

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Business Meeting held on Thursday 7th of June 2012 at Wemyss Bay Primary School at 7pm

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

2. Apologies for absence: Tracy Bunton; Telfer Ramage

In attendance: Duncan McNeil, MSP; Cllr Gerry Dorrian; Cllr Innes Nelson; Cllr Ciano Rebecchi; Robert Graham, Inverclyde Council's Service Manager, Environmental and Commercial Services; Sgt David Cameron, Road Policing Department; Community Sgt Eric Smith and four members of the public

3. Police Matters:

Before the meeting Sgt Anderson contacted the Community Council (CC) to inquire whether any complaints had been made about youths causing annoyance at Inverkip beach. The secretary replied that while it appeared to be an annual occurrence no complaints had been received so far this year. Sgt Smith said in the fine weather there had been complaints about drinking that were dealt with by officers.

He reported the following statistics from the 5th of May until the 5th of June 2012:

Incidents – 103

Incidents of note:

Assist members of the public – 11

Complaints – 28

Disturbances – 3

Road Accidents – 3

Number of crimes – 15 with 7 detections. Further police enquiries are ongoing

Instances of note:

These crimes consisted of:

3 x vandalisms – no detections and enquiries ongoing

3 x thefts – no detections and enquiries ongoing

5 x offences under the Road Traffic Act 1988 – 4 detections

1 x Breach of Peace – detected

1 x Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act – detected

1 x Drinking in Public – detected

1 x House Breaking with Intent – enquiries ongoing

The secretary said fellow Community Councillor Telfer Ramage had asked her in his absence to say excessive speed was a continuing problem on Finnockbog Road from the Brueacre Junction to Spey Road., despite the road being clearly signed as 30mph. She wondered if officers with a speed gun could make a return visit to this stretch of road. She also said a repeater 30mph sign had been promised but Cllr Dorrian said 30mph signs would be painted on the road. Telfer Ramage also said the 20mph painted signs in the Hill Farm development were being ignored but Sgt Cameron said as the signs are advisory only there's nothing the police can do. A Wemyss Bay resident asked the officers about problems parking on Lomond Road during the Wemyss Bay Gala to be held on Saturday 9th of June. Sgt Smith said he would leave a note for colleagues on duty that day.

4. Minutes of Business Meeting held on Thursday 3rd of May 2012 – Matters arising:

A78 speed limit/prohibition on buses stopping – this item moved up the Agenda from item 8

Hugh Ritchie read a background report to those attending. He said following May's Business Meeting it was decided to invite representatives of various organisations involved to attend the June meeting in an attempt to solve this perennial problem. Transport Scotland's (TS) representative said it was inappropriate to attend while a national Speed Limit Review had not yet reported and said the provision of bus stops was a matter for Inverclyde Council (IC) and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT). The SPT representative declined to attend and Cllr David Wilson said he was unable to attend but could confirm SPT had no locus in the matters of speed limits and buses stopping on the A78. He also said it is TS's responsibility to find the location for a bus stop and STP will then erect a stop/shelter. Duncan McNeil said he would need to know there was local support for a reduction in the speed limit as he recalled a previous attempt when there had been no agreement. The secretary said it was difficult to gauge local opinion as despite wide advertising seeking the views of local residents there had been very little response. Of the tiny number of responses received 30mph was supported (so buses may stop); 40 mph for safety and bus stopping reasons was supported and some wished to maintain the status quo. There is no consensus. Sgt Cameron said buses stopping on the 60mph stretch between Bankfoot roundabout to Wemyss Bay were dangerous and caused a safety hazard and despite the inconvenience caused to local residents he had to consider the safety of all. Bus stops would have to be built off the roadway.

After much discussion it was agreed the issues had to be separated into a bus service and speed reductions for safety reasons.

