

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Public Meeting held in the Seil Island Hall at 7 p.m. on Tuesday 27th January 2009

Present: Seumas Anderson Chairman
Jean Campbell Vice Chairman
Stuart Reid Secretary
Tina Jordan
Mike Shaw

Apologies for absence: Donald Melville, Cllr Robertson and Cllr McKay

Also present: PC Andrew Simpson, 12 members of the public

1 **The Minutes** of the meeting held on Tuesday 25th November 2008 were distributed, read and proposed as correct by Jean Campbell and seconded by Keith Oversby.

2 **Matters Arising:-**

a) **Community Council Review** The Chairman said this was raised as the main agenda item at the Community Engagement meeting on 11th December and was addressed by the Council Leader, Dick Walsh. However, the feeling among the Community Councils present was that they were no clearer after the meeting about how the review was to be handled. The Secretary read out various correspondence from the Secretary of the Association of Argyll and Bute Community Councils also expressing doubts about arrangements for the review and saying that a series of meetings between Community Councils and the Council had been cancelled.

The Council was due to meet again on 22nd January. The Secretary said that we had not yet been formally advised that the April elections had been postponed. Correspondence available suggests that it will be delayed until October 2009 – to allow for the review to be completed. The Community Council was disappointed about the way the review has been handled so far and felt that a proper announcement about cancelling elections should be made for it to be legal. We hope to hear the outcome of the meeting on 22nd January sometime.

The Secretary also read out some of the reasons for the Community Council review e.g. to seek to understand why people do or do not volunteer for Community Councils, identify and resolve the difficulties faced by Councillors and Community Councillors and how they can best be supported, and to review boundaries.

We are concerned about the future of the Community Council. A number of Highland Community Councils were lost following their recent elections and the Chairman urged people to consider standing when the elections come – whenever that may be.

b) **STAG Appraisal** We are still awaiting a report from the Consultants, Steer Davies and Gleave. The Secretary spoke to Stewart Turner (Head of Roads and Amenity Services) who is equally frustrated by the delays. It appears these are mainly due to staffing problems – a poor excuse. We have been informed that SDG will have a draft report

ready for the Council by the end of January completing the process to a final stage by mid- February. Mr Turner will come to our meeting in March to brief us.

- c) **Conservation Areas Appraisal** The Secretary updated the meeting. The questionnaires produced as a result of our public meeting were returned in September 2008, since when our sub-committee (Tina Jordan, Mike Shaw, Jim Watson, Stuart Reid and Adrian Jackson-Stark) have had a number of meetings and have produced an analysis of the results – statistics and written comments. These have been circulated to all members of the Community Council who will meet to produce conclusions and recommendations based on these findings. This should be completed in February and the results will be presented at our public meeting in March. Thereafter, we will send our report to the Council who will produce a Management Plan based on our recommendations. Mike Shaw explained that Mr Jackson-Stark has been on the sub-committee as an adviser but will not have any input into the conclusion meetings which will be entirely Community Council led. Production of the Management report depends on Council resources and progress of the similar appraisal being undertaken on Luing. The Plan will be particular to the Slate Islands areas.
- d) **Health Matters** Tina Jordan updated the meeting. There had been a meeting of the Easdale Medical Practice Patients' Group on 23rd January 2009.
- Further funding has been allocated to improve NHS Dental Services. This may allow for a new building in Oban though this may delay a new Surgery
 - Emergency medical evacuation – the SAS helicopter recently carried out a reconnaissance of Easdale Island. We await the outcome
 - The next round of consultation is underway for the redesign of Mental Health Services
 - Dr Miranda Barkham is available at the Surgery on Mondays and Wednesdays and on the fourth Friday of each month.
 - Monday evening appointments are available at the Surgery from 6 to 6.30 p.m.

The next Public Partnership Forum will be on Tuesday 17th February.

The next Locality PPF will be on Tuesday 14th March.

Tina referred to a method of identifying if someone is suffering a stroke – this had been published at the last Locality PPF. We will put this in the Seileachan.

- e) **Local Roads** The Chairman referred to our latest 'defects' list and read the reply from the Roads Department. We raised the matter of the state of the B 844 at our meeting with Councillors and asked about the arrangements for the restitution of the road after the waste water works were complete. We suggested a full survey before contractors start patching the road and leave the area.

The Secretary has done an inspection of the road and given a list and map of the main defects to Stewart Turner (Head of Roads) and has done a 'drive round' with him and Cllr MacIntyre. We await the outcome. We have also sent him a list of points we would like addressed and stressed the fact that residents deserve a better road after all the disruption they have experienced.

