

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

TUESDAY 26th November 2019

Present: Julie Ferris (Chair), Seumas Anderson, Yowann Byghan, Cllr Elaine Robertson, Cllr Kieron Green, Anne Foster (Secretary), 12 Members of the Public

Apologies: Steve Patterson, Guy Knight, Rhoda Thomson

Declarations of Interest: Seumas Anderson, as landowner, with a potential interest in the Scottish Water proposals, planning applications 19/02342/PP and 19/02093/HYDRO, and as a member of the Hall Trustees and Committee 19/02135/PP. Steve Patterson with regard to development of the former Highland Arts site, as someone who works with the owner. Julie Ferris, as a member of the Hall Committee, 19/02135/PP

The Chair advised that Declarations of Interest are made for members who may not be at the meeting in recognition that the CC may communicate about issues outside of public meetings. She also advised that, in response to a recent enquiry, the CC had taken advice from the Area Governance Officer and, with reference to Minutes of the public meeting held on 24 November 2015, the following proposal had been agreed by all members of the CC:

'In recognition of Seumas Anderson's Declaration of Interest in Scottish Water proposals for the Waste Water Treatment Works, and in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Community Councillors, Seumas will exclude himself from any discussions and/or decision making which may be deemed to be influential. This will be if deemed necessary by other members present.'

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2019 were APPROVED subject to the following amendment: Scottish Water: The final cost for the consultation exercise was £262.98

Proposed: Lisa Robinson

Seconded: Ray Turner

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Scottish Water (SW)

A decision regarding the planning application is awaited; we understand SEPA are requesting further information. The Chair read out a response from SW regarding future community engagement. See Appendix I

It was agreed that the response from SW left some ambiguity. Cllr Green commented that the Stakeholder Group had been set up by SW and it would be their decision about the method of consulting with the community in the future. Yowann Byghan noted the email response from SW was clear that, as there had been changes in the CC since its inception, SW would work with the CC to 'establish an agreeable make-up of the Stakeholder Group going forward to ensure all parties and their views are represented'.

It was suggested that the CC's response to the SW planning application had not been made public. As noted in the Minutes of the previous meeting (where the response was not discussed as all present had seen it) the CC's response is on the A&B portal and available from the Secretary. The results of the survey were read out and it was agreed the planning response would be presented as an appendix to the minutes. See Appendix II.

The Chair noted that the consultation had been used to inform the CC's response, but the response was not limited to the survey results. It was confirmed that individual responses from the survey will not be made available to members of the public.

Yowann Byghan reminded the meeting that an independent observer had presided over the opening of the responses, their counting and collation into themed comments.

One person asked whether the CC would now support the SW proposals as "the majority were in favour". The Chair stated that the CC would continue to represent the views of the community.

The Chair noted that, regardless of the current status of the Group, comments relating to SW from those who had been local stakeholders would in future be recorded as such.

Bus Service Ellenabeich – Turning Area

Cllr Robertson reported that a 'desk-top' exercise has produced very rough costings for the proposed works for a turning area at the bus stop in Ellenabeich. Costs did not involve a SEPA assessment or conservation issues. Although there has been publicity about the proposals, the CC have not actively sought views from the community and will publicise in the Seileachan. Would there be other options that have not been thought of? The CC appreciate the temporary turning arrangements and want to see the matter to continue to be pursued by A&B.

VE 75 Commemoration May 2020

8th to 10th May 2020 has been designated an International Celebration of Peace to commemorate the end of the war in Europe. Our very active local branch of RBLs have plans which include a dance with a swing band on the Friday evening, and possibly a street party in the hall on Saturday and a church service on Sunday. It was agreed that the CC would fund the hall hire for the street party.

Phone Box at Ellenabeich

A new door has been ordered and we await its installation.

AGENDA

Health

Cllr Green updated the meeting on the Primary Care Improvement Plan and advised they were considering advancing some strands of the consultation. Cllr Green gave a brief summary of the role of the Primary Care Group and how it integrates with community representation. He responded to a question about 'delayed discharges' and said they can be a local issue where there are delays in arranging home care, but this is generally managed. A question was asked about taking the home care service back in-house. Cllr Green explained that this works in different ways across A&B and there is a limited in-house service in Oban which can be used where private provision is not immediately available and to support discharges where the situation may not be stable.