Bus service - Duncan McNeil said a major issue was an ageing population without decent public transport and cited an older couple – the husband has a stroke and is unable to drive and his wife can't drive. Another example is a young couple – the breadwinner drives off in the family's only car leaving the other partner and children stranded at home on the Hill Farm development. The secretary observed that while no buses served Hill Farm, trains from Wemyss Bay and Inverkip only ran once an hour and this when the public is urged to take public transport. The MSP said there should be a public transport strategy for the area. Robert Graham said IC was not responsible for the A78 trunk road but liaised with SPT. All bus stops in the area are funded by SPT when suitable locations are identified. The bus companies not the SPT determine bus routes. The SPT solution for those in need of transport is My Bus, but it was observed the vehicle is almost as big as a McGills bus. The question was asked who had complained about buses stopping on the A78. Cllr Nelson said he had spoken to McGills and learned a lorry had passed a stationary bus as a police car was coming the other way. Sgt Cameron said it was not the only incident. Stationary buses cause an obstruction and are unsafe. Action would be taken against McGill drivers if found to have stopped on this stretch of the road. Duncan McNeil said he would take responsibility to push for a public transport survey and discover if rural transport grants are available. Cllr Rebecchi reported he had found out that the A78 at Inverkip has been looked at on a number of occasions as regards the provision of bus stops. IC Roads Service, SPT and Strathclyde Police agree there is no suitable location when considering the assessment criteria. It was also suggested one should be careful what to wish for – if the speed limit was reduced and buses able again to stop in the A78, the bus company might wonder why it was running 4 buses an hour through Inverkip – and all the difficulties of Main Street – and withdraw that service with all the associated inconvenience that would cause to villagers.

Speed limit – Cllr Rebecchi repeated his opinion that a 40mph speed limit should be put in place between Bankfoot Roundabout and Bridgend and 30mph past the rest of the village. He cited another accident at the A78 Inverkip junction the previous week and said hardly a week goes by without an accident of some kind at that spot. Sgt Cameron said TS reported an average speed of 46mph on the road at these points and said there was a good view both ways at the junction. However it was pointed out that statistics didn't reflect the accidents and bumps when police weren't called or didn't attend and indeed local residents confirmed such incidents did indeed occur around once a week. Also Sgt Cameron was challenged about the good view at the junction and was told that standing traffic waiting to turn into the village obstructed the view of drivers coming from Inverkip onto the A78. Robert Graham said the junction was not high on TS's list of dangerous junctions. The police would have no objection to the reduction of the speed limit to 40mph and as Sgt Smith said at commuter and school times that was about the speed of the traffic. Ron Potter said he had noticed cyclists using the pavement along the A78, presumably to avoid fast moving traffic. Robert Graham said there were long term plans to extend existing facilities and provide a cycle path.

Cllr Rebecchi has written to TS calling for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on the road and awaits a response. Cllr Dorrian said perhaps it was time to call in the Royal Society for the Prevention of

Accidents (RoSPA). It was agreed when the response Cllr Rebecchi receives from TS is considered it may then be appropriate to contact RoSPA. Robert Graham and the officers were thanked for their attendance at the meeting.

Wind Turbine Policy - please see Agenda item 11

Ron Potter referred to a reference about a bulb for the CC's projector in May's Minutes and it was agreed to delete the reference.

With that amendment Ron Potter proposed the Minutes as accurate, seconded by Eileen Virtue.

Hugh Ritchie congratulated the three councillors on being returned as Ward 6 representatives. He asked if all three were again members of the Planning Board and when that was confirmed Hugh Ritchie observed he thought having all three ward representatives on the Board was a double-edged sword - but all three said Planning was not a political issue.

Daff Glen - Eileen Virtue confirmed she would attend the next Daff Glen meeting – Hugh Ritchie will be unable to attend as he is on holiday.

