

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Business Meeting held on Thursday 5th January 2012 at The Chartroom, Kip Marina, Inverkip at 7pm

Present: Hugh Ritchie; Ron Potter; David Adams; Jean Anderson; Tracy Bunton; Telfer Ramage; Gordon Rodgers; Eileen Virtue and Lynne Chambers

2. Apologies for absence:

In attendance: Cllr Gerry Dorrian; Cllr Innes Nelson; Cllr Ciano Rebecchi; Sgt Stuart Dunsmore; Tom Campbell and approximately 130 members of the public

3. Police Matters – to consider police presence and response time in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay

Following complaints by Inverkip residents at December's Business Meeting about the mass vandalism of cars in the village plus the feeling by youngsters that Inverkip is an open house for rioting and under-age drinking because of the lack of a police presence, Cllr Dorrian contacted Inspector Alison Kennedy reporting the concerns expressed at the meeting and asked that there should be a police presence at the January meeting. He also said that wardens should have a presence in Inverkip to deter underage drinking. Cllr Dorrian forwarded a response from the Head of the Warden service saying he planned to implement with immediate effect a robust operation involving Community Police and British Transport Police. A request for a senior Warden to attend had also been made.

Following further vandalising of cars in Inverkip the Community Sergeant contacted the secretary and asked if the CC would spread the word that officers were looking for information about the crimes.

The secretary drew up an information page that was posted at various sites in Inverkip Community Councillor Tracy Bunton has passed on the link to the Association of Scottish Neighbourhood Watches – <http://www.aosnw.co.uk/page.php?id=1>

Sgt Stuart Dunsmore was introduced to the meeting. First he gave details of local crime statistics for December 2011 and up until the 4th January 2012:

Number of incidents – 115

10 Complaints

4 Disturbance calls

Number of crimes – 49 (34 thefts from/vandalised vehicles in Inverkip)

Numbers of youths causing calls – 1

Thefts – 3 (not vehicle related)

Common Assaults – 3

Vandalism – 2

Road Traffic Offences – 3

Total crimes – 49 Total Detections – 16

Detection rate – 32% (inquiry ongoing and will increase)

Sgt Dunsmore said there had been a one-man crime wave in Inverkip referring to the vandalised vehicles. He also said no record could be found of the 999 call reported at December's meeting as having been believed to have been made although there was no certainty. Sgt Dunsmore said that when officers don't turn up it's because they're fully occupied elsewhere. They're short on resources and transport. The force's budget has been cut by 25% and there are not the resources he'd like to see. Referring to a recent murder in Greenock he said 80% of community officers were in attendance at that crime. He said on many occasions there are outstanding calls in double figures and every effort is made to prioritise the calls into important and life-threatening situations. He apologised for the occasions when no officers attended. Some areas are busier with more serious things happening. The Inverkip and Wemyss Bay area is not particularly busy. But he stressed residents should call the police when they witness incidents or are concerned – they can do so anonymously – as high numbers of calls

from areas make senior officers focus more readily on that area. Sgt Dunsmore responded to questions and comments from members of the public.

Tom Campbell was then introduced to the meeting. He's Inverclyde Council's Social Protection Team Leader. He said there are substantial numbers of people involved in combating anti-social behaviour – there are 32 community wardens. The police can't do it all, he said. He has spoken to the British Transport Police and community police officers about incidents in Inverkip. His service has three CCTV vehicles and each warden has a body camera. The number for community wardens is **0800 0131 701**. The wardens work closely with the police and can gather evidence. The number of officers on board trains has increased, there is increased activity at the station and additional police and warden patrols in an effort to combat the problem of youths coming into Inverkip to drink and riot. Tom Campbell said the warden service could have a vehicle in the villages in 5 minutes. Other than a 999 call, the number for the police is **01475-492500**.

Sgt Dunsmore and Tom Campbell were thanked for their attendance at the meeting.

