

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 6th December 2007 in the Inverkip Hotel at 7.30pm

Present: Innes Nelson; Hugh Ritchie; Ron Potter; Harold McPherson; Brian McArthur and Lynne Chambers

Apologies: Liz Roders; Cllrs Dorrian, Ferguson and Rebecchi and Sgt Campbell Crawford

In Attendance: Willie Wilson, Inverclyde Council's Community Services Manager; PC Jane Perratt; PC Billy Gray; Isabel Hunter; N. Cupples; W. Gavigan; David Fotheringham, Inverclyde News; Telfer Ramage; Derek Cramman; Frank Campbell and Brian Blacklaw

3. Police Matters

9 crimes were reported:

2 Thefts

3 Road Traffic Offences

3 acts of Vandalism

1 Misuse of Drugs

Detection rate 45%

At last month's meeting the Secretary reported a flytipping incident at Dalriada at the back of Inverkip. PC Perratt said if she could be put in contact with the lady who'd complained she'd be in touch. PC Perratt has spoken to Guy Russell at Ardgowan Estates to express concern about open hatches that may prove a safety hazard to the youths who frequent the area. Ardgowan Estates will erect 'No Fly Tipping' signs and PC Perratt has alerted Inverclyde Council's Assist Team to the problem.

Following a complaint by an Ardgowan View resident about Hill Farm construction lorries speeding on Finnockbog/Spey Road relayed to PC Perratt, she told Stewart Milne's site manager of the problem and he said he would speak to the drivers.

Ron Potter said he's spotted a truck travelling around 40mph. Referring to the general problem of speeding on this stretch of road PC Perratt said they had detected drivers travelling between 50-60mph and had warned them.

The Secretary asked PC Perratt how she felt last month's police public consultation exercise in Inverkip had gone. She said she'd felt the turnout was disappointing.

However, PC Perratt said it had been the best turnout in Inverclyde. As expected, she said, there had been complaints about youth misbehaviour and concerns expressed about the proposed lift at the unstaffed Inverkip Station being a magnet for youths.

She said she would confirm the request for minutes of the event (taken by Sgt Danny Godfrey) to be sent to the Community Council. She also reported two representatives of volunteer organisations had attended with offers of support and information for projects to attract youths from the streets. PC Perratt referred to the church hall development and the refurbished Pavilion. She said she and PC Gray had funds to

disburse from the Well Being Fund and she had donated a sum to Inverkip Community Enterprise who run the Pavilion while PC Gray donated a sum to the Community Association in Wemyss Bay. The officers were thanked for their attendance.

4. Community Facilities:

The meeting was attended by Inverclyde Council's Community Services Manager Willie Wilson .

Chairman Innes Nelson said in the new year the Community Council intended to invite representatives of groups from across Inverkip to establish an autonomous group to take forward the setting up of a community facility and to confirm the ring fencing of planning gain money so that it may be used exclusively for a community centre. Willie Wilson explained he was Inverclyde Council's main liaison officer with community groups and for community facilities. He said he sees this meeting as the best way forward with the Community Council taking a leading role in establishing the autonomous group. He hoped all groups would buy into the idea and put aside any difficulties. Willie Wilson also said it was the best way to attract funding for the village to be seen as coming together to work on the project. He said the project would be long term – probably 2-3 years, but the first step was to hold an initial meeting. Willie Wilson was prepared he said to chair that first meeting after which, with the establishment of the autonomous group, the Community Council would have a role and be a partner in the group. He said he'd met with the Wemyss Bay Community Association and had had similar talks about the setting up of a partnership for a new community facility there. He said to progress, a good site in Inverkip had to be identified.

Hugh Ritchie said he thought it most important the CC was represented on the group, and Brian McArthur said the Council had done a great deal of work in the background for the establishment of a centre. Hugh Ritchie said the autonomous group should be focused on a community centre and the CC should take an overview of the ongoing situation.

The Secretary asked Willie Wilson about an article that had appeared in the Greenock Telegraph about the resignations of two leading figures in the Kilmacolm village centre project, alleging Inverclyde Council had behaved in an unacceptable way. He had no information about the allegations at this time and was therefore unable to comment. Willie Wilson was thanked for his attendance and remained for the major part of the meeting.

5. Minutes of Business Meeting held on the 1st of November 2008

The Secretary had reported the following matters to the ward councillors and this is their response:

Spar car park, Wemyss Bay: Inverclyde Council is not in a position to do anything about this until a request is received from CJ Lang or the 4 flats and 4 shops regarding having the work done, as this is private land.

Everton Road, Hill Farm, Inverkip: ongoing complaints about the surface of the road produced the following – this is still a private road and a query as to whether the CC has approached the developer. The CC expressed its continuing view that the responsibility lay with Inverclyde Council as it had imposed the closure order on the pedestrianised section of Finnockbog Road. The Secretary said it was interesting that

approaches by the CC had produced such a reply, but an article about a Hill Farm resident complaining about the Everton Road surface in the Greenock Telegraph had prompted a response from Inverclyde Council that they'd speak to the developers. She had emailed Alan Swinton of Inverclyde Council to discover the latest information and said complaints and letters about the road surface continued to reach the CC. Alan Swinton promptly replied to say he was in discussions with the developer and indicated some worthwhile upgrading of Everton Road is likely to take place before the holiday break. He said he would return to the CC with more information the following week.

One of the members of the public attending the Business Meeting said he'd nearly fallen over because of the unacceptable condition of the road surface. Ron Potter said Stewart Milne is currently getting quotes to tarmac a sidewalk area on Everton Road. He also said he understood that rather than the January 2008 reopening of the Finnockbog Road section it was more likely to be July or August next year. While expressing dismay, no one attending was surprised by this information.

Telfer Ramage reported a ditch on Finnockbog Road had been blocked under the railway bridge perhaps by run off from the Hill Farm site. He said he would contact Inverclyde Council about the problem. Some members of the public agreed nothing practical had been done, indeed nothing had been done, by the three ward councillors to mitigate the impact of the development on Inverkip and the developers had been permitted to walk all over the community.

Millhouse Road, Inverkip – speed limit: Community Councillor Brian McArthur contacted Cllr Dorrian to outline his concerns and suggested an urban speed limit should be considered on Millhouse Road. Cllr Dorrian said the police would set up traffic monitoring equipment and once the data is received it will be determined what action will be taken. Brian McArthur reported a further communication from Cllr Dorrian, that said the developer will extend the street lighting to a point beyond the new houses on Millhouse Road. The 30mph sign will then be relocated to this point. Mrs Hunter continued to voice her concerns.

Hill Cottage, Inverkip: the CC website had received a copy of an email from Gordon McGhee of Inverkip to Inverclyde Council's Head of Planning and Transportation, Fraser Williamson, re the right of way at Hill Cottage. Cllr Dorrian said as featured in recent articles in the Greenock Telegraph and on Inverclyde Council's web page a massive exercise had been conducted during October on core paths and rights of way in Inverclyde. He suggested the answer would be available when the exercise is completed and said Mr McGhee should input his question via Inverclyde Council's website.

Street lighting at Brueacre Junction, Inverkip: Allan Marsh, chair of Ardgowan View Residents' Association said representations had been made to him about street lighting on the A78 and slip roads at the junction. Cllr Dorrian said the A78 is an AMEY controlled road and that questions should be input on the AMEY web page.

Road sign, Spey Road, Inverkip: Cllr Dorrian has reported the missing road sign

Scottish Water: It was expected a Scottish Water representative would attend the December meeting. When the Secretary emailed to confirm details, the reply received said no representative would attend and that any complaints should be put in writing.

CC website – posting of Minutes: a message had been sent to the CC's website from Tam Nugent saying only one set of recent Minutes had been posted on

the website. The Secretary replied to say this was a matter another member of the public had brought up at a recent meeting and said it was intended to add additional Minutes. Innes Nelson said Minutes covering three months could be added. Hugh Ritchie thought perhaps 6 months should be posted, though Harold McPherson, the webmaster, said the CC might have to buy more space. It was agreed that initially three months of Minutes would be posted starting in January 2008.

The Minutes were proposed as accurate by Ron Potter and seconded by Brian McArthur.

6. Secretary's Report and Correspondence:

An email to the CC website from the representatives of a developer currently building in the area who wishes to look at sponsorship opportunities in the Inverkip and Wemyss Bay area. The email wondered if the CC could help with suggestions of groups or projects currently looking for funding. The CC thought the first step should be to find out about the potential donor and the Secretary will follow this up

An email from Cllr Ken Ferguson saying all three councillors were engaged and unable to attend the Business Meeting. He sent best wishes and seasonal wishes to the CC

A letter from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde with details of their Pharmaceutical Care Services plan

A letter from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde enclosing a poster for a community based event. It was agreed by the CC it should be posted on its notice board.

From NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde a copy of the summary report from the 'Getting the best from your NHS' event held in June 2007 and a copy of Health News Inverclyde Community Health Partnership newsletter

Inverclyde Elderly Forum newsletter

From rekk.co.uk details of 'socially responsible youth shelters'. Willie Wilson said the location of such shelters didn't always meet with the approval of residents.

From Inverclyde Council details of its Town Centres and Retail Development Plan

From Inverclyde Council details of their Core Paths Plan

From Inverclyde Council – winter maintenance information

7. Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Ron Potter reported outgoings of £354.73 – wreaths for Remembrance Day and the entertainer at the Christmas tree lights switch-on event – leaving a balance of £854.04

8. Planning Matters:

Inverkip – Railway Station, Station Avenue – construction and installation of lift by Stewart Milne Holdings. Kyles Residents' Association representatives said they would withdraw parking benefits if the project went ahead, which would add to parking problems in Station Road. The CC has received a letter from the Association asking if the CC would object to the application. It was agreed it would. Innes Nelson reported he'd had a look at the plans and it was intended a 16 person lift would be installed. The installation would be 10 metres high, two metres higher than the existing mast. He said First Scotrail would be maintaining the lift. Brian Blacklaw of the Kyles Residents' Association said he would certainly be objecting. It was also reported it would take at least half an hour for any response to be forthcoming if passengers experienced difficulties with the lift. There followed a discussion about

the implications of the proposed bridge and lift, including confirmation many traffic issues would be involved. Brian Blacklaw said as far as he could discover no footfall projection had been undertaken by Inverclyde Council, Stewart Milne or First Scotrail and the fact all three ward councillors were members of the planning committee – able to listen but unable to comment – he felt was undemocratic. Ron Potter said he believed the application would come before the planning committee in February 2008. It was also reported the existing bridge over the railway is in a dangerous condition and the railway authority should bring it up to a safe standard.

Inverkip - Bramble Cottage, Langhouse Road – alterations and extension to dwellinghouse

Inverkip - The Coach House, Langhouse Road – extension to dwelling house

Inverkip - Plot 1, Station Avenue – construction of dwellinghouse, amendment to planning permission

Wemyss Bay - 9A Shore Road – formation of dormers, timber decking and alterations

Inverkip – Spey Road/Findhorn Road – construction of play area by Stewart Milne Holdings. Several letters of objection were received but it was recommended permission be granted

Inverkip – 19 Cullen Crescent – extension to dwellinghouse and construction of decking. A letter of objection was received, stating a concern the conservatory would overlook the neighbouring rear garden and patio infringing privacy, and expressed reservations the alterations to the house were designed for an expansion of the existing childminding business. It was recommended permission be granted subject to conditions

Wemyss Bay – 14 Kishorn Road – extension to dwellinghouse – recommended the application be refused

Inverkip – Millhouse Cottage – Innes Nelson said he'd received information that a Scottish Executive Reporter had advised refusal of an application to build a single house at the location, because of the greenbelt.