5. Secretary's Report and Correspondence:

From Cllr Nelson – an Inverclyde Council (IC) press release regarding the collapsed Dunrod Road running through Sheilhill Glen to Loch Thom

From Inverclyde Community Health & Care Partnership (CHCP) – the Inverclyde Licensing Forum recently presented a report to the Inverclyde Licensing Board asking the Board to consider whether an Alcohol Overprovision Statement was required for Inverclyde. As part of the Board's consideration of the statement it has requested the Forum consult with the community through CCs, and a request has been received to attend a Business Meeting. The presentation would last 30-40 minutes but could be shortened if required. The secretary replied the June Agenda was packed with major issues and asked that the presentation be deferred to the August meeting, which has been accepted.

From IC – an invitation to the chairman, secretary and treasurer from the Provost to attend the Kirkin' of the Council on the 17th of June. As all three are unable to attend Eileen Virtue and Jean Anderson volunteered to go in their stead.

The secretary contacted IC to enquire if storage facilities were available to CCs for the storage of non-current files. The reply stated there were no facilities and pointed out the CC grant is for administrative purposes and can be used to assist with storage solutions

The secretary wrote to the ward councillors to alert them draft Minutes will be posted a week in advance of the following monthly Business Meeting so they should bring any matters to the attention of the secretary before that time

Letter to Transport Minister Keith Brown – making no mention of speed limits because further discussion required – expressing the CC's disappointment no radical improvements are planned for the A78 Inverkip junction and reminding him of the prohibition against buses stopping on the A78 between IBM and Wemyss Bay.

From Cllr Rebecchi – notice of a temporary restriction of road use at Station Avenue, Inverkip because of a crane required for lifting bridge and stairs in place at Inverkip Station – 2nd-6th of June 2012

The secretary has booked venues for monthly Business Meetings September-December 2012 inclusive.

A request was made to use The Chartroom for August's meeting but it would appear a function has been booked and another venue has to be found – please see Agenda item 11

From CVS Inverclyde – a letter requesting an update of contact details and a Database Survey. Also being offered is an accounts service (chargeable) for registered charities and voluntary organisations and a Services Directory. These documents followed by a Newsletter

Newsletter from Your Voice

Newsletter and Annual Report 2012 from Stuart McMillan MSP

From IC – Agenda 2012 – Audit Committee

From IC – Agenda 2012 – Inverclyde Community Health & Care Partnership Sub-Committee

From IC – Agenda 2012 – Environment & Regeneration Committee plus additional reports

From IC – Agenda 2012 – Planning Board

From Cllr Rebecchi – notice of the closure of Inverkip Library from 1700 on Tuesday June 12th to allow conversion work to start at the primary school. The Library will re-open soon – date to be confirmed – in a temporary Portacabin located in the village while work commences on a permanent purpose-built Library in the new Community Centre. While the Library is unavailable the nearest branch is Gourock until the refurbished South West Library re-opens in July. Books can be borrowed

and returned to any library in Inverclyde. Cllr Nelson said it is planned to locate the Portacabin on the site of the Pavilion.

From Cllr Nelson – notice of National Carers Week beginning 18th June and a poster for an event at Wemyss Bay Community Centre on Thursday 21st of June between 1-3pm – passed to David Adams
Letter from 2020 Renewables (a renewable energy developer headquartered in Greenock) enclosing a leaflet – 2020 Ardgowan Jubilee Walking Trails produced in conjunction with the Ardgowan Estate to celebrate The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee

From IC – Agenda 2012 – Education and Communities Committee including a progress report on Inverclyde Academy

From IC – Agenda 2012 – General Purposes Board

6. Treasurer’s Report and Expenses discussion

Ron Potter said because of a misunderstanding the examination of the CC’s financial returns to IC bore only one signature. In fact the Constitution says two signatories are required. That has now been accomplished. As the returns could not be considered at May’s AGM IC says it is acceptable the returns are approved at the next Business Meeting – and they were. Ron Potter said it is still not clear what has to be submitted to IC – the whole document or the examiners’ report.

He also observed that because of staff changes at IC John Arthur was no longer the CC liaison officer at the Council. The Legal Department will let CCs know when an officer has been nominated to take over the role.

Ron Potter said the expenses policy was still in abeyance.

