

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the business meeting held on Thursday
4th January 2007 in the Inverkip Hotel at 7.50pm,
following the AGM

1. Chairman's welcome and opening remarks: in the absence of chairman Innes Nelson (due to illness) vice chairman Ron Potter opened the meeting and welcomed those attending

2. Apologies for absence: Innes Nelson; Paul Maloney and Cllr Eric Forbes

In attendance: Fran McIntosh; Jim McIntosh; N Cupples; Cliff Lyons; Angela Neil; James Neil

3. Election of Community Council members: Ron Potter explained if there was not an overwhelming number of applications for membership of the Community Council that would take the numbers beyond that specified in the Community Council Scheme, there was no requirement for an election. As there was not, the members of the Community Council remained, as did their posts. Ron Potter said given his background he believed himself qualified to be treasurer, but was prepared to relinquish his post as vice chairman should any other member wish to take on that post. There were no takers so Ron Potter continues in his dual role.

4. Minutes of the business meeting held on Thursday 7th December 2006:

Matters arising:

Stewart Milne application update: Ron Potter reported that he and Fran McIntosh had attended a meeting of Inverclyde Council on Disability (ICOD). ICOD said it was due to have a meeting with Cllr Eric Forbes, his deputy convener on the Planning Committee and Head of Planning Services at Inverclyde Council, Fraser Williamson. ICOD does not approve of any relaxation of Disability Discrimination Act requirements for the proposed bridge at Inverkip station. However, they emphasised they were able to discuss only disability issues regarding the bridge, and would not comment on location, ownership etc. Cliff Lyons asked if there was another disability organisation that could comment. Ron Potter said Inclusion Scotland could and added that he is to have a meeting with solicitor Joseph Bryce of the Legal Services Agency Scotland (recommended by ICOD) who acts on behalf of disabled people. The meeting is to be held on Saturday 6th of January at 11.35am at Inverkip station and Ron Potter invited any interested party to join him then. The secretary said she'd received a copy of Inverclyde Council's proposed Disability Equality Scheme and passed it to Ron Potter.

Secretary's report and correspondence: at last month's business meeting an email from a group, Stop Climate Chaos was detailed. After consideration it was decided not to subscribe to the group.
The Minutes were approved.

5. Secretary's report and correspondence:

A letter from Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board outlining the future of hospital services in Inverclyde and Renfrewshire, with a booklet describing the proposed changes to services. Hugh Ritchie took the letter and booklet to consider. The secretary reminded Community Council members of a meeting that was planned with doctors in Greenock and said she had been unable to contact the person dealing with the meeting. She would continue to try to find a mutually convenient date. Received from the secretary of Inverkip Community Enterprise Minutes of a meeting held with Community Councillors and a copy of ICE's Constitution.
From Riverside Inverclyde an invitation to attend a Question Time event it is staging on Tuesday 16th January 2007. Brian McArthur indicated he would attend.
An email was received from Greenock Libraries agreeing to accept an emailed copy of the Community Council's minutes for printing off and storage at Inverkip Library.
A communication from the Association of Scottish Community Councils
Inverclyde Community Councils' Forum notice of meeting and Minutes
Letter from MSP Duncan McNeil about the campaign to save Inverclyde Royal Hospital
A letter from Inverclyde Council re the alteration to town centres and retail development
Letter of objection sent by the Community Council to Community Windpower Ltd's application for further wind turbines near Dalry

6. Treasurer's report: Ron Potter reported horrendous dealings with the Bank of Scotland in an effort to change the Council's account signatories. This entailed 15 trips to the bank, wrong forms, incomplete forms etc. In the end he was reimbursed £120 by the bank. He reported income of £2912.71, expenditure of £1179.06 leaving a balance of £1733.65 as at 31st December 2006. Ron Potter outlined details of proposed spending before the end of the financial year of £1911.90. He said it was his intention to close the books at the end of March with a balance of around £32.51

7. Planning matters:

32 Lomond Road, Wemyss Bay – re-roofing of side extension and front porch
14 Kishorn Road, Wemyss Bay – alterations and extension to dwellinghouse
Surgery, Main Street, Inverkip – change of use of doctors' surgery to private dwelling

8. Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 1st of February 2007

9. Any other business: Ron Potter showed photocopies of two articles from the Largs and Millport newspaper – one an announcement of the Community Council's AGM and the other information about the new village magazine for Inverkip and Wemyss Bay,

'Village People'. The article ended by saying the Community Council's newsletter would be 'following soon'. That was news to the Community Council. Cliff Lyons confirmed the magazine came from the same stable as the previous Inverkip newsletter and the same team as organises inverkip.com. It was remarked upon there was no Community Council column as there had been in the previous newsletter, nor a column from Cllr Eric Forbes. The publication was admired for its quality, but it was felt the content was a little fragmented. The next issue will be awaited with interest. It was felt the advertising wouldn't support the glossy publication and it was wondered who was funding the magazine. Brian McArthur felt it wasn't representing the people of Inverkip but the people who were producing it.

Ron Potter reported some snippets from the Inverclyde Community Council Forum including a statement by the Chief Executive of Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board that IRH would remain a 'district general hospital' for the foreseeable future. He also exhibited a cutting from the Mail on Sunday of 12th of November 2006, the headline – 'How public land worth £1bn simply disappeared'. The article dealt with common good land being snapped up by developers and local councils and it appears there is no recourse available to the public. It was agreed a lot of Greenock and Gourrock land had been 'snatched'. Ron Potter added that if you listened to politicians it was clear greenbelt land was no longer sacrosanct.

ICOD meeting: Ron Potter asked Fran McIntosh for her report on the meeting with ICOD they'd both attended re the proposed bridge at Inverkip station. Fran McIntosh thought it had been a good, positive meeting but said that two of the executive members appeared uncomfortable with statements she and Ron Potter had made. He agreed. Ron Potter was asked who funded ICOD. He said a small element of its income came from Inverclyde Council but the remainder from the Scottish Executive. ICOD had asked – where is the developer in this? ICOD is totally against a stepped footbridge but not a ramped footbridge. Mrs McIntosh thought ICOD would fight the proposed bridge at Inverkip station its own way and would do so very well. Jim McIntosh of the Kyles Residents' Association commented that at December's business meeting Cllr Forbes had said that perhaps no dispensation for the bridge would be required. He provided an update on the matter of dispensation for the proposed footbridge. Despite Inverclyde Council's Planning Department being advised that dispensation would be required for such a bridge, it was evident from photocopies of telephone messages obtained by Jim McIntosh that, up to a week before the Planning Committee meeting, the Department had not instigated enquiries to determine the position. He had obtained copies of the relevant correspondence, including notes of telephone conversations, and it was only two days before the Planning Committee meeting that the Department began to realise that dispensation would be required. In the past three weeks Jim McIntosh had obtained from First Scotrail a detailed plan which shows the area of Inverkip station leased from Network Rail. When one compares the proposed site of the bridge it is now quite clear, he said, that the structure will be built on land leased to First Scotrail who are the station managers. Jim McIntosh had received a letter from Transport Scotland which indicated that, according to the definition of location, there is no doubt that the bridge would be captured by the regulations. This was also confirmed by the Department for Transport

which is the body with whom a request for dispensation must be lodged and which will give its decision since this is a reserved matter. Prior to Christmas, a meeting had been held with Miss Anne Martin, European Affairs and Standards Manager (Rail Regulation and Standards) of Transport Scotland who had been given copies of the plan showing the area leased to First Scotrail and a copy of the plan of the proposed bridge. She had again confirmed that dispensation would be required. A further reply from Miss Martin is awaited. However, no request for dispensation can be made until Inverclyde Council decides upon the ownership of the bridge and whether it is prepared to accept the financial and legal obligations devolving upon such an issue. This will be decided, Jim McIntosh said, by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee in early February.

It was stressed again that only the Department for Transport can grant dispensation for a non-compliant bridge. Fran McIntosh said she thought it was time to bring David Cairns MP back into the loop. Jim McIntosh also reported that he'd learned from Network Rail that they have many bridges across Scotland but do not know what future maintenance costs might be for a bridge such as the one proposed at Inverkip station. It was confirmed only statutory bodies, such as Network Rail or Inverclyde Council could apply for dispensation, but ownership would have to be established and that could take time. The dispensation itself could take two to three months.

Angela and James Neil asked if the Community Council had heard anything further about an application to build a block of flat in Wemyss Bay, to which the Council had objected.

Nothing had been heard by the Council, but they were advised to contact Inverclyde Council's planning department directly to discover what progress the application was making

The meeting ended at 9.50pm