

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Public Meeting held in the Hall on Easdale Island at 6 p.m. on Tuesday 28th July 2009

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

Apologies for absence: Donald Melville, Cllr Duncan MacIntyre, Cllr Elaine Robertson, Cllr Donald Macdonald

Also present: Cllr Neil Mackay and 15 members of the public

1 **The Minutes** of the meeting held on Tuesday 26th May were distributed and read. Mr Tony Hill referred to the Minute concerning the STAG Appraisal and asked for comments about the proposed ferry design to be included. It was stated that the design of the ferry as shown in the STAG report was conceptual rather than actual. It is not an accurate depiction of the ferry which may be put into service. Mr Hill's comments were agreed as being a true record and will be included in the Minutes of the 26th May. These Minutes were then proposed as correct by Ann Reid and seconded by Jean Campbell.

2 **Matters Arising:-**

a) **Community Council Review** The Chairman explained that we had responded to the Stage 2 Consultation and read a synopsis of our comments. These included concerns about the election process which appeared to encourage undemocratic elections, the position of Community Councils with regard to planning and their role as statutory consultees. We felt that the suggestion of enhanced consultation with Area Community Planning Groups was unworkable as defined, and said our administration allowance was insufficient, in view of the increased workload, travel and IT demands. We felt the review document needs much more work and that the present version would make it more difficult for Community Councils to function.

The Secretary referred to correspondence from the Association of Argyll and Bute Community Councils to Argyll and Bute Council reflecting the general concern of Argyll and Bute Community Councils about the review. He read out the nine main criticisms of the review by the Association of Scottish Community Councils who urged the Council to correct elements of the draft scheme.

The Chairman read a statement from the Council explaining the next step. There was to be a meeting with the Association of Argyll and Bute Community Councils (on 28th July) to discuss our responses. Following this there was to be a meeting of the Council's Short Life Working Group which will make recommendations to the Executive who meet on 20th August. If agreement is reached, arrangements will be made to hold elections to Community Councils in October.

The Chairman added that there were 10 vacancies on our Community Council. If we have 11 candidates there would be an election – otherwise it would be uncontested. We can operate with 6 Community Councillors. If there are less than 6 candidates there will be no Community Council. He urged people to think about standing.

b) **STAG Appraisal - Easdale Transport Link** There is a copy of the full report in the ferry shed. The Chairman read a letter from Stewart Turner who attended our last

meeting. He explained that the STAG Appraisal will feed into the Scottish Ferries Review which could conclude in early 2010. The Chairman read the Summary Recommendations in the report from Argyll and Bute Operational Services which states that, while from a transport planning perspective a fixed link is preferable, the STAG report shows a replacement ferry as the better solution. As there is no budget provision for a replacement ferry, the existing ferry should remain in service while we await the outcome of the Scottish Ferries Review.

- c) **Local Roads** We are still reporting defects to the Roads Department but must await completion of Scottish Water works before we can establish the true state of the roads. The Chairman asked for comments. There were none. The Secretary urged people to report potholes. If reported, the Council has a legal obligation to repair them within 7 days. We will publish contact details in the next Newsletter.
- d) **Health Matters** Tina Jordan reported on a meeting of the Locality Public Partnership Forum on 8th June. Maternity services – there is a move towards more local screening and births and an increase in services on the Islands. Pharmacy – patients are being asked to take their own drugs into the Oban Hospital, to be stored in boxes marked with the patient’s name and kept in bedside lockers.
The matter of emergency evacuation from Easdale is still under discussion. This will be carried out by the Air Ambulance/Sea King/Land Crew or the Coastguard/RNLI. The village square will be the landing site. Discussions about provision, storage and training volunteers in the use of landing lights are continuing.
The Easdale Medical Practice Patients’ Group has attracted little interest – possibly an indication of satisfaction with the Practice. In order to keep communications open, it was agreed to meet in January each year – otherwise, remaining in e-mail contact.
The next area PPF meeting is on 18th August.
- e) **Scottish Water** The Chairman said that Scottish Water were unable to build a path for us linking the new and old cemeteries and war memorial. We were hopeful they would do this in recognition of the severe disruption suffered by the community during the Waste Water project. However, they were quoted £7000 by Balfour Beatty – but can afford only £500. The Chairman read an e-mail from the Secretary to Cllr MacIntyre expressing our disappointment and asking for help. Cllr MacIntyre said this was now a project for the Employability Team and he was confident it would go ahead.
The Balvicar Bay pipeline has still not been properly finished and is coming loose. We asked for it to be buried but have had a Health and Safety assessment from Scottish Water explaining that there is rock below the sand and this would have to be blasted/excavated which might damage property and marine life. It appears the only solution is to cover it with properly secured cement honeycomb blocks.
Smaller green control boxes have now been installed.
Mike Shaw said that landscaping in the area of No 6 Balvicar had not been done correctly. The Secretary will write.
- f) **Planning Matters** The Chairman read out our letters for the following applications – 09/00518/DET (Inshaig House) and 09/00833/DET (65 Easdale Island).
The Chairman read an e-mail from the Residents’ Association asking if the Community Council could help ensure that the wishes and concerns of Easdale residents are properly taken into account with regard to proposed developments on the Island.
The Chairman explained that the Community Council could not comment properly until planning applications had been validated. However, we will write to Eilean Eisdeal asking them to keep us informed of any proposals for developments.

