

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Business Meeting Held on Thursday 6th April 2006 in the Inverkip Hotel

Present: Innes Nelson (chairman); Ron Potter (vice chairman); Cliff Lyons (treasurer); Paul Maloney; Hugh Ritchie and Lynne Chambers (secretary)

Apologies: Harold McPherson

In attendance: Cllr Eric Forbes; Sergeant Norrie Barnes; Alan Cumming; Jim McIntosh; Fran McIntosh; Julia McLellan; Isabel Hunter; Caroline Wallace; Alison Nugent; Jean Anderson; Andy Lynch; William McFarlane; C Bashille; E Newlands; Ian Hannah, Marie Sweeney

3. Police Matters: Sergeant Norrie Barnes, Area Policing, attended and presented the following figures for the period March 1st to April 6th 2006:

57 complaints for the area – 26 from Inverkip

5 reports of disturbances – 3 Inverkip

4 suspect persons – 1 Inverkip

1 sexual offence – 1 Inverkip

2 frauds – 2 Inverkip

6 cases of dishonesty - 4 Inverkip

The rest of the calls are made up of assisting members of the public, abandoned vehicles, other traffic matters, vehicle escorts and sudden deaths.

A total of 20 crime reports were raised reporting actual crimes committed. Broken down as follows:

Wilful fireraising – 1 Inverkip

Vandalism – 7 – 5 Inverkip

Assault – 3 Wemyss Bay

Breach of the Peace – 1 Inverkip

MDA poss – 1 Wemyss Bay

Theft by housebreaking – 2 Inverkip

Housbreaking w.i. – 1 Wemyss Bay

Theft from motor vehicle – 1 Inverkip

Thefts – 2 – 1 – Inverkip

RTA section 3 – 1 Inverkip

Of the twenty reports taken 4 persons have been reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

Sgt Barnes provided further information – kept on file by secretary. Sgt Barnes also reported the community WPC Lesley Gibson had moved to Paisley. Sgt Barnes said interviews will be held in the very near future for an officer who would be permanent in the area. Innes Nelson said the problem is that the police arrive after an incident is over.

Caroline Wallace reported her husband had been attacked last Saturday evening returning from the Inverkip Hotel. A can had been thrown at his head, and the ring pull had sliced his face which required stitches. His attackers then took photographs using their mobile phones. Sgt Barnes said there had been a change in the call system – there is now no control room in Greenock. Cllr Forbes said it was time to get the CCTV van down to the area, though members of the Community Council felt permanent CCTV cameras should be installed. The Community Council was told that loiterers are still evident in Wemyss Bay, now using the side entrance to the Stonefield flats as well as hanging about outside the off-sales premises. It was reported a local 13 year old boy in Inverkip had been told by his mother he could do anything he wanted. WPC Gibson had given him a warning and it was felt he was on his way to receiving an ASBO. It was regretted her experience and knowledge had been lost to the area, and that there is no resident officer. However Cllr Forbes said it was the nature of policing. Time and again it was said parents had to take responsibility for their children's behaviour, and the denial often expressed by parents as to the possibility of their young people taking part in antisocial behaviour had to be overcome. Hugh Ritchie claimed some residents were fearful of going out in the evening because of the problem of gangs of youths. Cllr Forbes said he would speak to the police divisional commander to discuss policing matters in the area.

4. Presentation by Inverclyde Council's Problem Solving/Antisocial Behaviour

Helpline Unit – Ian Hannah and Marie Sweeney gave a presentation about the work of the unit, particularly timely given the previous discussion. They urged residents to report instances of antisocial behaviour to them, saying even the smallest detail may add to information they hold and could help their variously skilled team to build up a picture of problems in particular areas and refer them to the appropriate agencies. The Unit has only five members to cover Inverclyde and doesn't have 24/7 telephone staffing at present.

5. Minutes of Business Meeting held on the 2nd of March 2006 – Matters arising:

Bankfoot roundabout: Cllr Forbes has asked for a stage 4 audit of the roundabout following discussion at last month's business meeting, and said police too have expressed concern about the camber. As to the sponsorship of the roundabout and the expected policy statement by the Scottish Executive in March, well that didn't seem about to happen. However, Cllr Forbes said, if some proposal was laid before them it may well be considered.

Seaview Café: Graham Scott of Wemyss Bay was unable to attend the meeting but had dropped off a note containing observations. He said acting on Cllr Forbes' advice he had contacted the environmental health department. An inspector called on April the 1st, the latest theme night at the café, noted the loud music and held a discussion with café management. He has passed on a report to his department and will make another visit, this time making noise tests from adjacent residential property.

Residents' parking on A78 at Wemyss Bay: Graham Scott reported confirmation of Cllr Forbes' information that a feasibility study will be carried out on parking at the railway station and pier area 'for ferry and rail travellers' by Inverclyde Council's

planning and traffic management department. However, Graham Scott said, the position of others in Wemyss Bay is that the consultants should be asked about any potential for positive spin off for residents within the proximity. Cllr Forbes said the consultants will speak to locals. Innes Nelson asked if the consultants would be speaking to the Community Council about parking in Wemyss Bay. Cllr Forbes said he would ask them to get in touch.

Recycling points: Ron Potter asked Cllr Forbes if there was any progress on the provision of bins at recycling points. Cllr Forbes said an Inverclyde-wide policy is still awaited.

The Minutes of the Business Meeting held on the 2nd of March 2006 were approved.

6. Proposed bridge at Inverkip Station: Cliff Lyons had gathered together documents, copies of which were given to Community Council members and residents attending the meeting, as he made a detailed presentation about the proposed bridge – attached to the Stewart Milne planning application – at Inverkip station. It would appear that his claims about the proposed bridge – dismissed at the Public Local Inquiry – are proving to be valid. During discussion that followed the presentation it was claimed Inverclyde Council should have undertaken or ordered feasibility studies before the release of fields 8 and 9. Cllr Forbes said Inverclyde Council could not do that and it was not planning procedure to ask developers to undertake such studies. Cllr Forbes said he was unable to answer further questions because of his position on Inverclyde Council's planning committee. Jim McIntosh of the Kyles Residents' Association reported Network Rail said an underpass at the site was a 'no go', moving the bridge was not suitable and Network Rail will not adopt maintenance of the proposed bridge. Cllr Forbes retorted that all information would be laid before the planning committee, but that decisions on maintenance were not for the planning committee. There followed exchanges between Jim McIntosh and Cllr Forbes. Fran McIntosh claimed Head of Planning Services Fraser Williamson said SMG was 'ready to run'. Cllr Forbes said Fraser Williamson didn't speak for him. Cliff Lyons said his letter to Inverclyde Council's Chief Executive re maintenance had been passed to Head of Planning Services. Cllr Forbes explained that was because Fraser Williamson was a channel to SMG. He repeated the issue of maintenance costs will come with the planning application. If Inverclyde Council refused permission for the SMG application and at appeal the Scottish Executive overruled the decision, it would include conditions on bridge maintenance. The Reporter can't ask Inverclyde Council to spend money. On the question of ownership of the bridge, Innes Nelson said either Inverclyde Council or Network Rail has to own the bridge. Cllr Forbes agreed. Ron Potter asked Cllr Forbes if he would be on the committee that would make decisions about maintenance of the bridge and if so, how would be decide. Cllr Forbes repeated – as at previous meetings – he has concerns about the proposed bridge. Jim McIntosh said the main concern of Kyles Residents is the proximity of the proposed bridge – 18.75 metres from their property - and that Cllr Forbes had voted down a proposed buffer zone on the fields. Cllr Forbes reiterated that he couldn't discuss the matter. Cliff Lyons said it was lunacy to expect Inverclyde Council to fund the bridge and place the burden on all Inverclyde council tax payers.

Parking at the station was then discussed. Innes Nelson noted that Cliff Lyons had presented facts and due weight must be given to them. Jim McIntosh said the release of fields 8 and 9 had been a political decision. Head of Planning Services had been against the release of fields 8 and 9. Cllr Forbes said the planning committee makes decisions on planning matters. The Head of Planning Services makes recommendations and offers advice, but the committee can reject that advice. If there's an appeal, then the Reporter makes the decision. Cllr Forbes, as an illustration, said Fraser Williamson had recommended the planning application at Bridgend in Inverkip be approved. The Planning Committee refused the application but the Reporter granted it on appeal. Ron Potter said he has a problem with the planning committee not taking professional advice. Cllr Forbes said sometimes the planning committee agrees with the planners, sometimes it doesn't, and agreed the committee didn't take the professional advice on the decisions about fields 8 and 9. Jim McIntosh said the committee had also ignored a thousand strong petition from the residents of Inverkip. Caroline Wallace, who hadn't attended a business meeting before, expressed surprise councillors voted against the wishes of the people they represented. Cllr Forbes said he voted against local wishes on this issue as is documented. When asked if the SMG application would indeed be submitted in May, Cllr Forbes said it was in the balance.

