flooding and there are implications for new builds.

Bankfoot roundabout: Cllr Forbes confirmed Amey is still responsible for the maintenance of the roundabout. Hugh Ritchie said we should thank Cllr Forbes, because within a couple of days of his passing on the complaint about the poor state of the roundabout re weeding, grass cutting, it had been tidied up.

Minutes: the Minutes of the previous Business Meeting held on the 7th of July 2005 were approved.

6 Secretary's Report: Innes Nelson reported that the Community Council Secretary Lorraine Marshall had received a letter from Elaine Paterson, head of Inverclyde Council's Legal Services, dated the 26th of July 2005, referring to Inverkip Village Community Newsletter. In the letter Ms Paterson said she was concerned about the content of the Inverkip Village Community Newsletter, specifically the content of the Inverkip and Wemyss Bay Community Council news section and that some of the comments appearing in the Newsletter and attributed to the Community Council are political in nature. She reminded the Community Council that its Constitution specifically provides that it should be non-political. She also noted with some alarm the content of one section – an anonymous entry in the guestbook section of the Kipaycc@inverkip.com or accurately, Kipbaycc@inverkip.com) website which she claimed bordered on the defamatory. Ms Paterson asked the Community Council to clarify its relationship to the website and to what extent it is responsible for the management of the website. Innes Nelson replied to Ms Paterson's letter on the 1st of August 2005 saying that indeed the Community Council was familiar with its Constitution. He added that any comments Inverkip and Wemyss Bay Community Council made within the Village Community newsletter were not political, but factual and the Council stood by them. He added that the Community Council is not affiliated to any political party nor was he aware of anyone within the Community Council being a member of any political party. Innes Nelson said finally that the Inverkip.com website is currently run as a separate entity from the Community Council and that he had passed a copy of Ms Paterson's correspondence to them for information. Cllr Forbes confirmed that he had asked legal services to look at the Newsletter. It appears that the particular passage Ms Paterson refers to as being political in nature is as follows: *The Community Council were incensed by comments made by Liberal Councillors after the recent election results. These Councillors say that time will prove they made the right decision in voting to release the Greenbelt for housing. The local election in 2007 will show whether the people of Inverclyde agree with these councillors and their "we know what's best for you" political attitude.*

Members and public at the Business Meeting agreed that Inverclyde Council did not engage with the people of Inverkip and that the Newsletter reflected local feeling and frustration about erosion of the greenbelt and the swap of fields 8 and 9. It was the Liberal group alone within Inverclyde Council who had supported the land swap. Questions such as why Scouts who spend around 40 weekends a year at Everton were more important than Inverkip residents had never been answered. Members of the Community Council insisted that the comments were not political but personal. On the 28th of July 2005 Innes Nelson received a letter from Secretary Lorraine Marshall resigning from the Community Council with immediate effect. Mrs Marshall wrote that she had been a community council member for 7 years and was resigning because of many factors, but mainly due to the treatment Inverkip and Wemyss Bay Community Council received from members and employees of Inverclyde Council. Innes Nelson said that as a direct result of Ms Paterson's letter the Community Council had lost its secretary. Paul Maloney said he thought it was bullying and Innes Nelson claimed it was harassment of the Community Council. Hugh Ritchie said, when he learned that Cllr Forbes hadn't seen the letter before it was sent to the Community Council, that there was something wrong with procedures within Inverclyde Council and he felt the Community Council should write to the Council expressing deep concern about the handling of this procedure. Members of the Community Council unanimously agreed. Alan Cumming asked Cllr Forbes why he didn't take the remarks on the chin as a member of a political party. Ron Potter said legal opinions could be challenged. Innes Nelson said it was a major blow to the Community Council – it had lost its Secretary as a result of this letter. Mrs Marshall herself considered it harassment. Cllr Forbes said he would write to Mrs Marshall asking her to reconsider. However it was reported Mrs Marshall said she would return to the Community Council when Cllr Forbes wasn't the local councillor. Hugh Ritchie said Cllr Forbes should write to Mrs Marshall – it was certainly worth trying.