Roads and Bridges

Japanese Knotweed. A&B do not notify private landowners if knotweed is reported. The CC will put a notice in the Seileachan asking landowners to look for and treat knotweed.

Bushes. In some areas along the highways, brush is overgrowing causing pedestrians difficulties. The CC will put a notice in the Seileachan asking home/landowners to cut back bushes which encroach onto the roads and paths.

Pot holes. These continue to be reported to A&B through their dedicated email address. www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/road-faults

Speeding. The CC have been made aware of on-going concerns about this and have passed one issue to the police and are awaiting their feedback. Balvicar was noted as a particular problem area. The CC have considered trying to have speed restrictions implemented, but this has proven to be impossible as we do not meet the qualifying criteria. The CC would be happy to consider other measures or ideas from the community. The CC will ask local residents to consider their driving habits and will put a note in the Seileachan. PLEASE WATCH YOUR SPEED
The grate at Tramway has now been mended and we thank all involved in getting this done.

Police Report

No report was available for the meeting.

Some residents have been targeted by email spoofing and we are all reminded to be vigilant with regard to any possible scams.

Emergency Planning

The CC are currently revising the island's emergency plan. This includes details of people who have relevant equipment such as chain saws and 4x4 vehicles as well as working with the medical practice to be able to assist vulnerable people. The plan will be in a standard template form in line with A&B. A notice asking for interested parties to assist will be included in the Seileachan. We will also try to include A&B's contingency plans for the bridges in the plan.

PLANNING

Seumas Anderson reported on applications since the last meeting:

19/02342/PP	Land west of Kilbride Croft, Balvicar	Erection of 1 x pair of semi-detached cottages and septic tank	Pending Consideration
19/02214/LIB	41 Easdale Island	Replacement windows and porch roof	Pending Consideration
19/02194/PP	Monaveen Annex	Installation of pitched roof	Pending Decision
19/02135/PP	Seil Island Community Hall	8m high pole, antenna and associated works	Pending Decision
19/02093/HYDRO	Land N of Dunmarrock House	11kv overhead line	Prior Notification – no objection
19/01994/NMA	Shop, Ellenabeich	Non-material amendment to 19/00033/PP.	Pending Consideration
19/01938/PP	17 Easdale Island	Replace windows and doors, new back door and window opening	Pending Consideration
19/01232/PP	Clachan Seil	Waste Water Treatment Works	Pending Consideration

19/02135/PP - Seil Island Community Hall 8m high pole.

Concerns have been received from a resident of Ellenabeich with regard to this application. The Chair advised that the Hall Committee had been discussing this for several months. The committee consist of 25 including representatives of all the user groups of the hall and thereby it had been thought that all the relevant parties had been consulted. The Chair was grateful to the resident for having raised their concerns which are clearly articulated on the A&B Planning portal.

The pole is the same design as the one at Balvicar BT Exchange but 2m shorter. There is a financial interest for the Hall as the pole would provide a rental income for 3 years.

It was suggested that if someone requests a 'smart meter' the company would erect a pole under 'permitted development', but Cllr Green advised there would still be restrictions to this in a conservation area.

The Chair reminded the meeting that while the CC notify people of planning applications at meetings, we only meet every 2 months and people should not rely on the CC to be informed about planning issues. Individuals can access the A&B portal and track applications, request the monthly lists by email, or search on a keyword e.g. Ellenabeich. It was acknowledged that the portal is not always easy to navigate.

Local Development Plan Consultation.

Seumas Anderson encouraged all to look at this and comment. The consultation runs to January 23rd 2020. Information will be put on the website and Facebook. There was a concern that some zone classifications have been merged into a 'rural zone' and this may impact upon potential areas of Special Scientific Interest.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair requested that items for AOB should be submitted to the Secretary two weeks before the meeting in order that an informed response can be prepared.

