

North Knapdale Community Council

Minutes of the North Knapdale Community Council meeting held at Achnamara Village Hall on the 17th May 2022 at 7.30 pm.

In Attendance: Iain Ritchie, Richard Stein, Lynne Milne, Ross Ryan, Alka Foster, Catherine MacLennan, Heather Williams, Cllr Jan Brown, Cllr Garret Corner, Cllr Dougie Philand, Hans Unkles, Kate Walker, Graham Walker, Andy Grant, Lauren Taylor, Savanna Murdoch, Jane McArthur, John McArthur, Norma Kelly, Michael Kelly, Nicholas Mes, Zelda Mes, Alexis Mes, Jed Stephens, Andrew Milne, Heather Williams, Fergie Anderson, Alan Hutchinson, Janet Foster, John Sutherland (Forest & Land Scotland).

Welcome: Iain Ritchie welcomed everyone.

1. Apologies: Tanya Jackson, Sgt Matt Shaw.
2. Approval of minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the meeting on 3rd March 2022 were approved.
3. Police Report: In Sgt Shaw's absence, the police report will be circulated with the minutes.
4. Forestry & Land Scotland – plans for Dunadry & Crinan forest walks: John Sutherland our local Visitor Services Manager from FLS introduced his role. He is interested in safe and enjoyable visitor experience on FLS land. He is keen to be close to the community and will liaise with Community Councils. There are three current local issues. Crinan Harbour Walk – there is a substantial problem with ash dieback on the lower stretches of the walk. These trees will need to be felled, but he has no timetable for this at present. Dunadry – There are serious problems in this woodland with Phytophthora infection. This mainly affects larch, but they plan to clear the whole area – possibly this year. It will be a difficult operation because the woodland comes right down to the road. The plan is to clear the area in two parts. The area above the forestry track will be cleared first, followed by the lower part. Legal

access to properties will be kept open. Coillie Bharr – This area needs felling but there is a huge range of features of historical significance, so there will be restrictions on harvesting methods. These complexities have caused substantial delays in proceeding. He underlined that they are very conscious of the need to take care. They have no date for the felling, but he will keep us updated.

5. Matters arising:

- a. Argyll & Bute Executive Headship (Empowering our Educators) After the discussion at the last meeting, several of us had a zoom meeting with the Council's consultation team. After the meeting we received written replies to our questions and sent in representations confirming that we were very unhappy with the proposals. Cllr Pheland confirmed that there had been widespread unhappiness expressed in the consultation responses. He is unsure what proposals will come forward. We will await proposals to be brought forward in August. He will be pressing for the matter to go to full Council.
- b. Crinan & Tayvallich toilets funding OK for this year. But we need to be ready for next year's Council budget in February 2023. There is no support for the toilets to be run by the Community Council. Last year, in Tayvallich they had agreed to arrange for the Hall cleaners to clean the toilets. But the need never arose.
- c. Crinan bottle bank The meeting confirmed that we want a bottle bank in Crinan and consider it would be well used. We will continue to press for the bottle bank to be in the Canal Basin as the only suitable location in the village. There had been problems previously. No proper bottle bank was provided. It was a wheelie bin which was used for mixed rubbish when the other bin was overflowing. The other communities confirmed there was no problems with their bottle banks. We need a bottle bank with bottle sized holes. Agreed our councillors will follow up.
- d. Tayvallich sewage arrangements We reviewed the email from Cllr Taylor. He was not optimistic there was an easy answer. This was due to a lack of resources (manpower to take enforcement action or grant funding in SEPA or Environmental Health to facilitate connection to the mains). We were unclear whether SEPA has powers to force those with no (or inadequate) sewage treatment

arrangements to prevent inappropriate discharges. We will ask our councillors to find out.

- e. Argyll & Bute Campervan Policy Given the substantial increase in campervans in Argyll, we were disappointed that the Council doesn't have a holistic policy to deal with the various impacts campervans have on our communities. It will require coordination with other public bodies including FLS and Scottish Canals. It would be appropriate for the Council to take the lead on this. Agreed our councillors will review/respond.

