

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Business Meeting held on Thursday 5th November 2009 in Wemyss Bay Primary School

Present: Hugh Ritchie; Ron Potter; Harold McPherson; Liz Roders and Lynne Chambers

Apologies: Brian McArthur; Cllr Innes Nelson and Cllr Ciano Rebecchi

In attendance: Cllr Gerry Dorrian; David Adams; Allan Marsh; Penelope Hof and Brian Blacklaw

3. Police Matters:

There were no officers in attendance

4. Presentation by Inverclyde Council Housing Strategy Officer Asa Brooks on the Council's Local Housing Strategy 2011-2016

Asa Brooks was welcomed by Hugh Ritchie.

Asa Brooks explained that although housing is owned and provided by a variety of different people and organisations, a local housing strategy helps co-ordinate their activities so that wider housing problems are tackled. The Council will spend two years working with communities and organisations to create the strategy. He also said there are major changes in housing policy. Ron Potter said the problem with required additional housing is that major builders don't always fit in with what's required. Housing for first time buyers is falling by the wayside. Riverside Homes has a major section of refurbishment still to be accomplished. Inverclyde Council doesn't seem able to give additional funding to housing associations and for housing regeneration, first time buyers and partial purchase. How can Inverclyde Council or the government assist?

Asa Brooks said the line from the Council is that the future emphasis for new development will be east Greenock and Port Glasgow. Too much development went to the west of Inverclyde – the plan is to sustain in the west and increase development in the east. There are restrictions on funding coming into Inverclyde – the government brought forward money for affordable housing but the recession has taken its toll. Hugh Ritchie said that while in favour of affordable housing and not wishing to sound like a 'NIMBY' he does feel that affordable housing shouldn't be scattered around to affect people who have put a lot of money into their housing. He is concerned about the ageing population and the availability of sheltered housing. Allan Marsh said there is insufficient development of brown field sites – the sites are neglected, no industry is coming in so why not build there, he asked. Ron Potter said there are affordable schemes in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay – Main Street in Inverkip and old SSHA houses in Wemyss Bay. David Adams said only a couple of them remained. The rights and wrongs of Housing Associations were discussed by Hugh Ritchie and Ron Potter.

Asa Brooks said there were too many affordable houses, but admitted the quality of the social housing made them unwanted so they are to be demolished. The Scottish Government is prioritising Inverclyde – the second highest funding in Scotland is intended for affordable housing in Port Glasgow and east Greenock. The affordable housing will be dwellings of one, two and three bedroom houses. Allan Marsh said there are some good estates with a mix of houses – some bought by the householders and others not.

Ron Potter said there are two new areas of mixed housing at Branchton and the old ABC flats.

And Gerry Dorrian said there was a development in Drumfrochar Road of buildings for industrial use and social needs flats

Lynne Chambers asked if the area the Community Council represented could be discussed. Asa Brooks was told of concerns about over-development in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay and a total lack of infrastructure upgrade. One matter of great concern is the proposed housing development at the Scottish Power site, where there is talk of 780 houses, though Asa Brooks said he believed the number was more likely to be between 550-650 houses. The secretary said she'd been told by Scottish Power's consultants that Inverclyde Council had informed them there was no need for new school building as demographics would take care of the numbers. Penelope Hof said the schools were full – at Inverkip the playground would be lost completely if there was a further extension of the school.

Cllr Dorrian said there would be a five year gap to ease the houses in and that falling school rolls would mean the current provision will be sufficient. However, it would appear family houses are to be built at the site. And Brian Blacklaw said there would still be 1.5 cars per house on the A78. Build more homes – is water a problem? No says Scottish Water. Any problem with the roads? No say Scottish Transport and the Roads department of Inverclyde Council. The planners are talking through a hole in their heads he said – the planners ask and they're told 'no objection'. Cllr Dorrian said Scottish Water had to pay £280,000 to rectify their mistake in Inverkip. A mistake that had been foreseen it was observed!

Asa Brooks asked if housing was one of the reasons that some people decide to leave Inverclyde. He was told the Community Council had heard that people are leaving Inverclyde – and Inverkip in particular – because of the roads, not houses, and the time it takes to clear Inverclyde to get on to the M8 motorway.