Communication

The CC receive a lot of information from A&B. It was reported by a member of the public that anyone can register with A&B Outreach to receive this information as an individual – click on 'keep in the loop' in the Contact Us box on the right side of the home page. Those present at the meeting did not want to receive the information via the email distribution list. The CC will distribute relevant information via the CC website and Facebook, although it was noted that keeping online information up to date can be challenging. Draft minutes will be made available as soon as possible.

Budget Consultation

A&B budget proposals are currently out for consultation until 16th December. There are potential concerns for our community in these proposals in particular with regard to the Easdale and Luing ferry services. If negotiations to transfer the ferry services are not successful, the significant financial shortfall will need to be made up. It was suggested that the CC may wish to liaise with Luing and other affected islands. The CC will promote the consultations and encourage people to comment.

Kilbrandon Trust

The Chair will liaise with George Hannah for an update. The CC are happy to consider ideas for projects which would benefit the community.

Phone Directory

This is now on sale in the shop – price £2.50. If you would like your details to be included in the directory please let the secretary know.

Unsung Heroes award

It was noted that the Easdale ferry crew have won an award for rescuing two kayakers off Easdale. Many congratulations to them.

Date and time of next meeting
6.30pm January 28th 2020 Seil Island Hall

APPENDIX I

From: "seilandeasdaleccsec@btinternet.com" <seilandeasdaleccsec@btinternet.com>
Sent: Monday, 28 Oct, 19 At 10:10
Subject: SW and the Seil Stakeholder Group

Dear Alan

I am writing as secretary to Seil and Easdale Community Council and with regard to the Stakeholder Group which was set up as a liaison group to facilitate the consultation process between Scottish Water and the community during the planning process.

At our meeting in March you said “we (Scottish Water) suggest the forum from now will be through the Community Council and there will be no on-going engagement with the Stakeholder group. The CC Chair agreed this was the preferred approach.”

Can you please confirm the status of the Stakeholders Group?

Much appreciated and kind regards
Anne

Anne Foster
Secretary Seil & Easdale Community Council

From: "Ruaridh MacGregor" Sent: Friday, 15 Nov, 19 At 13:00
Subject: Scottish Water Update.

Dear Anne,

Further to you email to Alan and myself I would like to confirm the following information in relation to the current position with our planning application and also future engagement.

As you will be aware, the planning application submission for the proposed new Wastewater Treatment Works on the Isle of Seil was validated by Argyll and Bute Council in May 2019 and is currently progressing via the due process for determination by the Council.

I can advise that we are expecting the application to be determined early in the New Year and regardless of the outcome we will require to engage with the community council about how we will work together moving forward either with the current scheme, assuming planning is granted or indeed, if planning isn't granted, what options remain.

We understand that since the stakeholder group was initially formed, there has been changes to the Seil and Easdale Community Council and therefore we will look to work with you and others to establish an agreeable make-up of the stakeholder group going forward to ensure all parties and their views are represented.

We would like to thank the community for your patience and understanding while we go through this process.

Kind Regards,
Ruaridh
Ruaridh Macgregor

APPENDIX II

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Scottish Water Planning Application Ref: 19/01232/PP

Sewage Works and Land West of Existing Works Clachan Seil (site known as 1a)

This application is the culmination of a lengthy process dating back to March 2015, during which the Community Council has striven to reflect the views of all the community. As shown by the comments on the planning website, opinions are broadly polarised between those who are certain that the site known as 1a which was recommended by the stakeholders is best, and a group known as “Save our Seil” who are equally convinced that it is not.

To ensure we have obtained the views of as many people as possible, including those who might not speak at public meetings or make their views known directly, we conducted a survey to inform our submission as Statutory Consultees, having first informed the community of the Planning Application Reference, where to see it on the Argyll & Bute website, and where in the community we had made available hard copies of the application.

By law we could only write to those on the Open Register for our area (289 of the c550 on the Electoral Register). Prior to the survey we invited all other residents or property owners - via a public meeting and published minutes, email lists, website, Facebook and newsletter delivered to each household - to contact us if they wished to receive a letter. 21 did. Therefore, we wrote to 310 people, approximately 60% of those on the Electoral Register, asking if they think the Community Council should support the application, object to the application or express no view either way. We also asked for any other comments relevant to the planning application. It was stressed that a response to our survey in no way replaced individual submissions – we encouraged everyone to submit comments via the Argyll & Bute website. All responses to the survey were anonymous.