7. Community facilities: Lynne Chambers reported that following the Community Council's submission to Head of Planning Services re potential planning gain stating a community centre was top of the list, Fraser Williamson had sought answers to the following questions – is the Community Council's preference for any building to be located within the site of the current planning application; if any other site elsewhere in the village were to be available would such a location be acceptable and once any building were to be completed had consideration been given to the responsibility for the day to day running and management of such a complex and its repair and maintenance. Lynne Chambers said that after an additional meeting the Community Council had decided to answer that yes, the preferred site would be on the planning application area; that another site would be considered and the establishment of some kind of trust is being considered for the running of such a centre. It was agreed that if a trust is to be established there would be more access to funds, working towards charitable status. She added that information from Wemyss Bay Community Association on the running of their centre showed the centre is owned by Inverclyde Council to whom no rent is paid. Heating and lighting bills and some maintenance is paid for from lets, and the centre is used constantly. Each group using the centre holds a key as do around three members of the Community Association. The meeting was attended by Alison Nugent and a colleague from Kip Nippers who, however, said they were not attending in that capacity. Alison Nugent reported the recent establishment of a group calling itself ICE (Inverkip Community Enterprise) which will be looking for private and public sector funding for a community hall. She said their preferred site was where the pavilion now stands. An interim committee has been established and it is planned to hold a public meeting to gauge local support for the venture. They are drawing up a constitution and want to work in tandem with the Community Council. Ron Potter expressed concern that if SMG

learned of a group seeking other funding it might reduce a potential contribution. The group has confirmed that the Dalriada site – another suggested location - is indeed owned by Ardgowan Estates. Cllr Forbes declared he thought all should pull together and that ICE should work away seeking information. He also said the new extension at Inverkip Primary School – while he could make no promises about the cost of lets – would be isolated from the school building. Innes Nelson said it would be much better if ground for a community centre could be owned. Would Inverclyde Council have money to buy land from Ardgowan Estates for the community? Cllr Forbes said he would have to find out. Any money for Inverkip or Wemyss Bay would have to come from the Council's 'big pot', as the area is not eligible for ring fenced funds for deprived areas. There were various proposals as to how the relationship between the Community Council and ICE should be formed. Innes Nelson felt there should be an additional meeting to look at all the options. Alison Nugent agreed to liaise with Lynne Chambers for the organisation of such a meeting. Hugh Ritchie asked if Alison Nugent would make a presentation to the Community Council and it was considered June might be an appropriate time.

8. Secretary's Report and Correspondence:

Letter from Inverclyde Council's Head of Performance Management and Policy Development Brian Purdie, saying that without the assurances requested by the Council it could not agree to the proposal that any part of the Community Council's grant be used for donations to the Inverkip and Wemyss Bay newsletters. A further response is to be considered

Letter from Brian Purdie – as above – enclosing a cheque for £1179.60 in respect of the Community Council's 2005/06 grant, less £50.40 in respect of the insurance premium. The funds are being paid following approval of the Community Council's financial records for 2004/05

Letter from the Scottish Executive thanking the Community Council for responding to their Discussion Paper – “What can we do to help community councils fulfil their role?”
Letter from Inverclyde Council inquiring if the Community Council would be interested in a consultation session on Core Paths Planning. It was decided the Access Officer should be invited to June's business meeting.

Letter from the Local Government Boundary Commission setting out the new electoral arrangements in Inverclyde

Letter from Scottish Water telling the Community Council how it is delivering for the people of Scotland

Letter from The Local Channel offering a free website for the Community Council

Letter from the Forestry Commission Scotland seeking submissions to their second consultation on a review of Scottish forestry strategy

Inverclyde Elderly Forum newsletter

Newsletter from the Association of Scottish Community Councils

Letter from the Scottish Executive seeking a response to their consultation on the strategy for a Scotland with an ageing population

Letter to Head of Planning Services at Inverclyde Council saying the Community Council would be in touch as soon as possible with decisions re planning gain

9. Treasurer's report: Cliff Lyons confirmed the receipt of the grant cheque, as above. He said bookkeeping procedures had changed and he would seek advice from Inverclyde Council. He reported the account balance as £1634.85 with some small bills to pay

10. Planning matters:

Inverkip - Innes Nelson reported he had received a letter stating the Scottish Executive's decision to uphold on appeal the planning application for the construction of flats at Bridgend. Cllr Forbes said the permission was given on the condition existing cottages were brought up to standard. Innes Nelson questioned what standard, as he understood some recent work at Bridgend had been cosmetic. Cllr Forbes said work would be to an established standard. The Community Council recorded its disappointment that the Scottish Executive has seen fit to grant the application.

Inverkip - Dismissal by the Reporter of a planning appeal re the erection of a house at Finnockbog Road, between Seafield and Tall Trees, Inverkip

Inverkip – 2 Aberdour Place – application for the erection of conservatory

Wemyss Bay – Garden Flat, North Lodge – extension to garden flat

Wemyss Bay – 12 Ryan Road – erection of a garage

Wemyss Bay – 5 Burns Drive – erection of a rear conservatory

Wemyss Bay -17 Leapmoor Drive – formation of two storey extension

Wemyss Bay – The Garage, Shore Road – replacement windows and doors (in retrospect)

Inverkip – 72 Harbourside – erection of garden shed (in retrospect)

11. Date and time of next meeting – Thursday 4th May 2006

12. Any other business: Alan Cumming reported the Roman Bridge in Inverkip has been fenced off

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10.45pm