

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 28th JANUARY 2014

Seil Island Hall

PRESENT: Seumas Anderson, Charles Struthers, Ann Marie Robin, Eileen Colston, Graeme Bruce, Chris Dugdale, Alan MacFadyen, Julie Ferris; Cllr Elaine Robertson, PC Jeremy Moore and 30 members of the public

APOLOGIES: John Gordon, Cllr Louise Glenn Lee

This being the first meeting on Seil since the Community Council elections, the Chair introduced new members Eileen Colston and Graeme Bruce.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Graeme Bruce: a notified person re the installation of petrol tank application

Alan MacFadyen: re Easdale quarries

Chris Dugdale: re the Cuan planning application

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2014 were agreed as an accurate record; proposed by Duncan Smallman, seconded by Graeme Bruce.

MATTERS ARISING

Emergency Planning Preparation

The telephone directory was complete; work continues to progress on the Emergency Plan. Cllr Elaine Robertson stressed the need to complete the plan as soon as possible.

Scottish Water

Charles had spoken to David Innis of Scottish Water who confirmed that lids were on the tanks and that the new tank, which had increased capacity for the treatment works, was functioning well. There had been no problems with all the recent rain.

A site meeting was yet to be arranged with Scottish Water and the Council Planning Department to explain why they had disregarded the more open fence plan approved by the Community Council in favour of a more solid design.

Charles would discuss some screening for Pumping Station No. 2 with David Innis, although it was recognised that Scottish Water had finished the project two years ago and would not anticipate undertaking any major new work at this stage.

A site meeting would also be held to agree location of the noticeboard by the shop. The originally proposed location was felt to be potentially hazardous if people stepped back and fell over.

Puddles in the road were considered almost certainly to be within the remit of the Roads Department.

Roads

Charles had spoken to Jim Smith and brought up concerns over the standard of the Cuan road.

It was stressed that cutting back of verges and brush was very important and had been disregarded in the past. This was taken on board by the Council.

The Council will continue to spray knotweed. If anyone finds any they should let the Community Council know to ensure that it all gets sprayed as part of the 5 year eradication programme.

There had been no change in the status of Kilninver Bridge. Cllr Elaine Robertson confirmed that regular assessments of the bridge are undertaken and that glass tell-tales are in place to indicate any movement. The Community Council continues to press for a long term solution. Charles would speak to A&B Council's Emergency Planning Officer to obtain a copy of the Emergency Plan drawn up to cover various contingencies.

Potholes and puddles remain an ongoing issue despite having been reported several times. The one near The Old House is particularly dangerous since pedestrians, cyclists and cars move out into the road to avoid it and risk collision with oncoming traffic. PC Moore was asked to bring pressure to bear on this issue.

There had been complaints of motorists still racing through Clachan Seil, despite the speed limit. PC Moore explained that speed bumps were not an option because of the difficulties they pose to ambulances and fire engines. It was an offence for a motorist to soak pedestrians by speeding through puddles and anyone doing so should be reported.

Health

Defibrillators

The provision of defibrillators was ongoing on both Easdale and Seil.

Cllr Elaine Robertson reported that the MacMillan Suite in the Lorn & Islands Hospital had opened the previous day, and was a wonderful enhancement to the service.

Jenny Tarbatt reported on the evacuation by helicopter of a person taken ill on Easdale Island on 1st January. Although the patient had been successfully airlifted it had highlighted the need for a definitive evacuation procedure.

Police Report

PC Moore reported that there had been a spate of thefts in surrounding districts, and reminded all residents to lock up.

Recent rain and hail storms had resulted in a number of traffic accidents; drivers were reminded to adjust their speed in accordance with road and weather conditions.

There had been a high level of fraudulent activity on Gumtree and Ebay recently. PC Moore reminded everyone that if something seemed too good to be true, it probably was.

