

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Business Meeting held on Thursday 2nd of July 2009 at the Inverkip Hotel, 7.30pm

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

Apologies: Cllr Gerry Dorrian

In attendance: Cllr Innes Nelson; Cllr Ciano Rebecchi; PC Jason Logsdon; PC Kayley Teasdale; Cliff Lyons; Brian Blacklaw and Stephen Skirving

Vice chairman Hugh Ritchie extended a welcome to all attending the meeting.

3. Police Matters

The officers reported 11 crimes – 5 had been detected – 45% detection rate

3 acts of Vandalism

1 Breach of the Peace

4 Thefts

1 Bail offence

2 Road Traffic Accidents

Cliff Lyons said there had been three acts of vandalism – graffiti – that afternoon, and PC Gray had attended.

While the officers were in attendance the secretary and treasurer said they had that afternoon visited a resident whose home bordered the play park at Spey Road in Inverkip. Another resident had emailed the secretary to report damage to the fence surrounding the play park. It would appear the fence is damaged on a daily basis, 2 slats being kicked out so that youngsters can push through to the other side. Some living close to the play park reiterated they would like to see it closed. At last month's Business Meeting PC Gray had been asked if he could discover the number of times residents in the area had called reporting anti-social behaviour in the previous few months. PC Logsdon on his behalf reported it would appear there had been 16 disturbance calls since the beginning of the year – but four or five calls regarding the same incident would be considered as one incident. Members of the Community Council felt the number was low, given the submissions made to them by residents. The secretary said she had placed calls every day that week to Stewart Milne Homes and to two factors' offices trying to discover if the play park has been handed over to residents or whether SMH is still responsible for maintenance. She will continue to try to discover an answer. The former access path is still blocked off but vandalism, it was reported, occurs every day

Cliff Lyons also said he had phoned 999 on Tuesday to report 10-15 cows wandering across the A78

Cllr Rebecchi offered some numbers – Anti-Social Behaviour Helpline etc and it was agreed these numbers would be placed on the CC's website and notice board

The officers were thanked for their attendance

4. Minutes of Business Meeting held on Thursday 4th June 2009. Matters arising:

Dog fouling, Wemyss Bay Road, Wemyss Bay – Ron Potter had said there were no dog excrement bins in Wemyss Bay Road despite the fact it was a favoured route for dog-walkers. Cllr Rebecchi said it was a private road. He had investigated and discovered that even though refuse bins could be collected, unless all residents applied for a dog dirt bin one could not be installed. Even an objection from one resident would prevent it

Inverclyde Council Community Council Working Group – Cllr Rebecchi had been unable to discover the date of the next meeting but will keep pushing for it

A78 Safety Audit and Bankfoot roundabout – the secretary had written to MSPs Duncan McNeil and Stuart McMillan following the reply from Amey that it currently has no instructions to investigate either re-design or re-engineering at the Bankfoot roundabout. There were prompt replies and on-going correspondence from both MSPs who are taking up the matter with Transport Scotland and Amey. The secretary had also informed the MSPs the CC was unhappy about the safety audit being conducted during the school holidays and while there are long hours of daylight. Both Stuart McMillan and Cllr Nelson, at their meeting with Transport Scotland, suggested a wintertime review would be helpful. Amey has also been instructed to carry out a speed limit review. Cllr Nelson also said they would consider the phasing of the traffic lights at Inverclyde Academy. The secretary said – while looking through CC files – she had come across two reports, both by Amey for Transport Scotland and both dated 2006, dealing with ingress and egress at Inverkip on the A78 and the Bankfoot roundabout. She had alerted the MSPs to the reports. There are a number of recommendations in the Bankfoot roundabout report and it was agreed the secretary would write to Amey to discover how many of their recommendations had been implemented. Brian Blacklaw asked the secretary why she had approached only two MSPs instead of the 5 representing the area. She replied that both these MSPs had recently been involved in A78 safety issues and it had seemed appropriate to contact them. It was agreed it would probably have been better to contact all MSPs

