

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Business Meeting held on Thursday 7th May 2009 at the Inverkip Hotel

Present: Innes Nelson (chairman); Hugh Ritchie (vice chairman); Ron Potter (treasurer); Harold McPherson; Brian McArthur; Liz Roders and Lynne Chambers (secretary)

Apologies: Cllr Gerry Dorrian

In attendance: Cllr Ciano Rebecchi; PC Barry McNeill; PC Colin Mitchell; Penelope Hof; Isabel Hunter; Cliff Lyons and Brian Blacklaw

Innes Nelson extended a welcome to all attending the meeting. First of all he conveyed the Community Council's condolences to the family of Cllr Ken Ferguson who died recently. Cllr Ferguson was one of the councillors representing Ward 6. It was also recorded the well-known local farmer, Peter Howie, had died that week – his photograph hangs on the wall of the room where Community Council Business Meetings are held

3. Police Matters

PC McNeill reported the following crime figures:

Inverkip

Disorder – 2

Vandalism – 2

Theft – 5

Total 9

Detected - 3

Undetected – 6

Wemyss Bay

Disorder – 0

Vandalism – 3

Theft – 4

Total – 7

Detected – 0

Undetected – 7

PCs Perratt and Gray who regularly attended Business Meetings as the community officers had written to say they are now working on a 5 week pattern, and as part of Ward 6 are attending meetings in Larkfield as they now work as Multi Member Wards. It was regretted that officers with such an extensive knowledge of the area would not now regularly attend the meetings. PC McNeill felt if there was something

in particular the Community Council wished to discuss with the officers they could be contacted.

Closure of footpath/play park at Spey Road roundabout

This issue should have been raised under 'matters arising' from the April Minutes but while the officers were in attendance the secretary took the opportunity to read an email from a resident whose house is adjacent to the play park on Spey Road. The email outlined the noise and disturbance caused by 26 teenagers in the play park despite the footpath being fenced off, and they have started climbing over the fences into the park next to his garden. The noise was deafening and they had to close windows and vents but there was little improvement. He said children and adults are now using the area behind his back garden fence/the back of the park as a new path. This resident fervently wishes the park to be closed. The officers repeated their advice to call them in to deal with the problem. Penelope Hof reported two panels of the fence closing off the footpath had been removed, but reinstated by a resident. She also said people are still using the footpath and climbing over the fence. Innes Nelson said the area was zoned as countryside and green belt and he'd seen a copy of the planning application, when consultants had recommended the path stay open. In addition there is no mention of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. He'd spoken to Scottish Natural Heritage who said the fence should not have been put up as it is not in compliance with the law. Cllr Rebecchi said Inverclyde Council had made the decision. Innes Nelson said the Council had been misinformed. Cllr Rebecchi asked Innes Nelson to email him details which he would take up with Inverclyde Council's Head of Planning Services. The Community Council has contacted Planning Aid for Scotland who will allocate a Planning Officer from outside of the area to offer advice and information. The Community Council has also emailed the Head of Planning at IC asking who owns the land the play park is built on, and if it is owned by the builder, Stewart Milne Homes, is the intention to transfer the ownership to homeowners whose properties are adjacent to the park. The officers said if people were breaking down fences it was against the law. Innes Nelson suggested the builder had broken the law by erecting the fence. Cllr Rebecchi said the builder owned the land and rightly or wrongly he asked for permission and got it, and the Council wasn't breaking the law by granting planning permission. Penelope Hof was asked if she was aware of a general feeling chatting to neighbours. She replied that the majority she'd spoken to would prefer the access to be returned and the play park removed. There is another play park for small children on the development and most parents of older children would prefer a park where youngsters could kick a ball about. Cliff Lyons reported that on two nights running youths had taken contractor's fencing panels and blocked Main Street, Inverkip, by the bridge. The officers were aware of the incidents. Cliff Lyons also reported youths had set fire to a sign belonging to Carillion, the contractors working on the sewer upsizing in Main Street. Isabel Hunter reported young people and adults riding cross country motor bikes and quad bikes on the roads around Swallow Brae and Langhouse Avenue, Inverkip. If there's no tax, insurance or helmets and they're on the road illegally, the bikes can be seized the officers said. They would pass the information to PCs Perratt and Gray. Mrs Hunter also said cars were driving straight over what she described as 'the daft half roundabout', and as there's no pavement you're a sitting target for cars belting down the Loch Tom road. Cllr Rebecchi said these issues should be reported directly

to the Roads department at the Council and if there is no progress report it to the councillors.