Planning

Still pending

Site for proposed kayaker's facilities including conversion of workshop to bunkhouse, erection of pod style timber tents and toilet/shower/laundry facilities, formation of parking provision and installation of septic tank and formation of three house plots

Land North East of Cuan House, Cuan Ferry, Isle of Seil, Oban

Ref No 13/02253/PPP Received Tue 08 Oct 2013

Status: Pending Consideration

Since the previous Community Council meeting a site visit had been made to the proposed kayakers' development. The Community Council was supportive of this well-thought out, well-integrated application. With reference to the two issues of concern previously identified:

Increased traffic on the Cuan road – It was felt appropriate to treat the planning application and concerns over the state of the road as two separate issues. A meeting would be arranged with Community Councillors, A&B Councillors and the Roads Department to establish what is feasible to improve the road both immediately and to establish longer term priorities. PC Moore confirmed that a traffic counting system was available that would quantify traffic flows through to Luing.

Maintaining access through the site to the shore between Cuan and Ellenabeich – It was confirmed that the applicant was aware of the requirement to maintain the path with appropriate signage and was willing to facilitate this. The Core Paths team of A&B Council are aware of the situation.

Since the previous SECC meeting:

Formation of access and parking area

Coquet Lodge Annexe Balvicar Isle of Seil Oban PA34 4TF

Ref No:13/02575/PP Received: Mon 11 Nov 2103 Status: Application Permitted

Alterations and erection of single storey extension

Seil Grange, Clachan Seil, Isle of Seil, Oban PA34 4TL

Ref No:13/02916/PP Received Mon 23 Dec 2013 Status: Pending Consideration

Change of use of land for the siting of storage container, installation of petrol storage tank and erection of associated fencing

Land Adjacent to Public Car Park Ellenabeich Isle of Seil

Ref No:14/00084/PP Received: Wed 08 Jan 2014 Status: Pending Consideration

Removal of condition 2 of planning permission 01/87/547

Coquet Lodge Annexe Balvicar Isle of Seil Oban PA34 4TF

Ref No:14/00092/PP Received: Fri 10 Jan 2014 Status: Pending Consideration

Site for the erection of 20 dwellinghouses
Land South East of Oban Seil Farm Clachan Seil Isle of Seil Oban PA34 4TN
Ref No:14/00180/PPP Received Mon 20 Jan 2014 Status: Pending Consideration

Discussion thereof:

Seil Grange

The Chair had viewed the plans, which were for fairly minor alterations; no concerns were expressed.

Installation of petrol storage tank

The Community Council would gauge the feeling of the community and had notified the Planning Department that it would be making a submission regarding this application.

There was a considerable amount of discussion, which opened with members of the community expressing the following concerns (in order raised):

1. The landowner on three sides of the proposed site had not been aware that the area was designated as commercial in the Lorn Plan, and had concerns over HSE requirements, particularly in view of the water course down one side of the site.
2. The proposed development was not in keeping with a Conservation area/was unsafe/inappropriate near a public car park.
3. The roads were too narrow/inadequate for transporting fuel.
4. The site was in a completely residential area, along a narrow road, and would be dangerous for children.
5. How many times a week would deliveries be made?
6. The area was already congested with tourists and kayakers.
7. The development would spoil an area of scenic beauty.
8. How could the transfer from container to tank to boats be made safely?
9. The landowner on the fourth side of the proposed site pointed out that access could only be made over his land, for which he had his own plans. There was, therefore, no viable access to the site.
10. What size petrol tanker would be needed?
11. It was estimated there would be 2-3 deliveries per week, on average.
12. Local residents had the right to enjoy their homes without tankers going by.
13. The proximity to occupied houses of the proposed site/route to that site.
14. It was originally proposed on the pier, why was it better to have it near homes?
15. What about the legality of transporting fuel on the public road at Ellenabeich?