Rusting Goalposts on entry to Inverkip - Brian McArthur had not had the opportunity to speak to Rico Giovanacci, but will pursue the matter with him

Families with additional support needs - an email of thanks had been received from the organisation thanking the CC for its support

Letter of thanks – sent to Capt Marsh for his efforts in delivering flyers for the recent public meeting

Native Woodlands Survey – further to the letter received from the Forestry Commission Scotland alerting the CC to its research project – Native Woodlands Survey of Scotland – and the inquiry whether there were any woodland access restrictions in our area, the secretary had written to the Commission about **the fencing closing off the access path at Everton Road, Inverkip**

Protecting Scotland's Regional Parks Bill – the secretary had emailed MSP Kenneth Gibson about his Bill and said the CC would respond to the consultation document. Cllr Nelson said Kenneth Gibson's Bill was not just about wind turbines in regional parks but about any kind of industrialisation. He felt it would probably be next June before the Bill could be brought to the Parliament

The Minutes were proposed as accurate by Brian McArthur and seconded by Harold McPherson

5. Resignation of chairman Innes Nelson – following his election to Inverclyde Council, Innes Nelson tendered a letter of resignation as chairman of the CC. Vice chairman Hugh Ritchie said he had been a very worthy chairman and thanked him for his hard work and dedication in the service of the communities of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. He had been an outstanding chairman and the best wishes of the CC went with him as he takes up his new role. The members asked Hugh Ritchie if he would act as chairman in the meantime, to which he agreed. Cliff Lyons asked when a new chairman would be elected. He was told there was no requirement to elect a chairman as there was uncertainty when the next elections would take place. The guidance indicates that – with Hugh Ritchie’s agreement – he can remain as acting chairman

6. Secretary’s report and correspondence

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde newsletter

From Inverclyde Council – a list of grants made to voluntary organisations, including:

Inverkip Bowling Club - £1450

Inverkip Community Enterprise - £1000

Inverkip Community Enterprise - £5000

Friends of Wemyss Bay Station - £250

Cliff Lyons pointed out that Inverkip Community Enterprise returned the £5000 directly to Inverclyde Council for the running of a summer play scheme at Inverkip primary school. This rather confused those attending. Brian Blacklaw said it sounded like creative accounting, but agreed it would benefit the village. It was agreed it might be a way of maximising the amount by paying it to voluntary organisations. Cllr Rebecchi said he didn’t know if it came from the regular education budget, but would find out.

The Secretary said she had phoned and emailed three times to an Awards for All representative – following a workshop in Greenock – asking for an information pack outlining recent changes to the programme. There has been no reply but she will continue to try to get the information

From the Association of Scottish Community Councils an invitation to attend a ‘Talk Togetherquestion your MSPs’ session at Paisley Abbey on the 22nd of August

From the ASCC – the spring newsletter – The Community Councillor

7. Treasurer’s Report

Ron Potter reported the CC had finally received a cheque for £1100 from Inverclyde Council and he had indicated to Stuart Jamieson and Willie Wilson of the Council that he wasn’t happy with the allocation. An email had been received from Willie Wilson which said representations had been made to him by some CCs saying their allocation should be updated to reflect current population figures. However he didn’t think it appropriate to implement revised grants for one and not for all. He would continue to use the current grant allocations until the Scheme is reviewed. So he is not taking any account of updated figures presented by the treasurer. Ron Potter said the matter had been handed to the Planning Department to ascertain the electorate in all postcodes.