He asked if the CC would be interested in taking part in further consultation and was told it would. He was thanked for his attendance

5. Minutes of Business Meeting held on Thursday 1st October 2009. Matters arising:

Following Louise McVey of Inverclyde Council's Safer Communities Services presentation at October's Business Meeting, the secretary corresponded with her colleague Ian Hanley seeking information about the creation of Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Ian Hanley said he had been contacted by Cliff Lyons of Inverkip who is keen to establish a Neighbourhood Watch and would like to hold an open meeting at the Pavilion, Inverkip. The secretary wrote to say the CC is happy for that to go ahead

Footpath Access: the Secretary had responded to negative comments on info@inverkip.com re the Community Council and the footpath.

Ron Potter reported as follows – a complaint had been lodged with the Scottish Local Authority Ombudsman about Inverclyde Council's handling of the footpath access matter but the Ombudsman is not minded to take any action.

Ron Potter had a full discussion with two farmers who advised there was no right of way across the farmland as there was a working dairy farm and because of potential injuries to people by the beasts no access was allowed. They did construct a hard path for carts and farm implements from the farmstead to the gate leading to Everton Farm that could show on OS maps as a 'track'. The farmstead was vacated in 1987. An approach to Inverclyde Council revealed that Spey Road was adopted by the Council in 2000. There was extensive discussion and Ron Potter continues to pursue one more avenue.

Subscription to Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society – the secretary was asked to discover details and found the annual payment for Community Councils to be a member of ScotWays is £20. It was agreed the CC would pay the membership fee.

The Point Inverkip – email to local resident who thought overhanging branches should be removed to enhance the view – the secretary wrote to say the work was in hand

Ron Potter asked if there was any progress on the painting of the goalposts in Inverkip, being organised by Cllr Rebecchi. There appears to be no sign of the painting being undertaken, but it was agreed the job is weather-dependent and therefore it was not surprising - given the recent poor weather - the job had not been started

Rubbish bin at Brueacre recycling centre – Ron Potter said the bin was more often over-flowing than empty. Cllr Dorrian will pursue

The Minutes were proposed as accurate by Ron Potter and seconded by Harold McPherson

6. Secretary's Report and Correspondence

From Inverclyde Council – papers for Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee – Wemyss Bay Woodland is to receive a Local Nature Reserve designation

From IC – as above – Provision of street names – five cul-de-sacs at Hill Farm, Inverkip

From IC – papers for Regeneration & Resource Committee – Summer Playschemes 2009 – this matter was discussed at a recent CC Business Meeting when Cliff Lyons of Inverkip Community Enterprise and Inverkip Pavilion said the £5000 paid to them for a summer playscheme was instantly returned to the Council. Cllr Rebecchi confirmed that was the way it worked in some circumstances. However these papers state: the Voluntary Management Committees at Auchmountain, Clune Park and Inverkip apply to the Council's Grants to Voluntary Organisations for money to operate the playschemes. The Council then work with the Committees to run a playscheme in the associated areas. Very interesting!

From IC – papers for Regeneration Committee – Community Council Review Update. Ron Potter said there was a 12 week consultation period starting about now regarding redrawing CC boundaries in Inverclyde. The consultation document returns to Inverclyde Council for 4 weeks – then out for public consultation again for another 12

weeks. Back to IC for 4 weeks and then on to the Scottish Government. It will be 9 months at least until the outcome is known. At least, said Cllr Dorrian, this is not a matter that affects Inverkip and Wemyss Bay Community Council where the boundaries are agreed

From IC – cheque for £530.00 – annual grant payment – passed to the Treasurer

From IC – report by Corporate Director, Regeneration and Resources – revocation of weight restriction on Millhouse Road Bridge, Inverkip

From IC – Louise McVey, Safer Communities – details of an event to be held on Saturday 28th November – members to receive details by email

From IC – papers for Education and Lifelong Learning Committee – Review of Admissions and Placing Request Policy of Inverclyde Council plus draft Consultative Document

From the Scottish Government – Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals – Ladyland Moor, Kilbirnie – a Public Local Inquiry is to be held

From the Scottish Government – as above – site to North of Baidland Hill, Dalry – notice of pre-enquiry meeting

The Scottish Government – details of The National Conversation – Port Glasgow Monday 16th November at the Town Hall, 7-8pm – details to members by email

From the Information Commissioner's Office – renewal of Data Protection fee

From the Association of Scottish Community Councils an election ballot form.

Despite an extension for ballots to be returned until the 12th November because of the Royal Mail dispute – rather than the original 31st of October – the secretary was surprised to learn from the ASCC on the 31st of October the results of the ballot.

When she inquired as to what had happened to the time extension the reply was very complex and it was agreed it appeared too late for the CC to vote!

