

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Business Meeting held on the 7th of September 2006 Inverkip Hotel 7.30pm

Present: Innes Nelson (chairman); Ron Potter (vice chairman); Paul Maloney; Harold McPherson; Lynne Chambers (secretary)

Apologies: Hugh Ritchie, Cllr Eric Forbes

In attendance: Cliff Lyons; Brian McArthur; Isabel Hunter; N. Cupples; Jim McIntosh; Jim Stewart; Andy Lynch; PC Jane Perratt; PC Willie Howatt; PC Mark Noone and PC Billy Gray

3. Police Matters: PC Howatt informed the business meeting he would no longer be the local community officer as he was moving and introduced PC Jane Perratt who will be his replacement. The Community Council trusts that crime statistics will be made available to them in October. PC Howatt said the police had been targeting speeders on Spey Road/Finnockbog Road in Inverkip. At this point they're trying to educate drivers, but will move to enforcement if required. PC Perratt said they would contact Road Management to get more signs and perhaps move the 30mph signs under the railway bridge further up the hill. PC Howatt reported he'd been contacted by Beryl Ashworth of Harbourside, Inverkip, a member of the neighbourhood watch scheme, to report – probably because of the good weather – numbers of campers and neds causing damage close to the houses. There were reports too of trees being set on fire at Ardgowan and the Daff Glen. Isabel Hunter said youngsters were still causing trouble at HMS Dalriada. Brian McArthur also reported youth disturbances – young people shouting abuse at everyone late at night. Cliff Lyons said he'd phoned the police at 10pm to report around a dozen youths singing sectarian songs. The police came out but as they were not familiar with the area he had to direct them where to go to stop the trouble. Cliff Lyons also reported a recent incident at Marine Court. He had dialed 999 a few Fridays ago to report wheelie bins being stolen and taken across to Ardgowan to burn. He made the emergency call because the youths were running riot. He complained there had been no communication or co-ordination by the police. He had been frightened by the incident. The police advice was to write to Superintendent Stewart, copied to Cllr Eric Forbes and Duncan McNeil MSP with these concerns. Cliff Lyons advised those present always to get an incident number from the police if bins are stolen or vandalised as they would be replaced free of charge by Inverclyde Council rather than the usual charge of £35. Ron

Potter referred to a Hill Farm, Inverkip resident who says he is fed up of gangs of teenagers blighting the development. He was quoted as saying there are always neds hanging about the park, drinking. One night they even brought their sleeping bags with them. The article appeared in the *Greenock Telegraph* but the police seemed unaware of the incident. PC Howatt said housebreaking statistics were up in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay – sneak thieves were entering homes taking advantage of unlocked doors even while householders may be in their gardens. His advice was to lock all house and garage doors if in the back garden. There were also complaints to the officers about the attitude of call centre operatives, particularly their lack of knowledge of local areas. PC Howatt suggested the service should be given time to improve. It will get better he said. He explained that 999 calls were prioritised by senior civilian and police staff. . Ron Potter said it had been reported to him that following a recent road accident in Wemyss Bay involving a schoolchild, with police officers in attendance, it took 40 minutes for an ambulance to arrive. PC Noone said when a 999 call is made, particularly where an injured child is involved, all services are notified. It was decided the Community Council should write to the police expressing their concern about these issues. The officers were thanked for their attendance

4. Minutes of the Business Meeting held on the 10th of August 2006 – Matters Arising

Water and Sewerage: Ron Potter reported he'd learned Scottish Water has a planned programme of improvements. In the Langhouse/Swallow Brae area of Inverkip the old water mains are not standing up and there are regular bursts. He said there has to be consensus between Scottish Water and property developers, but he fears any improvement may be a long time coming. Paul Maloney said the problems seemed to originate up the hill in Inverkip. He reported that during recent heavy rain blocked up drains on Finnockbog Road led to sewage water running through his garden and into the Daff Burn. And this was not the first time. He said it was dreadful children having to tramp through sewage to get to school. Innes Nelson said the Community Council should involve the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency in this matter and take pictures as proof. Cliff Lyons said that Scottish Water had taken responsibility for the flooding in Main Street, Inverkip and if there was sewage in the Burn they should be prosecuted. Jim McIntosh said he thought it was a matter for the Scottish Executive. If the Community Council is writing to SEPA they should write to Duncan McNeil MSP too. Ron Potter said Cllr Forbes had been for a look at the situation. Heavy rain shouldn't affect sewers he added.