6. Correspondence:

- a. SSEN Resilient Communities Fund – communities had come up with proposals, but the Fund was now closed. We will keep it under review.
- b. Waste free take away leaflets – No action
- c. Scottish Parliament Fly Tipping Bill – No action. Not really a local problem.
- d. Jubilee holiday arrangements – Tayvallich has arranged a tea party with a bouncy castle. All welcome!
- e. Argyll Beaver Centre land transfer – We are fully supportive and will write to that effect. Also, we will restart or £30pa donation to the Beaver Centre, which we made annually until 2018/19.

7. Argyll & Bute Council Update

- a. Election of new councillors – We welcomed Cllrs Dougie Philand, Jan Brown and Garret Corner. We look forward to working together!
- b. Vote of thanks to retiring councillors – agreed, the Convenor will write to Sandy Taylor and Donnie Macmillan to express our thanks and best wishes for the future.

8. Scottish Canals

We discussed the saga of our attempts to liaise with Scottish Canals about the Crinan Canal over several years. In our latest attempt we wrote to Jenni Minto MSP, asking her to contact SC on our behalf. Unfortunately, we had no response from her either until Cllr Taylor chased her on our behalf. Jenni Minto's team contacted SC seeking to set up a first periodic liaison meeting with Ardrishaig, Lochgilphead and North Knapdale CCs. Disappointingly, they were advised that the person

responsible at SC was taking early retirement but would discuss with their replacement who would be in touch to set up the meeting. We will chase.

We reviewed the issues we would want to discuss with SC:

- Access for all Scottish Canals customers to Canal toilets
- Campervan parking issues
- Improved communication re Canal operational hours, opening dates, planned maintenance
- Repair of the road access to Crinan Basin carpark
- Spring mowing of canal banks
- Repair/replacement of Dunadry/Barnakill swing bridge
- Possible generation of hydro power from water feed to Canal
- Provision of a Bottle Bank for public use in Crinan Basin carpark

9. Planning issues – none raised

10. Highway/Transport issues

- a. Passing places - sign replacement Crinan and Moss road, new passing place past Tayvallich – we received an inadequate response from the Council. Our councillors agreed to follow up.
- b. Trees & shrubs pruning along the road Bellanoch to Crinan – no action to date. Councillors to chase.
- c. Road usage/speed control in Crinan – pedestrian warning signs to be erected. Locations to be agreed.

11. Health/COVID issues

- a. NHS Highland update – none available
- b. Lochgilphead GP Practice IT problem – In March the Lochgilphead GP Practice had serious difficulties with their IT system over several weeks, ultimately making it impossible for them to access patient records. They contacted CCs for help. We contacted all elected representatives. Brendan O’Hara MP responded promptly and contacted NHS Highland. The problem was resolved in 4 days.
- c. Covid booster appointment issues – High risk patients in Knapdale were invited to go to Kames, Tighnabruaich for Covid boosters. Raised by Brandan O’Hara MP on our behalf. Apology received.
- d. Air Ambulance Re-procurement consultation – we discussed the importance of the Air Ambulance Service to our communities and heard that helicopters had assisted patients locally on several

occasions. The Air Ambulance is an essential part of the health service locally. It currently appears to work well, including the bad weather support provided by the Coastguard and Navy.

12. Co-opting of non-voting Community Council members

We confirmed that eight is the maximum number of community councillors we can have. Others can be involved on specific issues – but without a vote. Agreed, we will involve Lauren Taylor and Savanna Murdoch on education issues.

We also discussed ways of widening community involvement in the CC. We noted that the way we operate there is very little distinction between formal members and others who attend meetings. We agreed that email communication between meetings will be extended to interested residents. Email addresses please!

13. Village notice boards

There are well used notice boards in Achnamara and Tayvallich. In Crinan the board by the Basin is unused. We also have a wonderful new notice board on the way into the village. Thanks to Ali Taylor who built and erected it! Agreed, we will put CC notices on the boards.

In Tayvallich and Achnamara there are Facebook and other groups where people can share information. There was a group set up in Crinan to coordinate shopping etc during the pandemic, but it is no longer used. Lauren Taylor has set up a Facebook group for us all to use called *Crinan and close by Community*. We will put CC notices up there too.

14. AOCB: none raised

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting: w/c 15 August 2022. Date to be circulated