4. Proposed development at the Power Station site, Inverkip

An email was sent to members of Inverclyde Council's Planning Board saying the CC was trying to organise a public meeting so the views of residents may be heard on the application to build an Urban Village on the Power Station site. The email requested Board members, if the developer submitted a late application, to refuse to hear the application – as is their right.. Since the email was sent the secretary learned the application would not be heard at either the December or January meetings of the Board.

Email to Cllrs Dorrian, Nelson and Rebecchi asking if they had any advice about who else might be invited from Inverclyde Council to attend the January Business Meeting

Email from Cllr David Wilson, chairman of the Planning Board, reminding the CC the statutory consultation period has ended. He also said the Urban Village is part of Inverclyde Council's 2005 Local Plan. He added that the application has been held up in order to have further clarification of the roundabout to be built by the developers in Inverkip. The Board, when the application comes before it, will decide to approve or refuse. Cllr Wilson said he couldn't speculate on the outcome but because of the Local Plan a refusal would inevitably result in an appeal to the Reporter.

The secretary emailed a reply to say there is an understanding locally that the development will go ahead. But she said it was the projected high number of houses that appears to be troubling residents without a clear idea of improved infrastructure. She added that there has been such an expansion locally she believed there is a weariness about further development changing irrevocably the nature of the villages.

Cllr Wilson emailed a reply and said much of what was said was understandable but the battle had been lost when the site was designated for mixed use and not returned to green belt.

Community Councillors, in the run up to the meeting, had delivered many hundreds of leaflets to homes in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay outlining the current situation as regards the application by Scottish Power Generation Ltd at the site of Inverkip Power Station. (Thanks to Michael Lynch, secretary of the Ardgowan View Residents' Association for helping with deliveries in Wemyss Bay). The leaflet also outlined the particular concerns made known to the Community Council by local residents.

The discussion that followed included expressions of anger that the Local Plan – often held up as set in stone – can be amended when desired. Residents voiced other concerns that resources that are currently over-stretched will be overwhelmed by an influx of new houses. What plans are there for improved infrastructure was another question asked. People are leaving Inverkip because of the journey time out of Inverclyde. Road improvements mean little when all roads lead to the bottleneck of Greenock. Chairman Hugh Ritchie said the Community Council was listening to what residents had to say. Another questioner pondered what the attraction would be for incoming house-buyers moving to an under-resourced area with serious road problems and failing infrastructure with no jobs to attract incomers. Another resident said there are still houses unsold at the Marina development after 10 or 11 years. A member of the public said what the leaflet didn't mention was that travellers couldn't find parking spaces at the two local railways stations now, and when the proposed houses are occupied at least another additional 50 to 60 people could be looking for parking spaces. A resident said the discussion was focusing too much on the potentially higher numbers of houses, 640-780. His view was that 400 houses would have a big impact on the local area. Hugh Ritchie said the 400 referred to in the Local Plan 2005 had now been upped by planners who had indicated the site could sustain 780 houses, - but 640 would be the preferred number. Although the proposed development would take around 12

years to complete – with 60 odd houses being built per annum if approved – it was observed that would be 12 years of construction traffic, something the local area has become very tired of.

There was general acceptance the development would go ahead and that the battle would be to limit the number of houses and extract the maximum planning gain from the developers. All but one member of the public attending the meeting expressed objections, concerns and reservations. The one member of the public who supported the project was of the opinion Scottish Power needed the money to demolish the Power Station buildings and chimney. If not there was a fear the site would become a derelict eyesore.

5. Minutes of Business Meeting held on the 1st of December 2011.

Flooding in Beatock Place; Kip Avenue and Finnockbog Road

An email was sent by Community Councillor Telfer Ramage to Robert Graham at Inverclyde Council detailing the various flooding problems in the above areas. Telfer Ramage said he appreciated Robert Graham was fully aware of the situation affecting residents and was actively seeking solutions to the problem. However it is considered locally, he said, the problem had not been addressed in a timely manner and as time moves on the problem appears to have become much more serious. He asked Robert Graham to say what plans are afoot to address this very serious issue. He has received no reply to his email but will contact him again. The councillors will follow up this issue and it was agreed Inverclyde Council officers Robert Graham and Gordon Leitch would be invited to attend February's Business Meeting. The councillors will extend the invitation. Telfer Ramage said after recent heavy rain the level of water under the railways bridge at Beatock Place, Inverkip was totally unacceptable.

Flooding at the bottom of Finnockbog Road at the Brueacre Junction, Inverkip

Thanks to Cllrs Nelson and Rebecchi; Michael Lynch, Secretary of the Ardgowan View Residents' Association and Telfer Ramage for pursuing this matter, leading to the clearance of the blocked culvert on Network Rail's land at the bottom of the hill. Divers were required to clear the blockage. It has been agreed there will be a meeting in the New Year to investigate what can be done to prevent the flooding happening again.

The Minutes were proposed as accurate by Jean Anderson, seconded by Ron Potter.

6. Secretary's Report and Correspondence:

Email from Darren Spiers, the entertainer who performed in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay for the Christmas Tree Switch-On events, saying he had a great time at both venues

Email to Inverclyde Council with the information that Telfer Ramage has been appointed the CC's representative on the Inverkip Community Facilities Working Group

Email to the Wemyss Bay website updating details of Community Councillors and giving dates of meetings until June 2012. The same information was sent to IWbcc's website

Association of Scottish Community Councils Online Bulletin

Save Your Regional Park (SYRP) December Newsletter and a request for annual subscription

Forwarded by SYRP an online poll asking whether more wind turbines should be built to cut carbon emissions

An email from Maggie Paterson, Inverclyde Council's Lead Officer, Community Learning and Development, saying the Council did not seem to have a signed copy of IWbcc's Constitution. Two copies of the Constitution – not identified as IWbcc's - were signed by Cllr Ahlfeld and handed to chairman Hugh Ritchie at the meeting held on Tuesday 13th December 2011 at the Municipal Buildings,

The secretary emailed Ms Paterson to say Cllr Ahlfeld had signed where the CC chairman should sign and sent the IWbcc Constitution document as an attachment, asking the Councillor to sign two copies appropriately, return to the CC and a signed copy would be returned to Inverclyde Council. Having heard nothing further the secretary presented two copies of the Constitution to the chairman and treasurer who signed the copies as did the secretary. She said she would post the copies to Ms Paterson for Cllr Ahlfeld's signature.

A letter from Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, thanking the CC for taking part in the preparation of the National Park's first local plan and enclosing a survey as to the experience of participating in the preparation process

From Inverclyde Council – the Agenda for the meeting of the Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee on the 17th January 2012 – the agenda includes the item – A & B Class Roads Speed Limit Review: Cardwell Garden Centre to Bankfoot Roundabout – current speed limit 60 – recommendation is to reduce the limit to 50mph. **Consultation with Transport Scotland highlighted it is considering changing the speed limit on the A78 past Inverkip**

From Inverclyde Council – an update to the Agenda for the meeting of the Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee on the 17th January 2012

From Inverclyde Council – Agenda for a meeting of the Regeneration Committee to be held on the 19th January 2012. The meeting will include a report by the Corporate Director Regeneration & Environment updating the Committee and seeking agreement on a number of issues relating to the community facility projects at Gibshill, Inverkip and Clune Park

From Inverclyde Council – a report – Operating Model Review for the Special Meeting of The Inverclyde Council on 15th December 2011

From Inverclyde Council – Round 2 Applications 2011-12 for Grants to Voluntary Organisations – including an application by Inverkip Community Enterprise for £1000 for the upgrade of entrance and railings

From Inverclyde Council – Inverclyde Community Health & Care Partnership Sub-Committee meeting on the 12th of January 2012

From the Greenock Telegraph – 7th December 2011 – report of a call by Cllr Dorrian for something to be done at the A78/Inverkip Main Street junction following another crash

Email forwarded by Cllr Nelson - to IC officials following the gale damage to the Pavilion in Inverkip asking about a timescale to survey the building; asking if the building is insured and what alternative provision for users of the Pavilion may be provided. Jean Anderson and Eileen Virtue reported Inverkip Community Enterprise was handling the matter. The Pavilion had been condemned and demolition would take place within days. They reported too that alternative venues had been found in Inverkip for the groups that had used the Pavilion.