Inverclyde Community Council Forum Presentation Lunch: Ron Potter reported the purpose of the seminar held at the Tontine Hotel on Friday 25th August 2006 was to obtain feedback to the Consultation Paper that was completed by Community Councils and Local Authorities. The basis of the questionnaire was to evaluate the present co-operation between Community Councils as a third stage of local government and the Local Authorities. Anne Callaghan (Public Services Reform Group) was given the task of obtaining the information and then presenting her findings to representatives of the Scottish Executive as well as Inverclyde Council and attending members of all

Community Councils within Inverclyde. Midway through the evaluation, 19 Community Council, 30 Local Authority and 436 responses had been studied and considered.

Unfortunately the power point presentation she had prepared had to be abandoned as not all processes had been completed, and responses from the Executive and MSPs had not been released. However it was clear from the responses that while no additional funding was available, there were vast differences between the assistance and support given by Local Authorities to Community Councils. The findings to date clearly show that Community Councils throughout Scotland want more clarity as to their role and how they can participate with and be empowered to serve their communities. Clarity is also required for the proposals once again to alter the Community Council boundaries despite once more receiving massive opposition to any changes being imposed. A full report of the seminar will be made available to Local Authorities and Community Councils.

Ron Potter said two copies of a new document – Statement of Intent between Inverclyde Council and Inverclyde Community Councils' Forum Council have been lodged with the secretary

Residents' parking in Wemyss Bay: In his absence, Cllr Forbes had emailed information to the secretary. He reported the consultants had finished their feasibility study for park and ride at Wemyss Bay pierhead. They are in the process of producing a report outlining all the issues and their suggested options. Cllr Forbes awaits this report

Approach to Bankfoot roundabout: Cllr Forbes said he was arranging a meeting with the Scottish Executive for them to come to have a good look at the roundabout. Before that he was going with an Amey representative and then with Inverclyde Council's own engineer to inspect the roundabout.

Loch Thom Road: At last month's meeting Isabel Hunter had called for 'sleeping policemen' on the Loch Thom road as she is concerned about speeding motorists causing near misses. Cllr Forbes responded by saying the road is regarded as a rural road and outwith the built up area and therefore is derestricted. You don't get speed bumps on these roads he said. The configuration of the road slows speed. Bad driving, he continued, is a different matter and should be dealt with by the police.

Letter from Scottish Natural Heritage: handed in to the secretary by Cllr Forbes

Website: An email was received from Brian Purdie of Inverclyde Council. He confirmed websites operated by Community Councils are gaining in popularity and are to be encouraged. He asked to be kept informed of the proposed content of the website.

Wemyss Bay Newsletter: Chairman Innes Nelson had submitted an article to the Village News following agreement a positive effort should be made to provide more information to the newsletter.

The Minutes were approved

5. Secretary's report and correspondence:

Letter from Planning Aid asking us to renew our subscription. It was unanimously agreed by the Community Council we should, and will be passed to acting treasurer Ron Potter to action

Letter from Primary Care & Community Services Users' Group inviting representatives of the Community Council to attend their monthly meetings. Lynne Chambers said she would attend the meeting

Letter from MSP Duncan McNeil enclosing a response to him from Fraser Williamson re the proposed windfarm on the Leapmoor

From Inverclyde Council – re Inverclyde Local Plan (2005) Affordable Housing Provision

From Inverclyde Council – Audit Committee Agenda 2006

From Inverclyde Council – Community Committee Agenda 2006

From Inverclyde Council – Health and Social Care Committee Agenda 2006

From Inverclyde Council – Education and Lifelong Learning document

6. Community Windpower/objections: Innes Nelson reported he had delivered 568 letters of objection to the proposed windfarm on the Leapmoor, plus objections from the Ladymoor Wind Factory Action Group, most without envelopes. Innes Nelson had corresponded with Fraser Williamson, Head of Planning Services after it was learned the Council would consider the objections as one objection. Fraser Williamson said that where such a block submission occurs or where a petition containing many signatures is lodged it is not his practice to send out a letter of acknowledgement to each individual or name on a petition. He would however write to the individual delivering the block submission or petition or the first name on the petition. On receipt of this information the objections were retrieved to be inserted into separate envelopes and returned. A letter has been received from Community Windpower in response to the Community Council's letter of 16th August 2006 and the contents were read out to those attending the business meeting. The letter will be replied to

