

INVERKIP AND WEMYSS BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Business Meeting held on Thursday 3rd December 2009 in Inverkip Primary School

Present: Hugh Ritchie; Harold McPherson; Brian McArthur; Liz Roders and Lynne Chambers

Apologies: Cllr Gerry Dorrian and Ron Potter

In attendance: Cllr Innes Nelson; Cllr Ciano Rebecchi; Brian Blacklaw and Cliff Lyons

3. Police Matters: No officers were in attendance but Community Officer Jane Perratt had emailed the October crime figures to the secretary:

1 Theft from a motor vehicle

1 Vandalism

3 Section 3 of the Road Traffic Act (careless driving)

1 Section 178 of the Road Traffic Act (no insurance)

2 Breach of Bail

2 Breach of the Peace

1 Theft

2 Section 57 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act, being in a place without permission and it can be reasonably inferred that you are there to commit a theft

13 crimes – 62% Detection Rate

4. Presentation by Fergus Macleod (Planning Policy and Housing Manager) and Ron Gimby (Planning Policy Team Leader) of Inverclyde Council on the Inverclyde Local Development Plan:

Fergus Macleod and Ron Gimby outlined the timetable for the creation of the new Local Development Plan – they were engaging in conversations, consulting and getting out talking to people. They were meeting with all relevant parties – community groups, stakeholders, internal services, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Scottish Water, and key partners Riverside Inverclyde and businesses. They are currently in the middle of the process and hope to complete this early engagement stage by next March, to present to Inverclyde Council a factual record of to whom spoken and the issues and concerns raised. Following the new Planning Act of 2006 the whole process is more specific, more precise. It is then planned to prepare the first stage of the new Local Plan by March 2010, and complete the first stage by 2011. By 2012 the new Plan should replace the existing Local Plan and should be in place for the consideration of planning applications. The former Local Plan Inquiry has been replaced by an Examination and it could be perhaps another 2 years before the Plan is adopted.

The Strategic Development Plan precedes the Local Plan by about a year, setting the context and leading the way. Harold McPherson asked if there was any point in the process – there could be a change of government and the Plan would have to be changed to suit a new administration. Fergus Macleod said no, they wouldn't have to change the Plan. Ron Gimby said they had to react to circumstances at any given time and put forward appropriate measures. And Fergus Macleod reminded the meeting councils don't have to take on board a Reporter's recommendation. Harold McPherson then asked about windfarms – what would happen if a local authority designated areas potentially suitable for windfarms but a developer came along with an application for an area outwith that recommended because it would be a cheaper option. Fergus Macleod said there are no windfarms in Inverclyde – and Inverclyde Council recently produced a document on windfarms outlining its stance. It is felt Inverclyde is not an area suitable for windfarms, though not against smaller community windfarms, under 20 megawatts.

Ron Gimby said developers have a right to put a case forward – as planners they're there to see it accords with the Plan. Brian McArthur asked Fergus Macleod and Ron Gimby would they prefer councils or locals to make decisions. Fergus Macleod said councils should listen. The question of the A78T was raised – and the usual complaints laid before the planners. Fergus Macleod said it was not for want of trying by Inverclyde Council that improvements have not taken place – but the harsh reality is that the A78 is low on this and previous governments' priority lists. While there is peak hour congestion on the A78 in other parts of Scotland there is all day, 7 days a week congestion and that must be tackled before the A78 is considered. It was cynically suggested that an increased level of accidents on the A78 might move the road up the list. Cllr Rebecchi agreed it was true the number of reported accidents did affect a road's priority for improvement. He said the corner of Newton Street and Inverkip Street in Greenock was an accident black spot. Hugh Ritchie said with the development in this area it is clear there is a great need for a by-pass. Cllr Rebecchi said a Greenock/Prestwick by-pass should be considered.

