

North Knapdale Community Council

Minutes of the North Knapdale Community Council meeting held at Achnamara Village Hall on the 23 February 2023 at 7.30 pm.

In Attendance: Iain Ritchie, Richard Stein, Cllr Dougie Phelan, Sgt Matt Shaw, Savanna Murdoch, Alan Hutchinson, Donald Booth, Jean Whittaker, Mike Macintyre, Conny Graf, Katie Ritchie, Kate Macdonald, Martin Mellor, Paul Chadderton, Fergie Anderson, Sue Hillman, Chris Purslow, Ewan Halley, Sandy Campbell, Bill Dunkley, Vicky Dunkley, Catherine MacLennan, Shuni Chiavarini, Andrea Chiavarini, Peter Burrell, Kathie Baer.

1. Welcome: Iain Ritchie welcomed everyone.
2. Apologies: John McArthur, Jane McArthur, Norma Kelly, Mike Kelly, Alka Foster, Kerrien Grant, Lynne Milne.
3. Approval of minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the meeting on 17th November 2022 were approved.
4. Police Report: Sgt Shaw referred to the circulated report and gave us an oral run down of police activity in our community council area over the last three months. There have been 25 calls resulting in 2 crimes. Although the level of criminal activity locally is very low, but there are greater problems, largely drug related in Lochgilphead and Ardrishaig.
5. Matters arising/ Correspondence
 - a. Tayvallich Water Main Replacement - pipe laying from the school to the shop will be finished this week & will become live next week. The section from the shop to caravan park will start then. Plans to be completed by the end of March. Investigations, trial holes etc to commence on the road to Carsaig from 13 March, with temporary traffic light control. The road to remain passable at all times. All the main replacement to be completed by the end of June. Villagers are grateful to the MacFadyens workforce who have gone out of their way to keep road access open as much as possible. Cllr Phelan agreed to ask for additional road cleansing to deal with the mud on the road.

- b. Crinan bottle bank - Scottish Canals have agreed to the siting of a bottle bank in the Canal Basin car park. There appeared to be an issue that the Council required SC to pay. Cllr Phelan has resolved this issue. We hope to have a bottle bank when the Canal works finish in the spring.
- c. Street Lighting - Craignish CC have asked whether other Councils also would like their street lighting to be switched off at night to reduce light pollution and protect wildlife. There was little support for this, including concerns about safety accessing defibrillators. Sgt Shaw thought there is a legal requirement to have street lights in 30mph areas (subsequently confirmed).
- d. Bins at Tayvallich Pontoon - Despite Cllr Phelan pressing for a Council funded bin in the centre of the village, payment by the Bay Association is still being required. Cllr Phelan will escalate our case to press for two Council funded bins (at least in the summer).
- e. Coronation – there were no plans for any special celebration events.
- f. Campervan Policy - the Council has published various publicity initiatives. Agreed we would suggest to the Council that they encourage restaurants, pubs etc with car parks to offer their use for campervans to use overnight.

6. Co-options to the Community Council

Having considered our co-option limit of two (rather than the three we wished to co-opt), we decided not to co-opt at all. As all matters are communicated to everyone who is interested and we never resort to voting, we considered it unnecessary. Our inclusive model works well. Cllr Phelan told us we are the best attended Community Council.

7. Argyll & Bute Council update

Cllr Phelan mentioned this year's Supporting Communities Fund, with up to £2,500 available to local groups. In view of 30 March deadline for applications, we agreed to circulate details. He then spoke about the budget setting meeting which happened today. The administration defeated the opposition's proposals by one vote 18-17. Copies of press releases setting out both proposals are attached. The budget papers are available on the Council website. There were £13m budget cuts last year, £80m in the last 10 years, making service delivery very difficult. There will be a 5% increase in Council tax this year.

8. Scottish Canals:

- i. Our complaint & FLS reply - Following the weak response to our letter of complaint to the SC Chief Executive, we had a meeting with Laurie Piper (attended by Richard Stein, Cllr Phelan & Cllr Brown) where we were promised more information to explain SC's failures. The meeting was rather unsatisfactory. We were told to apply under freedom of information if we wanted any more information.
- ii. Winter works progress – Around 30 people attended the January quarterly meeting with SC. We heard that the winter works were well under way and would be completed on time in March. The sea lock would be replaced next winter. The major leaks were also being sorted before the canal is refilled. We were promised an update on all of the other items we had raised at earlier meetings in time for this Community Council meeting. These specifically included how to take forward Dunardry Bridge repair/replacement and details of the community benefit to be delivered by Mackenzie's. Despite repeated pressing, nothing has been forthcoming.
- iii. Community benefit projects – at the January meeting with SC we were promised that we would have details of how the scheme works. We were also told that community input would be sought on which projects were favoured. Unfortunately, in the absence of a list of the projects proposed or details of how the scheme operates, we were unable to take this further.
- iv. Dunardry Bridge - at the January meeting it was agreed that a working group including SC and local interested people would be set up to explore how the bridge repair/replacement could be taken forward. The email setting out next steps never arrived. Richard Stein, Iain Ritchie, Conny Graf & Alan Hutchinson volunteered to be part of the working group.
Agreed we will write to the Chief Executive of SC and to Mackenzie's for the information about the community benefit scheme and the Dunardry Bridge working group.

The meeting was really pleased with the tree clearance work carried out by SC on the Canal side of the road between Crinan & Bellanoch. Problems still carried on with noise from pumps running overnight. Despite installation of new pumps with float switches there is frequently substantial noise nuisance.

9. Forestry & Land Scotland

- i. Tree work at Dunardry Ridge - we believe this will be carried out this winter. Agreed will check.
- ii. Charges at local FLS car parks – correspondence has already been circulated about plans to charge £1 per hour / £3 per day to park at

Barnluasgan, Ardcastle, Achnabreac & Dunardry FLS car parks. Despite further exchange and raising the matter at the Council MAKI Area Community Planning Group on 1 February, SC made it clear they would meet and discuss with Community Councils but would not reconsider the decision to charge. So much for public engagement. A Teams meeting has been arranged at 2pm on Friday 3 March.

- iii. Cutting back road verges - Bellanoch to Crinan. There are still concerns about the overhanging vegetation along the forestry side of the road, although the recent regular lorry traffic has removed the worst of it.
10. Cairnbaan Village Hall Project
Not discussed.
11. Tayvallich Initiative - Update from Martin Mellor (attached) regarding potential community purchase of part of the Tayvallich Estate. Now confirmed that Highlands Rewilding have funds to complete the purchase, to be completed by end March. The meeting expressed our support for TI's excellent work.
12. Scotland Deposit Return Scheme
We discussed the scheme, commencing 1st August. Cllr Phelan agreed to find out whether the Council had considered how it would be implemented in Argyll & Bute. (A&BC has responded by referring to the Scottish Govt information).
13. Planning Issues
Bellanoch Brae - unauthorised works scraping and levelling the area raised substantial local concern. Planning Enforcement has served a stop notice to prevent further works. Agreed, we will press for the Council to ensure reinstatement of the land to its original condition.
14. Highway/Transport issues
Passing place signs on the road across the Moss, promised by the end of 2022 have not been erected. In response to Cllr Phelan's chasing, the work will not take place due to budget cuts. It is uncertain whether it will happen in 2023/24.
15. Next Meeting – 7.30pm Tuesday 16th May 2023, Tayvallich Village Hall.