7. Stewart Milne application: Jim McIntosh provided an update from the Kyles Residents' Association on the Hill Farm development. Following a meeting at the Kyles with David Cairns MP, letters had been received, via Mr Cairns, from Inverclyde Council, First Scotrail and Network Rail. The letter from Inverclyde Council had confirmed that, since Network Rail was taking no responsibility for the proposed bridge, the ownership of the structure and the attendant liabilities would rest with the Council. The letter from First Scotrail was something of a surprise, he said, since they stated the bridge 'falls outside our area of responsibility'. Network Rail's letter confirmed what was already known – they have no interest in the bridge – it simply crossed the railway line. As a result of this the Kyles Residents' Association had written to Fraser Williamson, Head of Planning at Inverclyde Council, requesting confirmation that the Council would now be applying to the Department for Transport (DfT) for dispensation on the proposed gradient. The reply from Mr Williamson had, in turn, raised other aspects which the Association is now pursuing. Replies from Network Rail and DfT were still awaited. The Kyles Residents' Association has now learned that, following the legal opinion submitted by lawyers acting for Stewart Milne Holdings Limited, Inverclyde Council had also requested a separate legal opinion. Since this had been obtained at taxpayers' expense, the Association had requested a copy of the opinion

submitted to the Council. A decision on this was awaited. Cliff Lyons observed that Inverclyde Council is supporting the developer in the matter of the bridge. Brian McArthur warned that we shouldn't put all our faith in a bridge to prevent the application being approved. Cliff Lyons said Inverclyde Council would be held to the letter of the law. Innes Nelson said Policy H6 Hill Farm, Inverkip in the Inverclyde Local Plan (2005) said the release of area ho67 was conditional on the masterplan providing a pedestrian link, including footbridge, to Inverkip Station

8. Treasurer's Report: acting treasurer Ron Potter reported the account balance is £355.35. He said that around 99% of documentation had now been passed to him by the former treasurer Cliff Lyons, and a summary of Income and Expenditure from the 5th of February 2004 to the present. Ron Potter said he had received that day a letter from Brian Purdie of Inverclyde Council saying that Finance Services had adjusted certain sections of the Community Council's financial records. He also said we should note that since the balance of our account is in excess of 50% of the annual grant, a plan showing the Community Council's proposed expenditure to the end of March 2007 requires to be submitted. Brian Purdie also pointed out payments to Community Councillors are shown against a miscellaneous heading in the records submitted. He reiterated earlier advice that details of the nature of payments made to individual members of the Community Council should be recorded and payments other than those made in accordance with the expenses policy, should be agreed in advance by the Community Council and the decision minuted accordingly

9. Planning Matters:

Inverkip – Harbourside – erection of pontoon access canopies and security office
Wemyss Bay – 4 Melfort Road – extension to dwellinghouse
Wemyss Bay – 15 Rannoch Road – erection of two storey side extension and front porch
Wemyss Bay – 33 Leapmoor Drive – erection of a conservatory
Inverkip – 66 Langhouse Road – change of use of open ground to garden ground and associated works to create parking area

10. Community Facilities: Innes Nelson announced a consultative survey was being distributed by the Community Council to homes across Inverkip to discover from residents what facilities they would like to see in a community centre. He went through a list of actions undertaken by the Community Council outlining correspondence and meetings with people and organisations who could offer help and advice. Jim McIntosh said there appeared to be a great deal of activity by the Community Council in the last 6 weeks. Lynne Chambers pointed out that it wasn't until mid-July the Community Council learned from Fraser Williamson that builders Stewart Milne would not provide land or build a community centre for the village around 6 odd weeks ago. Jim McIntosh asked several times how the Community Council would take the project forward. He thought it should be decided by elected members. Paul Maloney asked – like us? Jim McIntosh said he had supported the Community Council on many issues but not this one. He thought it should be taken forward by elected independent members – an elected

steering committee. Again Paul Maloney asked - like us? Brian McArthur said he couldn't see anyone else other than the Community Council to take it forward. Paul Maloney asked Inverkip Community Enterprise (ICE) representatives or adherents whether in any framework they could work with the Community Council. Three times he asked the question and received no reply. Andy Lynch said it appeared the two groups were not that far apart. Ron Potter said if the groups fragmented it could cause dissent, and all groups within the village should work together towards the creation of a community centre.

11. Date and Time of next meeting: (Thursday 5th of October 2006 at 7.30pm)

12. Any other business: Innes Nelson stated the Community Council was seeking new members and asked if anyone was willing or knew of anyone who might be willing to become a member of the Community Council. Brian McArthur expressed an interest in the work of the Community Council. Innes Nelson asked if he was willing to become a co-opted member of the Council. He said he was. Harold McPherson proposed Brian McArthur as a co-opted member of the Community Council, seconded by Lynne Chambers. He was welcomed to the Council.

The meeting ended at 9.40pm.