Fergus Macleod asked about train travel in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay and was told that an hourly service and a lack of or expensive parking was not satisfactory. Hugh Ritchie said retention of the greenbelt was important for the area. Concerns were also expressed about the development at the Power Station site. Hugh Ritchie also raised the issue of retailing in Inverclyde. It was agreed a great deal of money was spent outside Inverclyde. Fergus Macleod said there remains an opportunity for retail development at Port Glasgow when the downturn ends. Aware of the 'leakage' of spending from Inverclyde and a shortage of space for further retail expansion in Greenock, it was felt the Port Glasgow development would complement Greenock retailing. Planning can set the framework for sites but can't make it happen.

It was requested the Community Council send bullet points regarding areas of interest and concern to the planning department by the end of January for inclusion in the first report. The gentlemen were thanked for their attendance

5. Minutes of Business Meeting held on Thursday 5th November 2009. Matters arising:

Letter to Amey re Brueacre junction, Inverkip – lack of lighting and cats' eyes

Letter in reply from Amey – saying its responsibility doesn't extend to slip roads – installation of lighting is a policy and funding matter for Transport Scotland but is normally restricted to urban or built up areas, busy junctions and roundabouts or areas with a high prevalence of night time accidents. Any consideration of lighting on the slip roads or installation of reflective studs would be a matter for Inverclyde Council. Cllr Rebecchi said representations had already been made on this issue to Inverclyde Council and he will check the situation. He suggested the Community Council should write to the ward councillors and the secretary said she would pass the suggestion to the Hill Farm Residents' Association who had brought the matter to the Community Council's attention

The secretary had contacted the community police officers about complaints of speeding on Spey/Finnockbog Road and the officers said they would return for a speed gun exercise on the road

In agreement with the Treasurer the secretary has contracted an entertainer to perform at the Lights Switch On ceremonies in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay on Friday 4th December. Liz Roders said there didn't appear to be a Christmas tree in Wemyss Bay and Cllr Rebecchi said he would chase the matter up. An all points bulletin looking for a Santa for Inverkip was received from Lynda Cameron of Inverclyde Council. The secretary sent out requests around the village. Alison Nugent of Inverkip Community Enterprise came up with a chap who has agreed to be Santa – he already performs the role in Wemyss Bay. Thanks to Alison Nugent were recorded Footpath access – various correspondence with IC officials and Hill Farm residents in a continuing effort absolutely to clarify the issue. Email to David Ashman at IC's planning department requesting the planning history at Hill Farm as further information for the footpath access debate and his emailed reply. Ron Potter who has been active in this matter is on extended holiday and will consider the information from IC on his return. The secretary will write to Scotways asking if a representative is prepared to engage with IC's planning department on the strength of information already supplied.

Liz Roders said consideration should be given to a road through Hill Farm to by-pass the flooded Brueacre Junction

Harold McPherson proposed the Minutes as accurate, seconded by Brian McArthur

6. Secretary's Report and Correspondence -

Press release from Stuart McMillan MSP re flooding chaos in the local area

From the Information Commissioner's Office – confirmation of renewal of Data Protection registration

Information from ScotWays following the CC's new membership

Information from Business Improvement Districts Scotland (BIDS)

Correspondence relating to contracting Davro the Clown (Darren Spiers) to perform at the Lights Switch-On events in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay on the 4th December.

Liz Roders received a cheque for £160.00 from the secretary which she will give to the entertainer at the Inverkip event in payment for his services

Copy of letter from Duncan McNeil MSP to Transport Scotland following his meeting with CC representatives re the A78 junction study asking whether representatives of Amey and Transport Scotland would meet with CC representatives

Copy of letter to Duncan McNeil from Transport Scotland as above – saying they

would be happy to meet with the CC and that they had received requests for meetings from other elected representatives and suggested a meeting where Transport Scotland and Amey could answer questions. Amey has been asked to contact the CC to identify a venue for the meeting. No approach has been made to date. The secretary contacted Duncan McNeil's assistant and said it was felt the meeting should be held in Inverkip rather than Glasgow as was also suggested

Correspondence with Tracy McKernan re the proposed Inverkip Gala Day. The CC has agreed to put a notice up on the noticeboard in Inverkip and on the website. The secretary said she would contact Ms McKernan to alert her new submissions for the third round of grants from Inverclyde Council can now be made