7. Treasurer's Report

Ron Potter said the account balance is £380.63, with three cheques still to be presented. He said the second part of the Community Council's grant had not been paid and there had been delays for the last 3 years. Cllr Dorrian said he should write to Inverclyde Council asking that the money be paid. Ron Potter replied he didn't see why he should have to write to IC to beg for money that is due to the CC. However, Cllr Dorrian urged him to do so, and asked that the 3 councillors be copied into the email. Ron Potter said he would.

8. Planning Matters

Wemyss Bay - Ferry Terminal – external redecoration – withdrawn

Inverkip – Cornalees Farm, Dunrod Road – erection of a 20KW wind turbine

By Gourack - land at Underheugh, Ardgowan Estate – erection of three 20KW wind turbines

Inverkip – Ardgowan House, Main Road – removal of remaining structure and fabric from the roof of the detached chapel to the north of Ardgowan House

The application for the erection of two 20KW wind turbines on 15m masts at Murdieston Farm, Old Largs Road, Greenock has been granted

Email from TGC renewables – The Green Company – to give information about a proposed development of two 100KW Wind Turbines (37m to hub) at Leitchland Farm, Greenock. The proposal is currently at the pre-application stage. The Company would be happy to attend a CC meeting to discuss the application further

Email from secretary to The Green Company asking if the proposed turbines would be within Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

Email from Peter McLaren of The Green Company saying the turbines are some 800 metres outwith the Park boundary.

The secretary said currently there is a rash of wind turbine applications. It was observed the CC still hadn't formulated a policy on windfarms to replace the one held by the previous CC. It was agreed Peter McLaren and Nigel Willis of Save Your Regional Park campaign would be invited to attend the March meeting, each to give a 10 minute presentation. Following the presentations a policy decision would be made at the April Business Meeting.

9. Date and time of next meeting – Thursday 2nd of February 2012 in Wemyss Bay Primary School at 7pm

10. Any other business

Through buses not stopping on the A78 between IBM and Wemyss Bay:

This thorny issue returned to the meeting. The 906 service is not allowed to stop between IBM and Wemyss Bay, but the Ayr to Greenock service has a timing point at Kip Marina a member of the public said. It seems – as discussed at previous meetings – that following a complaint/complaints a police officer decided that stopping buses were dangerous. It was pointed out by a local resident that bin lorries are permitted to stop at exactly the same places as the former bus stops on the A78 and the vehicles of residents on the A78 have to stop and turn on the road. Drivers on the 906 service are fined if they stop between IBM and Wemyss Bay. It was agreed it was ridiculous there wasn't a bus stop between those two points and that some sense should be introduced into the matter. The councillors believed the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport would review putting in bus stops. Cllr Rebecchi said if the speed limit was reduced to 40mph then the buses should be able to stop. However, he said he would pursue the matter

Poor street lighting in Inverkip:

Two Inverkip residents complained of poor lighting in two separate areas – they said there was poor lighting on the bridge and the light at the Inverkip Main Street entrance to the bridge was poor. Also the area of parking at the bottom of Station Road beside the school was very badly lit. One resident reported to IC the light on the lamp standard beside the letterbox was out, followed shortly by removal of the lamp standard! Cllr Rebecchi said he would investigate the situation

May meeting:

The secretary confirmed with the Inverclyde councillors that the date of the May meeting – Thursday 3rd – was in fact the date of the local elections. They confirmed this was so. The secretary undertook to find an alternative venue or date for the meeting as Inverkip Primary School will be used as a polling station on that date

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.10pm.