

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Business Meeting held on Thursday 7th June 2007 7.30pm – Inverkip Hotel

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

Apologies: Paul Maloney; PC Jane Perratt

In Attendance: Cllr Gerry Dorrian; PC Billy Gray; Mareike Awolin; N. Cupples; Isabel Hunter; Cliff Lyons; Jim McIntosh (Kyles Residents' Association); Liz Roders

3. Police Matters:

Complaints were made to PC Billy Gray about the police call centre response. The complaints were much as before – lack of knowledge of the local area and slow response time.

It was agreed the local young people had nowhere to go and PC Gray had been speaking to Lady Lucinda Shaw-Stewart about trees on Ardgowan Estate being set on fire.

He confirmed the police office in Inverkip was a 'convenience' office.

PC Gray said he'd had a report from Inverkip Post Office around a fortnight ago of two males hanging about and asked that locals keep an eye open for any suspicious characters loitering in the proximity of the Post Office.

PC Gray confirmed no camping was permitted on the beach at Inverkip. Mrs Hunter said she no longer visited the waterfront as she regarded it as a no go area.

Ron Potter asked PC Gray if the crime statistics presented to the Community Council could include the numbers of solved crimes. He said they could.

Lynne Chambers reported PC Jane Perratt had phoned to request details of references to Millhouse Cottage and the Roman Bridge that might have appeared in Community Council Minutes. Lynne Chambers checked and found two references – one in April 2006 and one in May 2007's Minutes. However PC Gray was able to report the situation at the Roman Bridge (the bridge being blocked off) had been resolved without it going to the complaints stage. He confirmed Ardgowan Estate owned the Bridge, and the Estate will be erecting a fence with a stile. Innes Nelson asked about access for the disabled but PC Gray said it was now out of their hands.

Cliff Lyons reported vandalism at the bridge leading into the Marina.

PC Gray said he and his fellow officers will be taking to their bikes in the next week or two to patrol the area. He was thanked for his attendance.

4. Mareike Awolin of Inverclyde Alcohol Services:

Ms Awolin is the new Community and Culture Change Worker for Alcohol under the auspices of Inverclyde Council, and came to speak to the Community Council about the impact of alcohol in the local area. Innes Nelson said he believed alcohol had both good and bad aspects. Brian McArthur said that locally youngsters with nothing to do thought let's get drunk and have fun. It was agreed there was a lack of parental control. Innes

Nelson said adults in every community take too much alcohol, and that it could create violence and mischief in younger people. Brian McArthur thought alcohol nowadays was cheaper and youngsters now have the money to buy it. Outlets selling drinks like Buckfast were condemned and it was noted older people were buying alcohol for underage drinkers. It was also reported there was a car in Inverkip from which alcohol was sold to young people. Attitudes to alcohol were discussed. Innes Nelson spoke of social drinking and Brian McArthur said that at the end of the working week it was pleasant to have a few drinks to unwind. Cllr Dorrian observed that 16-20 year olds drank as much as they could as quickly as possible. Ms Awolin asked where locally one could drink and was told the Inverkip Hotel, the Chartroom at the Marina and the Wemyss Bay Hotel. Cliff Lyons said it wasn't only young people who drank too much but older people too. Ms Awolin asked what should change? It was suggested outlets that sold Buckfast should be banned and Cllr Dorrian said Alcopops were a problem too. It was felt education and information on the health risks of drinking too much should be more widely available. Brian McArthur said he wasn't aware of any education in schools about excessive drinking. Jim McIntosh said he understood there was a higher incidence of drinking and driving among young people. Ron Potter said he didn't think labels on cans and bottles giving information about units of alcohol would help. Jim McIntosh said there was information about smoking and there should be more warning of the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption. Lynne Chambers said alcohol was the poor relation when it came to education and advice and that drugs and tobacco seemed to get the lion's share of funding. Cllr Dorrian said people were more aware of what units of alcohol were and that was agreed. Cllr Dorrian added there were more liver disease problems. Hugh Ritchie said too much to drink was an extension of the poor Scottish diet. It was agreed there should be more emphasis on health. Mareike Awolin was thanked for attending.