From IC – report, Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2010-2015

From the Scottish Government's Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals – notice of a pre-inquiry meeting for Baidland Hill, Dalry

From the Scottish Government – as above – notice of pre-inquiry meeting for Ladyland Moor, Kilbirnie

Letter from Louise McVey of IC's Community Safety Partnership re an Information Day on Saturday 28th November plus emails with further details

From Duncan McNeil MSP – copies of A Guide to Support for Older People in Inverclyde

From IC – Winter Maintenance – Procedures and Resources Document 2009/2010
Information from Planning Aid for Scotland with leaflets containing up-to-date information on their services

Forwarded by Ron Potter – details sent to Inverclyde Forum of Community Councils from Planning Aid Scotland outlining courses it runs

From Rekk UK – details of its youth shelters – not a good idea it was generally agreed

From IC – report for the Health & Social Care Committee meeting on 1st December – Mental Health Service Redesign – progress report

Email from Larkfield Housing Association giving details of the Community Safety Partnership meeting (Ward 6) to be held in Inverkip Primary School on Tuesday 24th November – the secretary attended the meeting and found it most interesting

Newsletter from Stuart McMillan MSP – refers to A78

From IC – Grants sub-committee – round 2 applications 2009/10 – application from Wemyss Bay Tiny Tots

Correspondence with Shirley Cairney of Hill Farm, Inverkip, re photographs relating to footpath access

Email to ScotWays with update of footpath situation

Correspondence and update with Hill Farm residents re footpath access

Correspondence re finding a Santa for the Inverkip Lights switch-on

Email from Alan Swinton of IC re history of Spey Road, Inverkip

Email to Alan Swinton looking for further information

Article for Wemyss Bay Newsletter from CC

Phone conversation with Cllr Rebecchi about the proposed work on the goalposts in Inverkip. He reported the posts had been inspected and found in poorer condition than anticipated. However, work will commence when there is dry weather. Cllr Rebecchi had arranged the purchase of paint to contribute to the work to be undertaken and the secretary handed over to him a cheque for £13, representing the cost of the top coat paint. Cllr Rebecchi was thanked for his work in connection with this project.

7. Lib/Dem leaflet

Hugh Ritchie declared himself puzzled and perplexed when this leaflet came through his door. He considered offensive the celebration by the Lib/Dems of the greenbelt land swap. Cllr Rebecchi said the decision had been made by a majority in Inverclyde Council. Certainly not by a majority of Inverkip residents retorted Hugh Ritchie. Cllr Rebecchi said it would be wise of the Community Council to keep an eye on the swapped greenbelt land, for though designated for recreation at this time one never knew what the future might bring. Hugh Ritchie said the Community Council didn't need to be advised by any political party to keep an eye on the greenbelt – the Community Council had fought for years to save the greenbelt forming the green heart of the village and the designed backdrop to the conservation area of the village. Much good it had done. Brian Blacklaw thought the leaflet made cheap political points and while those attending thought it commendable the Lib/Dems would push Inverclyde Council to match fund the £600,000 of planning gain funds, to ask residents how they would like to see the £1.2 spent was a piece of political opportunism said Lynne Chambers. A great deal of scepticism was expressed as to when funds would be made available. It was agreed by Community Council members that Inverclyde Council should have had discussions with the Community Council before the announcement of their plans for the land and the Lib/Dems similarly should have consulted with the Community Council before launching their leaflet. Cllr Rebecchi said the Council should have had a letter and been consulted and he apologised that that had not happened.

Cllr Rebecchi said he had been assured there was money in the Capital Fund and that it had to be fought for. Harold McPherson said he'd read about funds being spent in Inverclyde for new sports facilities – football pitches and sports centre. What were the councillors doing to bring such funds to Inverkip and Wemyss Bay for sporting development in Ward 6. Cllr Rebecchi said it was very difficult for minority parties to get anything through unless one went along with the majority party and hoped to get some projects through that way.