94 responses (c30% of letters sent and c17% of total constituents) were received.

Comments related to:

1. The Planning Process

Respondents who think the CC should support the application commented that Scottish Water had consulted with the local community and they wanted to “commend” the organisation for the way this had been done. The choice of site had been made after much consideration. They considered this to be the “best option” and the “perfect solution”. It was “better than other options” and they “supported Scottish Water’s decision”. Those respondents who think the CC should object to the application stated that “the wider community had had no impact on deciding options”. Several responses were concerned about the delay and the continued discharge into Balvicar Bay. They didn’t want to “stand in the way of progress” and wanted Scottish Water to “just get on with it”.

2. Environmental Issues Regarding the Site

It was noted that an Environmental Impact Assessment had not been done. There were numerous concerns expressed by those who think the Community Council should object to the application regarding the development within a “countryside zone”. It was noted that this application is on a “greenfield site” contrary to planning policy when a “brownfield site exists as an alternative location”. It was suggested that the “site will destroy habitat”. One respondent suggested “noise pollution was anticipated”, and another that there would be “odour issues particularly in dry weather”. Respondents who think the CC should support the application stated that there would be “minimal environmental impact” on a “small area of rough grazing land of little financial value” and the building would “not detract from notable view”. One response suggested that the works would “improve wildlife corridors”. Other comments said the “works were not near residents’ homes” on an “in-land, boggy site where few people ever go”.

3. Wider Environmental Issues

There was a concern regarding the overflow from the treatment works and that this would still be into Balvicar Bay. The works were not “climate change proof” and with the increase in extreme weather conditions “storms would cause more overflow leading to an increased risk of flooding at Balvicar Stores”. There would be “damage to important peatland” by works to the access to the site and “destroy habitat”. Responses commented on the “cleaning up of the existing site” at Clachan Seil and plans for improvements in this area were noted.

4. Technological Issues

Respondents noted that “tried and tested technology was being used” creating “high quality clean effluent”, “meeting micro-biological standards”. One response advised that the scheme does not allow for minimising micro-plastic waste.

5. Demographic Issues

It was noted that the scheme is “not designed for an increase in population” and “cannot be expanded” to accommodate additional residents, in particular those of Ellenabeich.

6. Economic Issues

It was suggested that the costs of this proposed option are “double previous proposals”.

Responses received

Do you think the CC should	No.of responses	% of responses	% of letters sent	% of full electoral roll
Support the application	57	60.6	18.4	10
Object to the application	24	25.5	7.7	4.4
Express no view either way	13	13.8	4.2	2.4
Did not respond	216		69.7	

CONCLUSION

It is not the role of the Community Council to determine which site is “right” but to reflect the views of our community. Whilst we have made every reasonable effort to consult with everyone it is clear from the table above that the majority have not expressed a view, which may indicate that they are neither opposed to or supportive of the application. However, it is likely that most residents will be affected by this major project.

In the short term during the construction period, the Community Council shares concerns which have been expressed about traffic and general disruption to the island. If this application is approved, we would urge work on the Clachan Seil site and the Seaview septic tank site to be phased to avoid simultaneous disruption of most of the island - a repeat of the appalling situation caused by Scottish Water’s two previous projects: the replacement water main and the existing treatment works.

In the long term it must be recognised that the construction of a sewage treatment plant in a hitherto untouched area of Seil is bound to have an impact, as will the access road creating a new junction from the B844.

The planning application must be taken in the context of future developments and requirements for sewage treatment, for example at Ellenabeich where discharge goes into the Firth of Lorn Special Area of Conservation. This could potentially lead to yet another treatment plant on an island with approximately 300 dwellings, many of which will still not be connected to the system.

It has always been recognised that no one solution will please everyone. The Community Council hopes this survey has raised everyone's awareness of the proposals, has given everyone the opportunity to make their views heard, and can inform Argyll & Bute's response to this planning application.

Julie Ferris, Convener
for Seil & Easdale Community Council