5. Minutes of Business Meeting held on the 10th of May 2007 – Matters arising:
New Licensing Act: it was recorded in Page 2 of May's Minutes that a new Licensing Act is to be introduced, and it was confirmed an advertisement to recruit interested people and due to be published in the Greenock Telegraph had not as yet appeared.

Proposed bridge at Inverkip Station:

Item 10 in May's Minutes. Cliff Lyons produced a picture of a lift at flats in Rothesay which he said would resemble the lift housing at the proposed bridge at Inverkip Station. It would be he said, a colossal eyesore, and reported Neil Graham, Corporate Director, Environment and Community Protection at Inverclyde Council had said it wouldn't be an integrated but separate structure. In addition there would need to be a new planning application.

Innes Nelson said the Community Council had prepared a document spelling out the background to the Stewart Milne planning application for the incoming Councillors for Ward 6 and passed copies to Cllr Dorrian for himself and Councillors Rebecchi and Ferguson.

Jim McIntyre of the Kyles Residents' Association said he'd spoken to Neil Graham who had said it was 85% likely the bridge would go ahead, and the Section 69 and 75

Agreements with the developer had been signed, and which Inverclyde Council officers had the delegated authority to sign. Jim McIntosh also referred to the meeting in April 2007 with Council Chief Executive John Mundell and Neil Graham which he and Lynne Chambers had attended where Neil Graham had confirmed the handover of the proposed Inverkip Station Bridge would be at nil cost to the Council. He said the move had been pushed through in the dying days of the former Inverclyde Council administration. Neil Graham told Jim McIntosh the Stewart Milne Group had offered three times the original amount for maintenance of the bridge – a sum thought to be around £90,000 – so the figure would now be nearer £300,000. Jim McIntosh had asked to see the figures – as public money could potentially be involved if this fund proved to be insufficient – but was told no. Cllr Dorrian said there could be an element of commercial sensitivity. Neil Graham said if he learned the figures could be released he would email them to Jim McIntosh. At this time he had not received the information.

He said the Leader of the Labour Group in the new Inverclyde Council, Stephen McCabe, had said Standing Orders permitted the bringing back of previously made decisions for further consideration if there was a two-thirds majority of the Council. Jim McIntosh declared himself rather disappointed there had been no sign of this happening as Stephen McCabe had fought very hard against the proposed Inverkip Station Bridge in the previous administration. It was agreed the matter should be brought back to Inverclyde Council. Ron Potter said an alteration to the structure had to come back to planning. Jim McIntosh reported Neil Graham had said the Stewart Milne Group would apply for a dispensation for a non-DDA compliant bridge, but this was wrong. Only statutory bodies could apply for dispensation and to date Inverclyde Council hasn't. Information about the required dispensation for the proposed bridge was sent in a letter to Inverclyde Council Chief Executive John Mundell in December 2006 and copied to Neil Graham.

Jim McIntosh said he plans to speak to MSP Duncan McNeil again and the Kyles Residents' Association is to send an official complaint about the matter to the Audit Commission.

The question was asked – who would own the proposed lift. Inverclyde Council may become the only local authority in Scotland to own a railway bridge.

Jim McIntosh observed it would appear developers run Inverclyde Council. Members of the Community Council agreed.

Ron Potter reported Inverclyde Councillors and officials had held a meeting with Inverclyde Council on Disability requesting their approval of a non-compliant bridge. ICOD would not give them that assurance.

Community Facilities – See 9 in May's Minutes. Further to a phone call from Chairman Innes Nelson to the Secretary reporting the Inverkip Church Glebe was no longer showing on the Church of Scotland's website for sale, Lynne Chambers spoke to Keith Fairweather of the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland. Mr Fairweather reported they'd received a raft of offers for the land and the best offer had been presented to the Trustees. They are minded to accept it and it would appear the sale is almost completed.

Ron Potter proposed approval of the Minutes, seconded by Hugh Ritchie.

6. Secretary's Report and Correspondence:

Letter from Inverclyde Community Councils' Forum saying their AGM will be held on the 11th of June. Innes Nelson and Ron Potter to attend.

A letter from Inverclyde Council inviting all Inverclyde Community Councillors – sent to individual Councillors - to an event to be held on the 9th of June. Brian McArthur said he hadn't received a letter. The Secretary said she would send his details again to Inverclyde Council. Ron Potter and Brian McArthur will attend.

Letter from Planning Aid for Scotland saying their AGM is to be held on the 14th of June in Glasgow

Letter from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde giving details of an event they're holding – 'Our Health' – on the 14th of June

Letter from Scottish Water informing the Community Council about a capital investment improvement for the Daff Impounding Reservoir

Newsletter from the Ladymoor Wind Factory Action Group seeking support for objections to a new proposal for 24 turbines north of Kilbirnie. The Community Council agreed to send a letter of objection.

Details from Inverclyde Community Care Forum about an event to be held on the 21st of June

Innes Nelson said he'd had an email from Philip Norris of the Cowal Marketing Group alerting the Community Council to a windfarm application on the peninsula opposite the Marina and Wemyss Bay. It was agreed the Community Council would object to the application and organise a leaflet drop in both villages in line with the Community Council's agreed policy on windfarms

7. Treasurer's Report:

Ron Potter said he heard from Willie Wilson of Inverclyde Council in an email that our duly submitted financial details had NOT yet been scrutinised and it wasn't intended to do so for 4-6 weeks, leaving a balance of £7 in the Community Council's account. The Treasurer said he had lodged £100 of his own money in the account to cover running expenses. Hugh Ritchie declared the situation ridiculous

8. Planning Matters

Inverkip – Bargane Plantation, Ardgowan Estate – erection of 27 metre telecommunications mast disguised as a cypress tree

Wemyss Bay – 7 Castle Wemyss Place – erection of two storey rear extension and change of use of open space to garden ground

Inverkip – Langhouse Road/Main Street – display of one lamp post banner by Inverclyde Council

Wemyss Bay – Ardgowan Road – as above

Inverkip – Main Street – display of illuminated and non-illuminated signs on temporary shop

9. Roman Bridge – see 3. Police Matters above

10. Community Council Notice Boards:

Lynne Chambers said a message to the Community Council's website had been passed to her. The message was from Stephen Skirving wondering if more Community Council notice boards could be located in Inverkip, suggesting the junction of Spey Road and Cullen Crescent and the Swallow Crescent area. Lynne Chambers said she was particularly keen a notice board should be erected in Wemyss Bay as the Community Council currently posted notices on the Spar notice board which was regularly full of other information. It was agreed she should contact Willie Wilson at Inverclyde Council to ask him to consider the situation.

11. Date and time of next meeting:

Thursday 5th July 2007

12. Any other business:

A new member joined the Community Council. Liz Roders of Wemyss Bay was co-opted to the Council, proposed by Innes Nelson and seconded by Lynne Chambers. Liz Roders said she had been a member of the former Wemyss Bay Community Council and was interested in the local communities. She was warmly welcomed to the Council and it was noted it was particularly pleasing to have another representative from Wemyss Bay.

Ron Potter reported on his visit to Scottish Power's consultants, Turley Associates' recent display at Wemyss Bay. He also said the Wemyss Bay Village News carried a full page article about the proposed development of 400-700 houses – flats or houses depending on the design - at the Power Station site, detailing 2,3,4 and five bedroomed villas. Lynne Chambers said Ron Potter had been contacted by Turley Associates to set up another meeting with the Community Council. Lynne Chambers had spoken to Elaine Troupe at Turley's and they plan to attend the July business meeting of the Community Council.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.