Hugh Ritchie pointed out that the Community Council had gone to great lengths to leaflet the village and hold public meetings to discover what residents in Inverkip wished in the way of community facilities, and a community centre was supported by around 90% of residents. Indeed the former chairman of the Community Council had based his MBA dissertation on the process of gaining a centre for the village. And this leaflet comes along and asks villagers how they'd like the money to be spent. Cllr Rebecchi said it was important to know what residents thought now. Brian McArthur said the Community Council would look foolish if it kept asking people what they wanted when the answer is already there. Lynne Chambers pointed out the Community Council is already in ongoing discussions with senior officers of Inverclyde Council to create a framework to take the project forward. Brian Blacklaw thought it disingenuous of the Lib/Dems to ask how the money should be spent – Stewart Milne is not currently building houses and its £600,000 could be five years down the line.

Hugh Ritchie pointed out the Community Council strives very forcefully to be politically independent and not to be seen as allied to any political party – his comments should not be seen as anti Lib/Dems, but anti the leaflet.

8. Planning Matters/Green Waste application

Inverkip – Former Water Treatment Works, Langhill – application for green waste treatment plant – refused. Hugh Ritchie said he'd been delighted to hear from Inverclyde Council this application had been refused, and refused on the grounds of heavy lorries and narrow roads – it seems unlikely, he said, that there are grounds to appeal against the decision. He also praised Inverclyde Council for the rigour it had applied to the application, as there had been concerns expressed earlier that there may not have been experience within the Council to deal with an application of this kind.

Inverkip – Kip Marina – application for use of retail unit as café (in retrospect) – granted

Inverkip – Kip Marina – application for display of illuminated fascia sign (in retrospect) – granted subject to conditions

Inverkip – 10 and 18 Lochans Drive – application from Stewart Milne Homes for a substitution of house types

Inverkip – 17 Magpie Crescent – extension to house – granted subject to conditions

Inverkip – Plot 155, Harbourside – alterations to house type to form a library – granted subject to conditions

9. Date and time of next meeting – the secretary made the following suggestions:

January – no meeting – as some members are away for extended periods

Thursday 4th February – meeting at Wemyss Bay Primary

Thursday 4th March – meeting at Inverkip Primary

Thursday 1st of April – meeting at Wemyss Bay Primary – the 1st April may not be available as schools close that day for Easter. To be confirmed. Agreed by members.

10. Any other business

A letter has been received from David Adams, formerly a member of Wemyss Bay Community Council, indicating he would wish to join the Community Council. It had been intended to co-opt Mr Adams at this meeting, however he was unable to attend. The co-option has been deferred until the February meeting.

Cllr Rebecchi brought to the Community Council's attention that following a conversation with the Governor of Greenock Prison, he learned prisoners with only 6 months of their sentence remaining, can come into the community and are available to undertake tasks.

Harold McPherson said he'd been advised by Cllr Dorrian to go on to Inverclyde Council's website to request a salt and grit bin for Lomond Road in Wemyss Bay as the road isn't gritted. He couldn't find anywhere on the site to make the request. Cllr Nelson will pursue the matter

Harold McPherson expressed his concern about the water pouring across the road from the Wemyss Bay Hotel. It was remembered that Amey and Railtrack had attended to the problem last year when water was pouring from the railway embankment wall. Cllr Rebecchi said Scottish Water was putting pressure on the owners of the hotel to undertake works and if not completed within a certain time action can be taken against the owners. Harold McPherson said if the temperature dropped and the water froze it could be exceedingly dangerous.

Brian Blacklaw said he had learned via Freedom of Information legislation that Stewart Milne Homes has paid Inverclyde Council £300,000 to cover maintenance of

the bridge for 125 years. He also said that CCTV at Inverkip station – and in the lift at the station if and when it is built – will not be monitored 24 hours a day.

Liz Roders reported cushions had been fly-tipped across from the recycling centre at the Brueacre Junction. The secretary said she would speak to Cleansing

Liz Roders also reported the gates, leading to the railway, adjacent to the Brueacre sliproad were open. Cllr Rebecchi said he would investigate

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.25pm.