From Save Your Regional Park campaign – details of a presentation on Scotland's Planning Policy on 11th November – details to members by email

Letter from The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland with details of resources it offers community councils – to be considered further

From Firth of Clyde Forum – details of its annual conference and newsletter

From North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority – annual report 2008/09 and newsletter

From Kirsty Donnelly, Wemyss Bay Community Association – an inquiry whether the CC would be arranging the Christmas entertainer for both communities. Ron Potter said he would contact the entertainer for Friday 4th December's switch-on

From Lightways (Contractors) Ltd – details of festive lighting

7. Treasurer's Report: Ron Potter was gratified at last to receive the outstanding cheque for £530 from Inverclyde Council. The current balance of the CC account is £1492.52

The members of the CC approved Acting/Chairman Hugh Ritchie becoming a signatory for cheques following former chairman Innes Nelson's resignation

8. Planning

Inverkip – green waste application – Hugh Ritchie explained that an application had been lodged with Inverclyde Council for a plant to treat green waste and its conversion to compost at Scottish Water's redundant tank farm in Inverkip. He spoke to a planner and discovered that effectively all of IC's green waste – 8,000 tons per

annum – could be composted at this plant and about 4.5 trucks per week would ship waste in and out. However, the tank can hold 20,000 tons and that would leave a further 12,000 tons to be processed from other sources. Hugh Ritchie said outlay for the application is around half a million pounds so a fairly major project is intended. Cllr Dorrian asked was it not intended the compost be bagged and taken away, and said it would have to be treated before it could go anywhere. He said currently it was taken to Cumbernauld. Hugh Ritchie said there were concerns about run-off and smell but IC says the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency would pronounce on these matters. He asked if local residents would want a project of this kind at the back of Inverkip. It was not clear what route the 10 ton lorries would take to the site. Concern was expressed if IC intended to process its green waste at the proposed site it might be more inclined to approve the application and there may be a conflict of interest. Cllr Dorrian said different departments were involved. The secretary said she had understood the applicant, Alistair McIntyre, would contact the CC better to explain the application. No contact had been made. Cllr Dorrian said he knew Mr McIntyre and would ask him to get in touch with the CC. Allan Marsh thought the green waste processing plant was a good idea. Hugh Ritchie confirmed the CC had lodged its objection and comments with IC but Cllr Dorrian recommended the CC should await the full planning application. Ron Potter said he understood once the plant was up and running – should permission be granted – it was intended the heat generated by the composting would be used to heat glasshouses. Concern was expressed that IC planning department isn't informed enough to deal with new applications of this kind, and the secretary observed in the past members of the CC had become more expert in certain matters than officers of the Council. When Cllr Dorrian demurred Brian Blacklaw said if it isn't the remit of IC to work on behalf of the residents of Inverclyde there was something wrong with the remit.

Inverkip – 17 Magpie Crescent – extension to house

Inverkip – The Ardgowan Estate, Ardgowan House – Application for Certificate of Lawfulness of mansion house with ancillary activities - refused

Inverkip – 2 Daff Avenue – installation of replacement windows

Inverkip – Burnside House, Main Street – alterations to form patio doors and Juliet balcony at rear together with installation of an external flue

Inverkip – Unit 1, Kip Marina – display of illuminated fascia signs (in retrospect)

Inverkip – Unit 2, Kip Marina – display of illuminated fascia sign (in retrospect)

Inverkip – Unit 2, Kip Marina – use of retail unit as café (in retrospect)

Inverkip – Plot 155, Harbourside – alterations to house type to form library

Wemyss Bay – 28 Burns Drive – alterations and extension to dwellinghouse incorporating new roof

Planning appeals

Wemyss Bay – Leapmoor Drive – appeal by applicant to the Scottish Government against the refusal by Inverclyde Council to permit the erection of a dwellinghouse at land to the south of 38 Leapmoor Drive – the Reporter dismissed the appeal and refused planning permission

Inverkip – 14 Ardoch Drive – appeal by applicant to the Scottish Government against the refusal by Inverclyde Council to permit the construction of decking in a rear garden (in retrospect), the Reporter dismissed the appeal and refused planning permission