Brian Blacklaw expressed his incredulity that Inverclyde Council didn't have up-to-date figures of the electorate, particularly as there had been a European Election and a local by-election within the last month, and there were electoral officers employed by the Council. Ron Potter said to Cllr Nelson that he should have access to a breakdown of the figures for Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. Cllr Nelson said he hadn't seen separate figures and that farms, caravan parks etc all had to be taken into account. Brian Blacklaw said that this CC had got its figures in to Inverclyde Council and was being penalised. The treasurer reported a balance in the CC's account of £1144.74. The £1100 he said was made up of £700 core grant, a grant balance of £100 and an additional payment of £300. The grant balance was money left over from payments to CCs in the last financial year and the additional £300 from money snaffled by revenue and retrieved - £3000 to be divided between 10 CCs. The amount of £21,000 was the total amount available for CC finances in the 2009-10 financial year, of which each CC received £1100. Harold McPherson said the CC had been short-changed for years. The secretary confirmed that three emails had been sent to Willie Wilson – one about the allocation of funds; one about the methodology used to allocate funds and one inquiring whether the CC was currently insured. There had been neither reply nor acknowledgment to these messages sent on the 15th of June. Cllr Rebecchi said if no reply was received from IC within a week to let the councillors know and they would chase matters. Harold McPherson asked what the insurance covered and was told public liability, equipment etc. Cllr Rebecchi said he was almost certain insurance would be in place, but would follow it up. In answer to the question how CCs are funded, Cllr Nelson said the money comes from the Scottish Government and then is distributed by local authorities. The treasurer was asked if he could roughly estimate how much more money would come to the CC on current population figures. He thought £400-£450

A request for renewal of the annual subscription from Save Your Regional Parks pressure group was agreed by members and passed to the treasurer for payment

8. Planning Matters

The secretary said she'd received a letter from Inverclyde Council with the news that – following a lengthy period of consideration – the applicant for a scheme to build 10 wind turbines at Leapmoor Forest, Inverkip had withdrawn the application. This announcement was met with pleasure and relief although the CC realises that given the site's proximity to the National Grid the area remains vulnerable to further applications and it must remain vigilant

On the subject of windfarms an email had been received from Philip Norris of the CaRES group – who supported the CC in its opposition to the Leapmoor application – to say a further windfarm (8 x 100m turbines) application on the Cowal peninsula has been lodged, this time at Strone Saul Hill, just west of Sandbank. He says the turbines will be seen from Gourock, the Battery Park and the Greenock Cut. In line with CC policy a letter of objection – in agreement with members - has been sent to Argyll and Bute Council

Wemyss Bay – 2a Forbes Place – erection of conservatory

Inverkip – The Manse, Langhouse Road – proposed conversion of existing garage to form additional accommodation and erection of new lock up garage

The secretary reported that – much as the CC had feared – contaminated water had been discharged into the Daff Burn from the Stewart Milne Group Ltd development at Ardgowan Rise, Hill Farm, Inverkip. The measures that had been installed on site were not sufficient to ensure drainage was managed appropriately and to prevent the escape of silt pollution. The company was fined £6000. Cllr Nelson said his complaint had been raised by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. Cliff Lyons said he had phoned SEPA regularly with his concerns and had been asked by SEPA to monitor the situation

Hugh Ritchie said 4 members of the CC had met that afternoon with Fraser Williamson, Inverclyde Council's Head of Planning, for a briefing on the changes to the Scottish planning system. Hugh Ritchie said there were good parts, some not so good. But it did appear there would be more control locally rather than plans being regularly referred to a Reporter in Edinburgh. Also there should be more CC consultation and contribution

9. Power Station site

The secretary said she had been alerted to neighbour notification being issued regarding the Power Station site in Inverkip. She had immediately contacted the consultants to express the CC's disappointment it had not been kept informed that an outline planning application had been lodged with IC, and had not received documentation pertaining to the application. The consultants apologised and have sent a disc containing the plans to the secretary. In the meantime a letter, with the agreement of members, has been sent to Inverclyde Council saying the CC will be objecting on the grounds of over-development and over-capacity on the A78

10. IBM site

The secretary said information had been released two days before the meeting, of plans for a commercial and business park on the former IBM site in Spango Valley, to be known as Valley Park. With only basic information available at this time, the proposal was generally welcomed as bringing jobs to Inverclyde and an acceptance the required infrastructure was in place