9. Date and time of AGM and next meeting – Thursday 3rd of January 2008

There was discussion about the meeting being held on Thursday 3rd or the 10th of January 2008. There was some support for the 10th but it was agreed to get down to business on the 3rd. The Secretary asked Treasurer Ron Potter to speak about the AGM. He pointed out that after a 3 year term it was time for the Community Councillors to put themselves up for re-election and to try to attract new members. It was agreed the AGM should be deferred until April.

10. Any other business:

Proposed Community Council reforms: Ron Potter reported from the Inverclyde Forum of Community Councils that there are proposals by the Scottish government to change the way CCs work. It is proposed they are given more powers and there should be more consultation by the local authority. In future local authorities will have to take account of what CCs say. There are a number of papers available outlining this information and Ron Potter undertook to send them on to CC members. He observed a lot is going to change over the coming year.

Community Planning Alliance Board and Thematic Partnerships:

Ron Potter took up further an item of correspondence presented to last month's Business Meeting. The Inverclyde Forum of CCs is keen to facilitate effective

representation from CCs in Inverclyde and has invited CCs to put forward nominations for representatives to the Thematic Partnerships groups – Safe and Sustainable Communities; Health and Wellbeing; Enterprise and Learning and Regeneration. The groups would report to the Inverclyde Alliance. Ron Potter said it was important a couple of community councillors committed to the project and Vice Chairman Hugh Ritchie has undertaken to represent I&WBCC on two of the groups.

Inverclyde’s declining population: The previous week Ron Potter had attended a seminar looking at the problems of Inverclyde’s declining population and projected figures for the year 2024. There were proposals to attempt to reverse the numbers leaving the area and to attract people from outwith Inverclyde. A major problem was that affordable housing couldn’t be supplied by Inverclyde Council. It will take 10 to 12 years for Riverside Inverclyde to make an impact. It was remarked that the declining population brought the viability of Inverclyde Council into question.

Another comment referred to the east to west shift of the population of Inverclyde. Ron Potter said the Stewart Milne sales kiosk at Hill Farm was receiving inquiries about 4 bedroomed properties so it looked as if established families were interested in moving. He added 3 bedroomed properties started at £170,000 and 4 bedroomed houses at £250,000.

Hill Farm development: The Secretary said an Ardgowan View resident who had had to complain to Inverclyde Council again about weekend (Sunday) working on the site (not permitted) had sent her an email to say she’d learned from the Council once site preparation ended and house building began that Stewart Milne will apply for working hours to change to the Standard Inverclyde Working Conditions of 7.30am-6pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm on Saturday and not at all on Sunday.

Innes Nelson said he had received complaints from residents of Beatock Place about pumps that run all night and it was confirmed they could also be heard in Sandend Place.

Ron Potter said he’d heard field 7 is so waterlogged the site preparation contractors Con-form can’t access it until the end of December and the field is unworkable at the moment.

Innes Nelson referred to an article in that evening’s Greenock Telegraph headlined – ‘Residents raging as hedges are destroyed’. It reported Ardgowan View residents living in Cullen Crescent were horrified when Stewart Milne contractors chopped down hedges at the back of their gardens. He said he had seen the land title and the land had been sold to the builders Tilbury Douglas. It does not, he said, belong to SMH. An Inverclyde Council spokesperson was quoted in the article as saying – “During the planning process the drawings we had from the developer included the hedges within the boundary of their application site. The developer did not indicate the hedges were within the ownership of the residents. Legalities and negotiations regarding land ownership are not part of the statutory planning process and residents should take their dispute up with the developer.”

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.