

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 25th MARCH 2014

Seil Island Hall

PRESENT: Seumas Anderson, Charles Struthers, Ann Marie Robin, Eileen Colston, Graeme Bruce, Alan MacFadyen, Julie Ferris; Cllr Elaine Robertson, Cllr Duncan MacIntyre, PC Jeremy Moore, Dr George Hannah and 23 members of the public

APOLOGIES: Chris Dugdale

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Alan MacFadyen: re Easdale quarries

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The last sentence of Point 9 on Page 5 of the minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2014 was amended to read, "Mr Hill declined to comment *on his two other options.*" With that amendment, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record; proposed by Ann Reid, seconded by Kneale Smith.

MATTERS ARISING

Emergency Planning Preparation

John Gordon reported that there had been a good uptake of the telephone directory.

The Seil & Easdale Islands Resilience Plan was in the final stage of completion, just awaiting improved maps and the input of key personnel and specialist equipment. John acknowledged the work of Taynuilt Community Council, whose plan had been used as a model for the Seil & Easdale document, and thanked Dr Hannah for his help.

The Plan was given to Cllr Elaine Robertson, who presented Resilience Packs for Seil and Easdale Islands.

Scottish Water

Charles would meet with David Innis the following day (26th March) to discuss outstanding issues, including the new noticeboard and screening of Pumping Station No.2. It was recognised that we are fairly near the end of Scottish Water's undertaking on the project, but there may be ongoing concerns. Charles asked for any other comments or issues; none were raised.

Roads

Charles reported that there was no allocation in the current budget for roads on Seil, apart from ongoing pothole filling and emergency works. Charles would continue to keep pressure on verges/brush clearance, and reminded everyone that they can report problems with local flooding, potholes etc themselves by calling A&B Council direct on 01631 563264

(James). Particular problems noted were potholes on the Ardmaddy Ferry/Balvicar Farm road and on the summit of the Ardencaple road.

Knotweed was reported on the shore side of the road near Fasgadh, possibly originating from Scottish Water land. There was also erosion on the path near Tigh Cladich.

Someone from the Roads Department would be invited to the next Community Council to give an update from A&B Council's perspective.

Cllr Elaine Robertson had spoken to the Head of Roads about the Cuan road. It was proposed that he and Charles should meet to discuss the Community Council's suggestions for improvements, and any other issues, prior to the next Community Council meeting.

Work was in progress on A&B Council's contingency plan for Kilninver bridge, and it should be ready by the end of May/beginning of June.

Health

Defibrillators

Thanks were expressed on behalf of the community for money raised at Emma MacFarlane's funeral which had gone towards funding a defibrillator for Seil. Thanks were also given to Dr Hannah and the Easdale Surgery; the British Heart Foundation had approved their portion of the funding. Dr Maggie Thorpe was thanked for successfully applying to the BHF for funding. It was confirmed that the defibrillator does not need a power supply for charging, although it may be useful to have a heating element to prevent freezing.

Cllr Elaine Robertson said that Caroline Henderson and Shaun Davidson, leads in the project reshaping care for older people, had offered to attend a future meeting to update the community on the proposed model of care.

Police Report

PC Moore reiterated the need for everyone to be aware of internet crime and the various scams used to separate folk from their money and personal details – be vigilant and suspicious of anything that looks too good to be true.

There had been a recent spate of road accidents involving young, inexperienced drivers caught out by road and weather conditions. On remote rural roads a crash may go unnoticed for some time, so PC Moore stressed the importance of friends and family being aware of journeys by young drivers, and to have an idea of where they are going and when they should be back.

Anyone with concerns over dangerous potholes could call the Police 101 number, and the report would then be recorded as an incident.

The question of people wrongly parking in disabled spaces was raised. PC Moore confirmed that it is an offence and anyone doing so on a repeated basis could be reported.

Planning

Site for proposed kayakers' facilities, Land North East of Cuan House – Application Permitted.

New applications since last SECC meeting

Erection of shed and fence and formation of hardstanding area (retrospective)

The Old Inn, Ellenabeich

Ref No 14/000324/PP Received: Fri 31 Jan 2014

Status: Pending Consideration

The Chair reported that the Community Council had submitted its response, and was waiting for A&B Council to decide.

Mrs Munton was very concerned that the Community Council had objected to this application. She felt this showed a lack of even-handedness by the Community Council, and seemed out of proportion as the application was for a minor structure of a temporary nature, which would be removed when they sold the house. Furthermore, the application had only been withdrawn and resubmitted on the advice of the planners.

The Chair explained that the Community Council's response was a comment on the application, not an objection, and read the text as follows:

"Seil and Easdale Community Council has submitted representations about this application on the previous two occasions that it has been made. The Community Council wishes to register its comments again, regarding its concerns for the Conservation Area Status of the site for this development.

Furthermore, the Community Council has concerns that a precedent could be set if repeated attempts to obtain retrospective planning permission result in permission being granted."

Mrs Munton asserted that the response is listed as an objection on the A&B website. However, the Chair confirmed that it is correctly listed as a Consultee Response.

Erection of dwellinghouse and detached garage with residential accommodation at first floor level.

Land West of Dunearn House, Ellenabeich

Ref No 14/00402/PP Received: Thu 06 Feb 2014

Status: Pending Consideration

Non Material Amendment to planning permission 08/01001/DET – (Combined waste water treatment works with formation of access lay-by) – Combined waste water treatment works with formation of access lay by and change of tank covers

Sewage Works Clachan Seil

Ref No 14/00638/NMA Received: Tue 11 Mar 2014

Status: Application Permitted

Erection of dwellinghouse and formation of vehicular access

Land Adjacent to Braeview, Balvicar

Ref No 14/00618/PP Received: Wed 12 Mar 2014

Status: Pending Consideration

No issues were raised regarding the two applications for dwellinghouses. Work on the sewage works had already taken place, with tank covers fitted.

Still pending

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

The Chair reported that the Community Council had made its submission, having taken note of various points of view received from across Seil and beyond. An open letter had been received from Mr Nick Hunter, giving his view that “the development... will provide a balanced mix of affordable and market housing that will enhance Clachan Seil and will also provide work for local builders”.

Mr Hunter had analysed the comments made and concluded that virtually all objections were by incomers to Seil, none of whom had children at Easdale Primary. He stated that 50% of objectors lived in houses built on Oban Seil Farm, largely in the 1970s, that 65% of objectors are retired, and that 50% of objectors questioned affordability.

The view was expressed that it was offensive to suggest the opinions of the retired and incomers were in any way less valid than those of any other section of society. Dr Hannah tabled a graph of the demographic for Seil from 1994 -2014, reflecting a shift in the community towards an older population. Cllr Elaine Robertson confirmed that the Community Planning Partnership’s recent consultation event on halting the decline in A&B’s current population had noted that although the population in Oban, Lorn and the Isles had increased, it was mostly because of older people moving in.

There then followed a wide-ranging discussion on how to develop a diverse community representing all age groups, with some arguing that the availability of affordable housing should come first, and others arguing that jobs and industrial units were the primary requisite.

On the question of affordable housing, Mr Hunter stated that the criteria for affordability are rigorously defined and controlled by A&B Council. He envisaged the affordable part of the development would have house prices under £100,000 or rents around £500 per month. Furthermore, there would be mechanisms in place such as a rent cap in perpetuity or a resale limit in the title deeds to ensure the affordable houses would remain as such.

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

The Chair reported that the Community Council had made its submission and that a decision was now awaited from A&B Council.

It was suggested that the planning team had not been looking at the correct site. It was pointed out that clarifying such issues is part of the planning process.

A number of questions were put to Mr Tony Hill including:

- How many local people did he employ? Mr Hill replied that he would gladly employ local people if they had the required qualifications.

- Would he tell the meeting what the two alternative sites were? Again, Mr Hill declined to comment.
- Why could he not use a floating fuel pontoon? A paper was tabled by Mr Chris Odling giving details of such pontoons.
- Was planning permission in place for Mr Hill's existing business activities? Mr Hill replied that he rented car park space from A&B Council and that he always tried to follow guidelines. Mr Hill stated that his application was going through the due process and he was awaiting the decision by A&B Council.

Concerns were expressed that the Community Council had not reflected the views of local residents. The Chair read out the response (available in the public domain on the A&B website) and maintained that all the points which had been raised at the previous meeting were reflected in the submission. He pointed out that the Community Council attempts to give a balanced view, taking into account the views of the whole community.

Cllrs Elaine Robertson and Duncan MacIntyre confirmed that all valid objections made are taken into consideration by the Council, and that the submission by the Community Council on this application seemed to reflect the views which had been expressed.

A member of A&B Planning Department would be invited to a future meeting to clarify a number of issues relating to applications, including why some seem to continue accepting comments long after the deadlines given. It was suggested that the process could be refined if people limited their comments to the valid grounds for objection (given on the Council website).

The process by which the Community Council reaches an opinion on planning applications was questioned. Do Community Councillors actually visit the sites in question? It was confirmed that they do. Do they take note of other comments on planning applications? Again, it was confirmed that they do.

The Chair explained that there is no formal procedure, but that members sound out the views of the community, both informally through day to day contact and through the ongoing invitation to all residents to contact any member of the Community Council with any views, questions or concerns. In addition, surveys and studies such as the CADISPA Report inform the Community Council's views. Above all, the Community Council has to focus on the specific planning application before them, and to give a balanced view based on the whole community's response, and only on valid grounds for objection.

It was pointed out that the Community Councillors are volunteers, doing a difficult job to the best of their ability. Cllrs. MacIntyre and Robertson expressed appreciation of the work of the Community Councillors .

Easdale Slate Quarries

Seumas Anderson and John Gordon had attended a meeting held on Easdale Island on 15th March to discuss the proposal by Historic Scotland to designate the Easdale Slate Quarries as a scheduled monument. Historic Scotland would be revising the map slightly to address some boundary issues, and would be taking account of various comments made on the text

of the proposal. Eilean Eisdael remains concerned about what scheduling would bring to the island, and although not necessarily taking a negative view, has not yet made up its mind. It will attend a further meeting with Historic Scotland, then consult with the community before formulating its response. Historic Scotland would then hold a further meeting on Easdale Island

It was confirmed that Historic Scotland had emphasised that activities such as swimming, rock-jumping, boat trips and the stone-skimming championship would not be affected by the proposal, contrary to an article in the Press and Journal.

Any Other Competent Business

Cllr Elaine Robertson reported that the Council's Contingency Planning Team had won Silver in the COSLA Awards.

Commemoration of the Great War. Charles invited anybody locally with information on those listed on war memorials, or with any personal or local memories relating to the Great War, to contact him as a member of the Steering Committee on the Commemoration. It was agreed that it is most important to pass on such information to future generations.

Tabled papers

- Local Energy Scotland: an introduction to a free and impartial service to access the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES).
- Demographic Seil 1994-2014 (from Easdale Surgery)
- Letter from A&B Council re Removal of Balvicar Road (Part) & Kilbrandon Cottages from list of public roads. Clarifies: letters to the individual residents directly affected is part of the consultation process whereby they must be given the chance to decide on the proposal as they are directly affected. The Notice is for anyone else to comment on the proposal.
- Letter from A&B Council re maintenance issues – ferry shed and public toilets/bin storage Ellenabeich
- Extract from Historic Scotland presentation on Easdale Slate Quarries
- Copy of article re stone skimming –Press and Journal
- Information on Taylor Fuel Control Floating Fuel Pontoons.

Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 27th May 2014, 19.00, Seil Island Hall