11. Inverclyde Community Council Working Group

A letter has been received from Inverclyde Forum of Community Councils saying that following a meeting with Inverclyde Council the Forum has been successful in securing 4 places to sit on a revised Community Council Working Group to discuss proposed Community Council boundaries. The Forum requires a nomination from each CC. If more than 4 names are received a ballot will decide members to be selected to sit on the CCWG. Cllr Rebecchi said his own view was there should be a representative from each CC, and Hugh Ritchie agreed with that. However Ron Potter said there would be consultation with all who wished to pass their views to the Forum. Lynne Chambers proposed Ron Potter as IWBC's nominee, seconded by Harold McPherson. Ron Potter said that Stuart Hunter, who used to be an ASCC representative, had written to Inverclyde Council's Chief Executive John Mundell to say Inverclyde Council was wrong to have 4 CC representatives and that all 10 CCs

should be represented. He alluded to a draft regulation the ASCC is proposing but it is Ron Potter's opinion that he is trying to stir up matters

12. Business Meeting venues

Ron Potter said he thought it appropriate the CC should meet in split venues – in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay and would like to propose one meeting in the hotel, followed by a meeting in Inverkip primary school and then one in Wemyss Bay primary school. There has been criticism that CCs can be too parochial and he thought we should meet in both areas. Hugh Ritchie said the CC had held meetings in Wemyss Bay, but with little response. However it was felt it had to be tried. When schools return the secretary will contact the janitor at Wemyss Bay primary school to discover if a notice board on the railings outside the school could be used by the CC. Another potential location for meetings in Wemyss Bay was the Friends of Wemyss Bay Station's rooms. It was however thought parking might be a problem. Cllr Nelson, a member of the group, will check on parking. Ron Potter said the stairs to the room where Business Meetings are held were challenging for anyone with a disability and there was an obligation to try to find alternative accommodation. It was agreed the September meeting should be held at the Inverkip Hotel and the secretary agreed to discover the regulations and costs of school lets, and if possible establish a new venue routine from October. The plan is to try the new system for 3-6 months

13. Date and time of next meeting –

Hugh Ritchie proposed – because of the holiday season – that no Business Meeting should be held in August. This was seconded by Brian McArthur. The next meeting of the CC will be on Thursday 3rd September in the Inverkip Hotel at 7.30pm

14. Any other business –

Stephen Skirving asked if any progress had been made in having the access path at Everton Road, Inverkip, reopened. The secretary said information and advice was coming in from, for example, Planning Aid for Scotland but more information was required. It was a complicated issue, but one the CC is pursuing. Ron Potter had looked at Inverclyde Council's OS maps which show no sign of the access path, unlike the maps the CC has. Aerial photographs don't show the path either. Cllr Nelson said the maps going back to 1965 show it quite clearly. Ron Potter said Head of Planning Fraser Williamson claimed that though roadways show that farm vehicles have traversed the area it doesn't mean it's open for anyone to walk through. Ron Potter observed that people who used the route as a short cut to the farm house were privileged, it was a favour. There were never enough people on an ad hoc basis to say it was a right of way. Stephen Skirving was told enquiries and work on the issue continue

14. Any other business –

The secretary said she understood the payment of the £50,000 Wemyss Bay Bond had finally been made to Inverclyde Council. Liz Roders said it must have been 18 or 19 years ago the Bond was first mentioned. The secretary asked if this was an opportunity for an application to the Big Lottery Fund to double up the funds, but was told with the £40,000 allocated for a games area in Wemyss Bay added to the £50,000

that that would be a sizeable sum! Liz Roders said 6 months to a year ago a committee was set up to consider how best to spend the funds. She said she would discover the name of the chair of the committee to pass to Cllr Nelson. The CC would also be interested in the discussions. Has the money for a games area been moved elsewhere? The CC would like to know the latest state of play.

Ron Potter said the CC is obliged to produce an action plan by the end of September – the CC's aims and objectives; time scale and what resources are required

Cliff Lyons said he had no problem with the sewer upsizing work being carried out by Scottish Water, but he had been struck by the amount of 'freewater' during the construction. In addition he says water can be heard continuously running in front of the hotel in Main Street, Inverkip. He is taking up the matter with Scottish Water

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.30pm.