7 Treasurer's report: Cliff Lyons reported a balance of £945 and said he planned to close the books after the Business Meeting. Cliff Lyons said he would be in touch with Brian Purdie of Inverclyde Council to see if the plan to make donations to the villages' newsletters would be approved. The Wemyss Bay Newsletter had indicated they would be most pleased to receive £250 if the plan is approved

8 Newsletter, Press matters and Website: Cllr Forbes said he had received an e-mail inquiring about recycling – thought he'd look at the website and contributed some recycling information to it. He thought he'd scroll on a bit and discovered an entry about himself on the website describing him as *standing outside the school on election day with a smile on his face like Judas having received twenty pieces of silver* or, as Cllr Forbes corrected, twenty-one pieces of silver. He had taken advice and was told the entry was defamatory. Cllr Forbes had asked the website administrators to print a retraction and had received an e-mail from them saying they would post an entry about *censorship by Forbes*. There would be no retraction and they would let people know what kind of chap Cllr Forbes was, using bullying tactics. Cllr Forbes said he had the issue with the website, it was personal. Hugh Ritchie said that the Community Council had been asked in Ms Paterson's letter about their connection with the website. Innes Nelson said the Community Council had no control over the website. Ron Potter said Cllr Forbes and Ms Paterson should have a meeting to discuss the contents of her letter and make matters clear. It was observed that the website, like a newspaper, should know who is making entries on the website,

although they appear as anonymous, and should control and edit the content. Innes Nelson thought the Community Council should write to the website on this issue, and that people might want to write to the website but be put off by some of the entries. Cllr Forbes said he had been obliged throughout his career to put up with all sorts of abuse but that he would personally pursue the website entry with the site administrators. Cliff Lyons reported on the personal abuse as a Community Councillor he too had been exposed to, especially at the hands of some people connected with the Scout movement.

9 Planning matters:

31 Teal Drive, Inverkip – erection of rear conservatory

Studio 19, Cameron Place, Main Street, Inverkip – change of use and alterations to shop to form ground floor flat

5 Sandend Place, Inverkip - erection of conservatory

Underwood, Main Street, Inverkip – erection of garage, formation of access and hardstanding and installation of replacement windows in ground floor flat

Wemyss Bay Railway Station, Wemyss Bay – application for non-compliance with Conditions 2 and 3 of Listed Building Consent

Planning and Traffic Management Committee

Extension at 4 Broom Road, Wemyss Bay – approved

Side extension and formation of rear dormer window at 19 Castle Wemyss Drive, Wemyss Bay – refused

Appeal re installation of replacement windows in 3 flats at Ivybank, Main Street, Inverkip – refused

Square Wood application - withdrawn

Application for erection of 28 houses/flats at Bridgend Cottages, Inverkip - deferred for site inspection. Cliff Lyons wondered why the Scottish Executive had accepted the Amey recommendation for the road layout attached to this application. Should they be appealed to again. Cllr Forbes said that the Executive employed Amey to give them advice, so no, they couldn't be appealed to. Cliff Lyons thinks the road layout is just wrong.

Inverkip Station and land bound by railway, Finnockbog Road, Everton Farm Road, Hill Farm housing development and Berfern Farm – residential development with associated roadworks, open space, landscaping, management scheme and railway footbridge – Cllr Forbes reported that there were problems with documents and plans and getting them into libraries. There has been a 14 day extension from the re-publication of the notice in the Greenock Telegraph. Ron Potter asked Cllr Forbes what the situation would be if the application came to committee under the auspices of the current Inverclyde Local Plan – as the new Local Plan has not as yet been adopted. Cllr Forbes confessed he didn't know and would have to consult the Council officers.

A letter has been received from Planning Aid Scotland detailing a public and community meeting about the future of planning legislation in Scotland being organised by the Scottish Parliament. It was felt a member of the Community Council should attend the meeting being held at Holyrood on the 29th of October 2005.

10 Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 8th September 2005, 7.30pm at the Inverkip Hotel

11 Any other business: Isabel Hunter told Cllr Forbes there was still dumping of rubbish outside Dalriada. Cllr Forbes said he would phone the Ardgowan Estates factor John Wilson.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.45pm