Cllr Dorrian had emailed details of a survey carried out on Spey Road, Inverkip following complaints about speeding. The survey was carried out between the 18th-25th March. The average speed was 27mph (the speed limit is 30mph on this stretch of road) but there appeared to be a number of vehicles travelling about 40mph downhill towards the Brueacre junction. Police will be attending this location with a speed gun.

Cliff Lyons referred to the traffic accident that had occurred days earlier on the A78 at the junction with Main Street, Inverkip. He said only one accident had been reported in the Greenock Telegraph but in fact there had been another accident earlier the same day between two vans.

The officers were thanked for their attendance

4. Presentation by Joe Pearce, Alcohol Community Worker with the Young Person Alcohol Team, Inverclyde Alcohol Services

Joe Pearce explained he was a community cultural change officer. He said consumption of alcohol had never been so high in Scotland as it is at present, and he stressed the serious effect alcohol had, for example, on heart disease and mental health. Excess alcohol consumption crossed all cultural groups. All of Scotland has a drinking problem, but the west coast is worst. Inverclyde has the second highest number of alcohol related deaths in Scotland; drink is a factor in one in three divorces and 45% of prisoners were drunk when the offence was committed. Inverclyde has the highest rate of Korsocoff Syndrome in Scotland. He said the real price of alcohol had dropped year on year and there is a correlation between price and consumption. Joe Pearce was quizzed and some assumptions questioned by Cllr Rebecchi and Brian Blacklaw, both of whom have connections with the licensed trade. In discussion it was generally felt that parents had to be educated about drinking in moderation so they could give that message to their young people. Joe Pearce said his team's work is aimed at deprived areas in Inverclyde. Harold McPherson thought all the effort was useless as there was no money to implement schemes for training and cultural change. Joe Pearce replied there are two full-time school workers educating on drinking safely. He said there was no clear-cut message against alcohol as there is for drugs and suicide. He continued to say that under recent legislation Community Councils are now regarded as competent objectors – currently there is not much community contribution. The secretary asked Joe Pearce if there was a problem with young people drinking in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. Cliff Lyons said there is a problem of people drinking on the streets of Inverkip – locals and incomers. He said there should be zero tolerance and all incidents should be reported. Liz Roders spoke of the Clubs in Greenock that admitted 16 year olds. It was agreed the police did their best – it was a generalisation to say it was all about bad parenting. What all agreed on was it is a very complex problem. Joe Pearce was thanked for his presentation

5. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 2nd of April 2009 and Matters Arising

See the **footpath closure** above at 3

A78 – further to Stuart McMillan MSP's presentation in April, there had been much coverage in the Greenock Telegraph and correspondence with the Community Council from Stuart McMillan and Duncan McNeil MSP – letters, press releases and

emails. The upshot is that Transport Scotland has asked road contractors Amey to undertake a 3 month survey of the road and the junctions entering on to it from Inverkip and Wemyss Bay.

Hugh Ritchie said he had to bring up the issue of potholes saying they were becoming worse and worse, not only on trunk roads but local roads, and he asked Cllr Rebecchi what he was doing about it. He said councillors should be putting pressure on Amey. Cllr Rebecchi said councillors should put pressure on the MSPs and the public should do so too. Hugh Ritchie said there must be a clause in Amey's agreement that if they're not performing the government can act. Cliff Lyons said the government should do its job and ensure Amey does its job

The Minutes were proposed as accurate by Hugh Ritchie and seconded by Ron Potter

6. Secretary's Report and Correspondence

Letter to Mrs Jean Ferguson extending the CC's sympathy on the death of her husband, Cllr Ken Ferguson

Newsletters from Stuart McMillan MSP; Larkfield Community Safety Group and Inverclyde Elderly Forum

Information from Scottish Water and their contractor Carillion re work schedule for sewer upsizing in Main Street, Inverkip – posted on Inverkip notice board and CC website. Further information from Scottish Water/Carillion/McGill's Buses about amendments to bus services during the closure of Inverkip Main Street – posted on notice board and website

Letter from Astra Trade AG, Switzerland, asking details of the ownership of the Inverkip Power Station as they are interested in buying parts of the power station to reconstruct elsewhere. The secretary was asked to write giving them the information
Letter to Amey re re-design/re-engineering of the Bankfoot roundabout

Email from the Association of Scottish Community Councils confirming – contrary to the recent distribution of forms – that Scottish CCs are not subject to Freedom of Information legislation

Correspondence with IC re CC meeting with Stuart Jamieson of Inverclyde Council
From NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde – information about the Victoria and Stobhill hospitals

From Planning Aid for Scotland – an invitation to renew the CC's subscription

Invitation from Larkfield, Braeside and Branchton Community Council to attend their AGM – Innes Nelson attended

From IC – two tickets to attend Gourock Highland Games

From Fraser Williamson, IC's Head of Planning, a letter notifying the CC of changes to the planning system and asking if Community Councillors would be interested in attending a meeting outlining the changes. The secretary replied the councillors would indeed be interested in attending

From Scottish Natural Heritage – details of the consultation on the draft Firth of Clyde Marine Spatial Plan – passed to Hugh Ritchie

From the BMA Scotland – consultation documents – General Practice in Scotland – the way ahead

From IC – papers for the meeting of the Regeneration Committee – Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan

As above – Community Council review update

Email from IC's Community Services Manager seeking sponsorship for his efforts over 'Seventy Wild Miles' to support the charity CLIC Sargent – at members' discretion

From the ASCC – request for feedback on the School Closure (Scotland) Bill

From the ASCC – notification of the appointment of a National Development Officer Statistics re electorate in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay from Stuart McMillan MSP's office

The secretary reported she had registered for the Scottish Government's Online News Information

Further to an article in the Greenock Telegraph the secretary approached Awards for All Scotland for an information pack re applying for lottery cash

Noted – Inverkip Primary School fete is on Saturday 16th May – the secretary suggested that – if approved by the school – it might be helpful to the community if the CC set up a stall at the fete – not this year but perhaps the following year - to hear complaints and suggestions from those who may not be able to attend Business Meetings

7. Treasurer's Report

Ron Potter reported that the current amount in the CC account is £136.67. He said he had confronted IC officials with the population statistics obtained from MSP Stuart McMillan's office and from other sources of his own – statistics IC claimed they weren't able to provide and which form the basis of the CC's funding. IC official Stuart Jamieson has said he will make sure the CC receives a cheque for £156, the outstanding monies for 2008-2009. Based on that sum the projected balance for year end March 2009 will be £292.67. Ron Potter said he's not closing the books yet. His concern was that as in years past IC would snaffle the unpaid amounts. Stuart Jamieson has instructed that £3000 be found to add to this year's £17000 for community councils so that the budget for 2010 should be £20000. Ron Potter said that on the 7th of May IC was discussing CC boundaries and that would affect the funding received.

8. Planning Matters

Wemyss Bay – 2 Station Cottages – internal alterations to form new bathroom
Inverkip – 14 Ardoch Drive – notification of planning appeal re decking in rear garden (in retrospect)

Wemyss Bay – 38 Leapmoor Drive – notification of an appeal re erection of a dwelling house

April Planning Board meeting

Inverkip - Stewart Milne Homes – Amendment to Condition 29 of planning consent – land at Inverkip Station and land bound by Finnockbog Road, Everton Farm Road, Hill Farm housing development and Berfern Farm – it was decided Head of Planning be granted delegated power to grant the application following agreement being reached with the applicant that the first instalment to be made by the developer towards community facilities shall be paid after the completion of the seventieth house

A report to the Planning Board re the above – by Head of Planning. He reported it had not been possible to reach an agreement with the applicant in this matter. It was recommend the application be granted

2 letters from IC noting the CC's interest in the amendment sought by Stewart Milne Holdings to Condition 29

Inverkip – Seafield, Finnockbog Road – erection of one and half storey extension on side of dwellinghouse

9. Date and time of next meeting – Thursday 4th of June 2009

10. Any other business

Ron Potter said that as a CC we have to consider and write an action plan – he will email information to members. He also said it was very important for the CC to consider involving young people in the Council

Ron Potter has learned that IC is happy to print and distribute CC newsletters. The CC to consider

Cliff Lyons updated the meeting on computer facilities at the Pavilion in Inverkip and said that a Fitness for the Over 50s course is being introduced

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10.20pm.