Brian Blacklaw drew the attention of those attending the Business Meeting to a consultation being undertaken by the Scottish Government on high hedges and nuisance vegetation. His particular interest, and of the residents living in The Kyles near to Inverkip Station, is trees that bear Tree Protection Orders passed 30 years ago, but no maintenance is being carried out on them– they fall into the ‘nuisance vegetation’ category. Currently there is no legal way to deal with a 50 foot high tree but one can object to a 2 metre fence. Brian Blacklaw said more people in Scotland than in England had responded to the consultation and observations may be made on the Scottish Government’s website until the 13th of November

9. Inverkip – land swap deal:

On 3rd of October the CC received an invitation from IC to attend an event to mark the land swap in Inverkip - from Stewart Milne to Inverclyde Council. The first instinct by members, given the history of this issue, was to refuse the invitation. However on further consideration it was decided the treasurer and secretary would attend the event as it was accepted by some the CC had to move on. However illness and a medical appointment intervened and the secretary made apologies to IC. However, on reading newspaper accounts of the event detailing what Stewart Milne Homes thought the land could be used for, the CC sent a letter to IC Chief Executive John Mundell asking just when the CC – the local statutory body – would have been consulted on this matter. A lengthy letter was received from the Chief Executive but the CC decided not to reply to it as it was felt to be an unsatisfactory response

10. Road Safety A78T:

Hugh Ritchie reported on meetings the CC had with MSPs. Hugh Ritchie and Lynne Chambers met with Duncan McNeil to consider how best to progress the road safety issue further to Transport Scotland’s Report. A further meeting was held with Hugh Ritchie and Harold McPherson and Stuart McMillan and Cllr Nelson. All appear to be agreed Junction 1 (the southerly junction) and Junction 2 (the Marina junction) are satisfactory. However Junction 3 (the Sainsbury junction) is considered unsafe by all because of the poor visibility of oncoming traffic. Harold McPherson made the interesting suggestion of traffic leaving the A78 at Junction 3 (the Sainsbury junction) and entering the A78 only at Junction 1, (the southerly junction). Penelope Hof thought in that case Main Street, Inverkip, would have to be one way. Cllr Dorrian said he’d suggested that 2 years ago. David Adams suggested a speed limit of 40 mph but it was agreed vehicles seldom reached the speed limit of 60 mph. The roundabout at Junction 3 included in the Traffic Assessment for the Power Station site was dismissed at this time as not likely, certainly in the short term. Penelope Hof thought the slip road at Junction 3 should be taken away altogether so that cars exited straight off the A78. Lynne Chambers said the CC had agreed – if traffic lights and roundabouts have been dismissed as not viable - the bottom line was visibility at Junction 3 has to be improved. The pressure has to be kept up. Stuart McMillan will return to Scottish Transport with the CC’s representations and suggested a public meeting if Scottish Transport would agree to attend. Hugh Ritchie said the CC would welcome that.

11. Date and time of next meeting (Thursday 3rd December 2009 at Inverkip Primary School)

12. Any other business

The secretary said – as the CC was having trouble for various reasons to find representatives to attend the Remembrance Day services in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay - that Cllr Innes Nelson was prepared to lay the wreath on behalf of the CC at Inverkip. His offer was gratefully accepted and it was confirmed Lynne Chambers would attend the Wemyss Bay service

The secretary asked what recommendations the CC could make for future venues for Business Meetings and it was agreed for the next six months meetings would alternate between Inverkip and Wemyss Bay primary schools.

Allan Marsh, representing Hill Farm Residents' Association, said drains on Finnockbog Road that had been taken up and destroyed by Stewart Milne Homes from behind residents' homes in Cullen Crescent had led to water gathering during the recent heavy rain. He said pipes from residents' gardens now run onto the pavement. He is concerned as the weather grows colder ice may form and present a hazard. It was not an extensive remedial job and he will take the matter up with Stewart Milne – however he wished the problem to be minuted. Allan Marsh also said he had received numerous complaints from residents about speeding on Finnockbog Road. The secretary said there had been some reduction in speed following police with speed guns charging motorists but would alert the police again to the ongoing problem. He said concern had also been expressed about poor visibility on the Brueacre junction slip roads. Ron Potter said this matter had been taken up with Amey already but they claimed there was no power source for lighting to be connected to. However, he pointed out there were lights on Finnockbog Road that surely could be used. It was also noted cats' eyes are missing at the run off from the A78 – and an already difficult junction made more difficult. The secretary will write to Amey on these issues.

David Adams, a member of the former Wemyss Bay Community Council, has expressed an interest in joining IWGCC and will write to the secretary to make an application.

There being no further business the Meeting was closed at 9.30pm.