16. An enquiry was needed to ensure the development complies with all legislation.

Mr Tony Hill then read a statement (Appendix A attached) and then answered questions as follows:

1. Why was the storage not sited on Easdale Island? Mr Hill explained it was impossible to transport fuel across the water.
2. A&B Council could arrange their own supply of fuel separately. Mr Hill confirmed this was not a joint application with the Council, but it would resolve the situation for A&B Ferries.
3. There was a possibility of flooding of the site. It was confirmed that A&B Council have the relevant flood maps and would factor risk of flooding into their considerations.
4. How would fuel be transported from the tank to the boats? Mr Hill explained that the existing trailers could be used to transport small quantities at a time.
5. What would be the frequency of such movements? On a busy day Seafari could use up to 800 litres a day, so 2-3 movements a day.
6. Why had the site been proposed? Was it an option to relocate? Mr Hill explained that the site had been suggested as the best.
7. Could the existing tanks at the Tigh an Truish be used? Mr Hill explained that was not suitable because of the distance to collect the fuel.
8. It was suggested A&B Council should make a statement regarding the Ferries' fuel arrangement. It was confirmed that on a busy day the Ferries could use maybe 40 litres.
9. What are the contingency plans if the application fail? Mr Hill declined to comment on his two other options.
10. It was pointed out that anyone with a boat can be called out for emergencies, this was not unique/special to Seafari.
11. Had there been a risk assessment on fire cover? Could the local volunteers respond? Mr Hill pointed out that there are regulations and standards which apply and would be adhered to. He directed those interested to the Scottish Government website to view all relevant legislation. www.scotland.gov.uk
12. Mr Hill confirmed that fuel can be supplied by three separate suppliers in the Oban area.

The Chair then drew discussion on this application to a close.

***Site for the erection of 20 dwellinghouses
Land South East of Oban Seil Farm***

The Chair explained that this related to a site already designated as housing allocation for 20 houses in the current local plan. Cllr Elaine Robertson confirmed that there had been objections to its continued inclusion in the Lorn Plan, which had gone through the Council the previous week and had been passed to the Reporter for consideration. The new local plan would be produced by October 2014.

The current application was the equivalent of outline planning permission for 20 houses, i.e. the area of proposed development was shown but there was no detailed layout of houses/services etc. The Community Council had applied for an extension to the deadline for responses, and this had been granted to 27th February.

Concern was expressed that neighbour notifications had not yet been received. Those directly affected had only found out about the application as it was on the A&B website and the plans had been displayed only that day in Balvicar Post Office. It was agreed that it is unacceptable for A&B Council to give deadlines of 3 weeks from the date of documents which are not actually received until much later. This was an ongoing problem with planning issues; Cllr Robertson confirmed she would check on the status of neighbour notifications.

Further concerns discussed were:

1. The information on the website is extremely uninformative; it is hard to see what is planned and the hard copy available at the Post Office is no better.
2. There is no information on the type of houses planned, access arrangements etc.
3. The vertical rise of the site gives concern over sewage flows and water run off, made worse by building over the current greenfield site.
4. Can the sewage system actually cope with the proposed development?
5. Can the road cope with the vehicles from 20 houses? What were the requirements for the developers in terms of extra passing places etc?
6. The view was expressed that the designation only went through initially because of a loophole, and against the recommendations of the Community Council, A&B Council and planners.
7. The affordability of "affordable" housing was questioned, i.e. affordable for whom?

The Chair then drew discussion on this application to a close.

Any Other Competent Business

Cllr Robertson left the meeting at 8.50pm, having reported on:

The Community Planning Partnerships consultation event on halting the decline in A&B's current population trends. This would be held in the Corran Halls on Tuesday 4th February.

Anyone organising a litter pick could apply for a grant from the GRAB Trust.

Easdale Slate Quarries

Documentation relating to the proposal by Historic Scotland to designate the Easdale Slate Quarries as a scheduled monument were tabled and discussed. It was recognised that the Easdale quarries are probably the best-preserved and that is why they have been proposed for scheduling rather than others in the region.

Historic Scotland would be visiting Easdale in March and had offered to give a presentation and Q&A session on the proposal. It was noted that Historic Scotland is in a merger with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and it should be asked whether this had implications for the proposal.

Overall it was felt the documentation associated with the proposal gave a fair assessment, though there was need for clarification of certain issues such as whether the proposals cut across people's gardens, reassurance that there were no implications for gardening, whether the Stone Skimming Championships would be affected, why was the harbour not included, etc. There was also a feeling that the proposal had been presented as something of a fait accompli and that consultation with residents at an earlier stage would have been welcomed.

Paddock for rent or sale

Concerns were expressed over an advertisement in the Oban Times of 16th January 2014 for a paddock for sale or rent near Balvicar Lodges, "Travellers welcomed". It was pointed out that this site floods, is a home to frogs, hedgehogs and other wildlife and there is no suitable access for trailers or caravans. The Community Council would maintain a watching brief on the situation.

Thanks for work on Easdale power supply

Alan MacFadyen, on behalf of the residents of Easdale Island, thanked SSE, A&B Council, Shane Cadzow and Ian Mitchell for all their assistance in keeping the power on.

Tabled papers

Police Scotland: Review of Traffic Warden Service Provision

This advised that Police Scotland will withdraw the role of traffic warden to focus on the core activity of keeping people safe.

PC Moore stressed that police officers would continue to use the appropriate enforcement activity where parking is dangerous or causes significant obstruction.

Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 25th March 2014, 19.00, Seil Island Hall

SECC Minutes 28.1.14 APPENDIX A

Regulations as applied to businesses alter with time. The safe storage of petrol is no exception. Businesses, including farmers, fishermen and tour boat operators cannot store even small quantities of petrol overnight unless facilities meet current standards. There are no exceptions due to remoteness of location. The bedding in period for petrol storage regulations is well past. Both Seafari and A&BC Ferries must comply. They may do so as individual entities or jointly use a single storage facility. All facilities must meet current regulations for construction, operation procedures, security and maintenance without exception. Procedures are generic but adaptation to individual sites is allowed. The proposed storage tank will have a capacity of 3,000 litres.

A&BC Ferries and Seafari have identified an increasing risk of transporting fuel by trailer with more traffic using our single track road. Transportation and delivery by specialist tanker significantly reduces risk and the carbon footprint of the boat fuel.

Seafari see this as a sensible investment to company infrastructure.

Should the application be successful Seafari have agreed to enter into negotiations with A&BC Ferries for the storage of fuel which would both ensure a supply of fuel for the Easdale Ferry and enable A&BC Ferries to comply with current legislation. Should this planning application be unsuccessful A&BC Ferries will still have to provide a solution for a regular supply and storage of fuel for the ferry which meets current regulations.

The sea plays a major part in many people's lives in this area. Seafari boats have on many occasions responded to requests for assistance from vessels be they minor or major incidents. Correspondence with the Marine Rescue Co ordination Centre, Stornoway, states Seafari vessels cannot be described as declared assets (RNLI, SAR helicopter) they are however additional assets that provide valuable support and local knowledge.

People may be surprised at how many times our vessels ‘support’ craft in this area.. Vessels cannot proceed to sea at short notice unless fuel tanks are full. Best boating practice confirmed by John Hill Coxswain Oban RNLI (no relation) is boats should be refuelled at the end of a working day. Seafari skippers should not be required to face the dilemma of whether to attend an incident questioning if they carry sufficient fuel to complete a task.

Seafari engaged the services of consultants to act on its behalf in all correspondence and in the preparation of plans submitted to A&BC Planning Department. Consultations on our behalf were made with SEPA, Health and Safety Executive, Building Standards and Trading Standards. Plans are now in the public domain and A&BC Planning Department will make their decision only after receiving submissions from the public and the appropriate statutory bodies.

Living in a democracy enables both supporters and objectors to present their case to a third party. Whatever the decision of the Planning Authority, Seafari will respect due process. Should the application be successful we hope to shake hands with those who objected and move on.