He said the CC’s opening balance was £847.32 – expenditure was £306.64 giving a balance of £540.68

7. Planning Matters

Letter from the Scottish Government giving notification of a pre-inquiry meeting on the 13th of June 2012 at the Seamill Hydro regarding the application for a Multi-Fuel Power Station at Hunterston Forwarded by IC for the Scottish Government – a consultation exercise on Planning Reform – to be forwarded to members – Cllr Rebecchi suggested attention should be given to the proposed reform of Section 75

Inverkip – 12 Primrose Avenue – side extension

Wemyss Bay – Leapmoor Drive – conservatory conversion to sun room

Wemyss Bay – 2 Etive Road – erection of extension to front of dwelling house

8. A78 Speed Limit

Please see Agenda item 4 above

9. Windfarm Policy Statement

After discussion at May’s Business Meeting the secretary drafted an additional paragraph to the existing Windfarm Policy that read:

5) However, the above stated Policy declaration does not automatically exclude the careful consideration of every wind turbine application – whether it is for a single turbine or a wind turbine development – and each will be considered on its merits

The word ‘windfarm’ was replaced by ‘wind turbines’ throughout.

The draft was approved by four members of the Community Council (CC) in advance of the meeting and approved unanimously by those attending and will now become the CC’s formal Policy

Cllr Nelson has asked Head of Regeneration and Planning – further to a question asked at a CC Business Meeting – what constitutes a windfarm either in terms of output or number of turbines. The response was pretty technical!

TGC Renewables awaits the CC’s decision whether to support or object to its proposed application for a single 100kW Wind Turbine, 37metres to hub; 47 metres to tip on land at Finnockbog Farm, Inverkip – the proposed site is within the boundary of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. The application is due to be submitted soon.

The following applications await a decision by IC

Wemyss Bay – Kellybank Cottage, Kelly Road – erection of 2x33 metres high wind 50kW turbines with associated works. This application supported some members of the CC’s fears that the erection of one turbine can lead to further applications.

Gourock – land at Faulds Park – erection of 2x24.6 metres high wind turbines – it was agreed this application was outwith Ward 6 and shouldn’t be pursued.

Greenock – Garrow Hill, Leitchland Farm, Flatterton Road – erection of one 47.15 metres high 100kW wind turbine with access and associated works. After discussion it was agreed the CC should contact adjoining Larkfield/Braeside/Branchton CC for its opinion. Cllr Nelson urged the CC to consider each application carefully, studying the accompanying documents and maps. He said it was a time-consuming business. The secretary said she would forward details of the Finnockbog Farm application to Jean Anderson who will consider wind turbine applications at this time for the CC.

10. Inverkip/Wemyss Bay clean up – the secretary suggested this issue be deferred to the August Business Meeting - agreed

11. Date and time of next meeting – Thursday 2nd of August 2012 at 7pm in the Wemyss Bay Community Centre

12. Any other business and secretary's handover

Gordon Roders had previously agreed to take on the role of dealing with the CC's correspondence and to be a contact point and has now agreed to be designated as Secretary. Hugh Ritchie proposed Gordon Roders as Secretary, seconded by David Adams.

Tracy Bunton had previously indicated she would take on the role of Minute Secretary, arranging meetings etc. Eileen Virtue proposed Tracy Bunton as Minute Secretary, seconded by Jean Anderson. Lynne Chambers suggested perhaps the designation should be 'Assistant' Secretary rather than 'Minute' Secretary which was approved, subject to Mrs Bunton's agreement.

A Wemyss Bay resident said that in a woodland area at the top of Carron Road, during recent storms large trees had fallen. The trees near his house are very tall and he is concerned they may not be safe and will come down. Cllr Rebecchi said he would bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate IC department.

Jean Anderson said three people had asked why there was no copy lodged in the Library of the Order detailing parking restrictions on Station Road at the primary school in Inverkip. Cllr Rebecchi said the Order should be in the Library and said the restrictions operated between 8.30-9.30am and 2.30-3.30pm.

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