We asked for Clachan Bridge to be inspected and have received assurance that 'no matters of concern were identified'.

Though the contractors are obliged only to leave the roads as they found them, we want the Council to add the £300,000 they had earmarked for the road improvements to the

contractors' budget to make improvements before they depart. The road has failed in a number of places and needs rebuilding, not patching.

The Secretary said that we have been getting a better response from the Roads Department recently.

PC Simpson said that if we report major/safety concerns to him, the Police would use their authority to help get results.

- f) **Scottish Water** There was an 'open day' on 14th January which was attended by about 40 residents. It appears that the project is on time. Main digging to be complete by the end of January and the electrical and mechanical work to finish by the end of March with a programme of restitution continuing thereafter. John Wilson said that the Clachan Seil treatment plant had overflowed on 9 occasions in 2 years and he wondered whether this could happen at all their new sites!

Keith Oversby reported that the only upgrading of the fresh water mains on Easdale Island was to be 40 metres of pipe which has been bursting because of building work.

The Chairman said we had asked Scottish Water if they could build a path between the new and old cemeteries at Balvicar. This would enable people to use the car park and walk to the old cemetery and war memorial. They were receptive to the idea and thought it a good way of giving something back to the community. We have sent them maps and photographs and await their reply.

A question was asked about the large green control cabinet which has been placed by the Tigh an Truish. It does not fit in with the area (between a listed building and a listed structure). The Secretary will speak to the owner.

- g) **Planning** The Chairman read out 4 new applications. He referred in particular to application 09/00004//DET and 09/00006/LIB for a shed and read our letter to the Planning Department expressing our concern about the structure (this is already built and is retrospective) and its suitability in the Conservation Area. Our Conservation Areas Appraisal exercise has produced a majority in favour of preserving the architectural heritage of the area.

- h) **Police Report** PC Andrew Simpson said he was sorry to report that he was being drafted back to Oban because they are short of resources. He very much regretted the move but said that, though we now have no dedicated 'Beat Officer' as such, we would be supported by the 'Community Team' in Oban. Officers will still come to our meetings and we can still contact him at Oban Police Station.

Chief Inspector Fred Hall has left and they are still awaiting a replacement.

PC Simpson has acquired a CCTV camera which he will have erected in the Ellenabeich pier area.

Those present raised the matter of Balfour Beatty's lighting and roadworks problems. If we have any complaints, PC Simpson urged us to phone the Police Station immediately as they have a hot-line to BB who can correct problems quickly. PC Simpson will remind BB about their lighting and the fact that some vehicles drive too fast.

- i) **Recycling** It was noted that the recycling area at the Hall has been screened by the Council and a hard base installed. This looks tidier and should help prevent waste blowing about. We will write to thank Stuart McCracken.

- j) **Dog Warden** Mr Peter McLuckie has put bags for dog waste in the ferry sheds and has put signs about dog fouling in problem areas. However, we still appear to have a

problem and will let him know. It was stressed that anyone seeing dog-fouling should report it, though this can be difficult in a small community. His telephone number is 01631 562125 Ext. 2185.

Regarding the question about private property, he said the Dog Fouling Act covers 'public places' which is any place the public can access, by payment or not. This covers private land to which the public have access.

3 **Other Business**

a) **Strathclyde Fire Brigade** We have been enquiring about the proposed new Fire Station by the Seil Island Hall. The Secretary has spoken to Mr Paul Connelly (Area Commander) who said that £40 million had been allocated for a training centre and they had no other funds available. He is satisfied that our present facilities are adequate and nothing is likely to happen for 3 years.

b) **Potential Wind Farm Development** The Chairman read a letter from N Power explaining their intention to build and operate a wind farm in Raera Forest – 8 miles south of Oban. They plan to submit a scoping request to the Council this month and planning permission for 3 anemometer test masts has just been lodged. They intend to keep us informed through the Community Council, newsletters, a public exhibition in the early summer and their web page – www.npower-renewables.com/raera/index.asp The Chairman read excerpts from their site which were obviously biased. However, Mike Shaw said that it was important for the Community Council and the community as a whole to resist forming an opinion until the full facts were made available and understood. This will clearly become a major issue and we will watch developments.

4 **Documents to be tabled** A number of documents were tabled for general interest.

5 **Date, time and place of next meeting** The next meeting of the Community Council will take place on Tuesday 17th March 2009 at 7 p.m. in the Seil Island Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.

Signed: Chairman:

Date:

Signed: Secretary:

Date: