

North Knapdale Community Council

Minutes of the North Knapdale Community Council meeting held at Crinan Hotel on the 17 November 2022 at 7.30 pm.

In Attendance: Iain Ritchie, Richard Stein, Cllr Garret Corner, Sgt Matt Shaw, Savanna Murdoch, Alan Hutchinson, Donald Booth, John McArthur, Jane McArthur, Jean Whittaker, Libby Butler, Mike Macintyre, Fiona Higgins, Jeremy Birnie.

1. Welcome: Iain Ritchie welcomed everyone.

1. Apologies: Andy Grant, Catherine MacLennan, Sue Hillman, Norma & Mike Kelly, Paul Chadderton, Alka Foster, Iain Gibson, Fergie Anderson, Ewan Halley, Martin Mellor, Heather Williams, Christine Richards.

2. Approval of minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the meeting on 18th August 2022 were approved.

3. Inaugural NKCC Meeting: Iain Ritchie reported that we had just held the new Community Council's inaugural meeting. 5 councillors were elected unopposed – Andy Grant, Catherine MacLennan, Jean Whittaker, Iain Ritchie and Richard Stein. Iain was reappointed Convener & Richard Stein was reappointed Secretary. Andy Grant was appointed Treasurer.

We had wished to co-opt three people (Sue Hillman, Alka Foster & Savanna Murdoch) onto the council (to fill the three vacancies), but we were advised that we could only co-opt two. The rules provide that we can only co-opt up to 50% of our number. A third person could become a non-voting member to provide specialist advice and assistance. Iain agreed to contact the three potential co-optees to obtain their views.

4. Matters arising:
 - a. Crinan bottle bank - Agreed to raise with Scottish Canals at the January quarterly meeting.
 - b. Argyll & Bute Campervan Policy – Agreed the Secretary will write to Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development & Strategic Transportation regarding the need for a multi-agency working group across the County to pull together a strategy for dealing with all aspects

of campervan operation in Argyll. Cllr Corner will also raise at a meeting next week.

- c. Scottish Canals Our MSP Jenni Minto met with Scottish Canals last week.
 - d. Tayvallich Initiative – see attached update from Martin Mellor regarding potential community purchase of part of the Tayvallich Estate.
 - e. Bins at Tayvallich Pontoon Cllr Corner has pressed for a public bin in the centre of the village to accompany the Bay Association bin – but to no avail. The Secretary will make a further request explaining that the rubbish is largely from the public, not just pontoon users. We will also apply for a recycling bin etc for public use at the pontoon.
5. Police Report: Sgt Shaw gave us an oral run down of police activity in our community council area over the last three months. There will be staff changes which mean he will no longer be attending community council meetings generally. However, as he lives locally he will ask whether he can continue to give us a local report. We expressed our hope that he could continue with his most informative reports.
6. Correspondence – dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.
7. Argyll & Bute Council update – dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.
8. Scottish Canals: There have been many developments since our last meeting. The main positive is that SC are at last talking to us. The recently appointed Head of Customer Experience and Delivery Laurie Piper has been very positive – although he is frequently left out on a limb by SC. Their communications have been awful, claiming on two occasions in the Squeak that they have consulted/informed local people when there have been no contacts at all. Our letter of complaint to the SC Chief Executive, supported by our three ward councillors, has received a weak response. (Both letters are attached here). A meeting is being arranged to take matters further. We have held two public meetings with SC and have established a cycle of quarterly public meetings to discuss Canal related issues of concern – the next one being on 26 January at 18.30 in the Ardrishaig EggShed. The lock replacement is well under way. Although the decision to delay the replacement of Lock 15 gates –until at least next year - is disappointing. We have been impressed by the technical staff of both SC and Mackenzie Construction, their contractors. The road closures to bring in new lock gates

went as planned, although the signage could have been better. The lock replacement works are said to be on target to complete in March.

A recent issue of concern involved notification of plans to remove trees above Lock 14 for storage of lock gates. SC were unaware that they could not remove trees in the Crinan Canal Conservation Area without 6 weeks' notice to the Council. Having brought this to their attention they have now decided the tree removal is unnecessary!

There are worries that funding issues may prevent repairs this year to major leaks discovered in the canal. This would necessitate further draining of the canal, including the Bellanoch Basin at a later stage. We will also raise damage and potential leaks caused by self-seeded trees on the canal bank at the January meeting.

We discussed the 'Community Benefit' obligation on Mackenzie Construction because of the substantial size of their contract. A meeting has been arranged between Crinan Harbour Association, SC and Mackenzie Construction to consider work to prevent soil erosion in Crinan Harbour. Other potential ideas are invited. Savanna Murdoch advised that she and two friends had been meeting with Mackenzies and Argyll & Bute Council to explore funding/building a village hall for Crinan – although a suitable site had not yet been found.

We discussed the replacement of the Dunardry Rolling Bridge – and agreed that we would meet with John Dunlop of Crinan Boatyard to discuss options.

9. Forestry & Land Scotland We arranged a successful meeting with FLS on 26 October to discuss their local plans. (Note of the meeting is attached). Following the meeting we were concerned that the intention might be to 'clear fell' the broadleaf trees along the road past Dunardry, rather than just to remove the unstable or diseased trees. We received a reassuring response from FLS that only the unstable & diseased trees would be removed. (Correspondence attached).

We agreed to invite an FLS representative to our next meeting to talk about their peat restoration programme.

10. Highway/Transport issues
 - a. Passing places – Cllr Corner reminded us that passing place signage on the Moss Road will be sorted by Christmas. He has also passed on the request for a new passing place past Tayvallich. Council officers have explained that the budget is stretched by the need for new Gallic village signs. Mike Macintyre advised us that the Crinan Gallic sign is incorrect.

The Gallic name should be Grianan. On early maps Loch Grianan took its name from a local farm on the hillside named Grianan – a little sunny place! Cllr Corner will also raise with Highways, the dangerous lack of white lines on the Cairnbaan to Lochgilphead road.

- b. Trees & shrubs pruning along the forestry side of the road from Bellanoch to Crinan – excellent job done by Scottish Canals clearing their side of the road. Although some work has been done on the forestry side of the road, cars are still getting scratched when they pass each other. The Council claims that ‘general growth on verges... is cut once a year’. We are unaware that this has been done in the last couple of years. Secretary to follow up.

11. Planning issues – none raised

12. Next Meeting – 7.30pm Thursday 23 February 2023, Achnamara Village Hall. Cllr Corner advised that one of the other ward councillors will be attending our meetings in future. We thanked him for all his help to date.