

North Knapdale Community Council

Minutes of the North Knapdale Community Council meeting held on the 17th May, 2016 at 7:40 pm at Achnamara Village Hall:

In attendance: Iain Ritchie, Andrew Wilson, Heather Williams, Peter Burrell, Ross Ryan, Pete Creech, Catherine MacLennan, Liz Swan, Ailsa Raeburn, and Sandy Taylor.

1. Welcome.
1. Apologies: Graham and Kate Walker, Sue Hillman, Chris Purslow, Andy Grant, Chris Perring, Kim Ritchie and Kirsten Logue.
2. Approval of minutes of last meeting: the minutes of the meeting of March 1st, 2016 were approved.
3. Matters arising/ correspondence: none.
4. Should NKCC join Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust?: Pete Creech of Heart of Argyll Wildlife Organisation shared his experience of AICCT. Aicct is a charitable organisation charged with promoting, preserving and protecting Argyll's coast and countryside. It provides a mechanism for gathering funding for this purpose. So far it has a Development Manager in place, and has had notable success in Helensburgh and Dunoon with maintenance squads. It has worked locally with Blarbuie teaching woodland skills and helps the Council meet some of its goals relating to the Single Outcome Agreement. It was agreed that NKCC should join AICCT.

5. Should we support Barrandaimh/ Heart of Argyll Wildlife: Pete Creech continued to inform us of progress in leasing Barrandaimh from Forestry Commission Scotland. FCS had been very helpful, and the main stumbling block was the need to find money to upgrade the track to the building. Barrandaimh has the potential to offer a community asset that functions off-grid. It would have uses for Scouts and Artmap, for example. Other activities would relate to recording bio-diversity. HoAWO hope to create a legacy from the Beaver Trial, and to promote Knapdale as a premier wildlife watching destination. HoAWO were looking for NKCC to support their efforts. It was agreed that AW would write a letter in support of HoAWO efforts relating to Barrandaimh.
6. Planning issues (if any.): The only issue raised was the Crinan towpath. This work had been approved by Historic Scotland for the entire Scottish canal network. Local residents and NKCC were not consulted until after work had started. This was deemed poor as it related to consultation. There were reports that the surface was hard on dogs' feet, and could cause issues for boats' decks due to grit on shoes.
7. Road issues: Dougie Philand had dealt with the issues raised at the last meeting. Achnamara residents were worried that some of the patching was poor. There seemed to have been a rolling back on promises to resurface the road to Achnamara. The road beyond Achnamara is in a dreadful state. It is even worse beyond Castle Sween. This is a poor state of affairs given that we are trying to encourage tourists to enjoy the area. The main road along the canal is also deteriorating, and some action should be taken to improve the situation. Councillor Taylor was to be meeting Julian Green of the Roads Department. He will report back with the Roads Department response. Councillor Taylor reminded people to use the dedicated phone line, 01546-605-514, to continue to log issues.

8. Renewable updates, and Knapdale North Opportunities Trust: AW reiterated what IR had reported to the AGM. E'on had pulled out, EDF were still pursuing Cruach Brenfield on a smaller scale, Knapdale North Opportunities Trust had been registered as a company, and the Mid-Argyll initiative (MAi) was close to being established as a community investment vehicle.
9. AOCB: Tayvallich slipway was to be lengthened. NKCC had been approached by Marine Scotland as a consultee. It was agreed that NKCC would reply in support of the application.
10. Crinan Corridor Charrette: this process had been held with the purpose of improving and developing the Crinan Canal corridor. AW and RR had attended. RR felt that the process had been worthwhile, and it was to be hoped that some good ideas would emerge in June when the consultants report back.
11. Councillor Taylor was asked if he had anything to add. He noted that Councillors had found the necessary savings required to balance the budget. While residents won't have noticed anything yet, Councillor Taylor felt residents would begin to notice these cuts soon. Impacts would be felt through 3 weekly bin collection and reduced maintenance of grass areas etc. On a brighter note, the Council has ear-marked £3 million to improve the Mid-Argyll area through the rural regeneration fund.
12. Date and venue of next meeting: the next meeting is to be held in Tayvallich on the 23rd August 2016, at Tayvallich Village Hall.