Tina Jordan said that 2 planning reports by the Conservation Design Officer had not appeared on line. Cllr Mackay said he had spoken to the Planning Officer and Conservation Design Officer. It was not clear why they had not appeared but the matter will be rectified. He said that, in future, they will ask for the Conservation Design Officer's report for any developments in the Conservation Area. If, for any reason they do not appear, Cllr Mackay would send a hard copy.

The Chairman read out the latest planning applications.

Following a comment in one of the Community Council's letters about retrospective planning applications, Cllr Mackay said the Area Committee had been uncomfortable about the number of these in this area and that they should not be acceptable without sanction. There should be no need for such applications as the procedures are clear. They will be monitored closely in future and enforcement procedures may have to be instituted.

Cllr Mackay confirmed that the new Planning system comes into force on August 3rd. Together with the new Local Plan and some new Planning Officers, we will be starting with a clean slate. He said that the new rules would now apply to current, outstanding planning applications..

- g) **Proposed Raera Windfarm** The Secretary reported on a meeting with N Power which was held at Kilmelford on 22nd July. The purpose was to see 'wireframe' projections of the windfarm and discuss the landscape and visual impact of the project. Many of the viewpoints are out of date and much of the information is altering as the project develops. Originally, there were to be 40 turbines – now 23 which will be 400 ft high. Only 3 viewpoints were shown for Seil. We have asked for 5 more to be looked at. They will produce photo-montages for these. There is to be a public meeting and exhibition on 28th/29th August at Kilmelford Village Hall. Nothing planned for Seil. A large part of the windfarm would be in our Community Council area so we asked for a meeting/exhibition in Seil Island Hall. They agreed at the time – dates to be advised. We have since heard that they wish to lay on a mini-bus to take people to Kilmelford. It was agreed by those present that this was unacceptable and we will write asking for a meeting on Seil. Cllr Mackay asked us to send him correspondence and he would speak to the Head of Planning. He added that for previous windfarm planning applications, the Planning Department had visited all the viewpoints. They could include those we have selected on Seil.

It was not known if the Community Council would be considered statutory consultees and no mention has been made of any financial benefit to the community. N Power seem reluctant to commit themselves. A planning application is likely at the end of this year with building due in 2 years approved. We expressed concern about damage to the roads and the prospect of the Council being left to carry our repairs it could not afford. N Power said sea transport was also being considered. They could not confirm whether or not the towers would be made at Campbeltown. The ambient noise levels in the area of the windfarm will be measured. The turbines are only permitted to be 5 decibels above these. 2 members of the Community Council will be visiting a windfarm on 10th August. There was mention of possible 'turbine creep' – i.e. we may start with 23 turbines but this may gradually increase. There was a request for information to be circulated before N Power do housecalls so that people know what questions to ask. The Secretary will prepare a list. There is also the question of the grid connection – pylons? It was suggested that any jetty built for delivery by sea could be left for public benefit.

3 **Other Business**

- a) **Strategic Plan for Seil** The Community Council thinks it important to be more proactive with regard to the future structure and plans for Seil. At present, we are

only reactive and the community as a whole has little or no influence on what happens here. Mike Shaw explained the background to his idea which is in the embryonic stage. We would start by putting out a number of ideas and suggestions, which could be controversial, in order to arouse interest and start a dialogue. Nothing will happen immediately but we might be able to influence and guide future developments. The sort of things to be considered are – types of road, leisure facilities, areas for boating, hotel, sheltered housing, provision for small industry, parking, sports fields etc. The Community Council will develop the idea further then circulate a paper to provoke discussion.

- b) **Argyll and Bute Housing Need Survey** The Chairman referred to a letter about a survey by the Council about properties and neighbourhoods. This will influence decisions on housing investment and policy. The Community Council has been asked to encourage people to respond. The letter was tabled.

- c) **Non Native Invasive Species** The Chairman referred to an e-mail about the control of the Japanese Knotweed and the role of the community. This included reporting sites, fund raising to finance control projects, promoting responsible disposal, composting and learning about non-native species. The Community Council had also asked the Council about the legal and actual responsibility for the control of Knotweed which is proliferating on and around Seil. In their reply, they said they have no ring-fenced resources to treat invasive species. In order for a case to be made for funding, they need information about locations and extent. They encourage the community to collect data for the Argyll and Bute Biodiversity Forum. Cllr Mackay said eradication was very expensive. Chemical treatment has been banned. The only method available is digging up and transport to a treatment site.

- d) **Core Path Plan** The Chairman updated the meeting on our latest submission or routes to the Council's Core Path Plan. This is a long term project. There is no funding available at present. Paths must be acceptable to landowners as they will be advertised in public. If they are accepted and supported by the community, then funding for maintenance becomes available. This will not affect the Right of Responsible Access legislation.

- e) **SCAPE** (Scottish Coastal Archaeology and the Problem of Erosion). There had been a series of programmes on the television and the Secretary had written asking SCAPE if they had included Easdale and Ellenabeich in their survey as we experience similar erosion problems. The Chairman read their reply. They had considered only sandy coastal areas along 30% of the Scottish coast (the NE) but were interested and would like to see a copy of our Coastal Zone Survey. The Secretary will send a copy.

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 29th September 2009 in Seil Island Hall at 7 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.

Signed: Chairman: Date:

Signed: Secretary: Date: