

# North Knapdale Community Council

Minutes of the North Knapdale Community Council meeting held at the Crinan Coffee Shop on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 at 7.30 pm.

In Attendance: Richard Stein, Andy Grant, Alka Foster, Jean Whittaker, Sgt Matt Shaw, Andrew Milne, Dulcie Raynor, Mike Raynor, Martin Foster, Mike MacIntyre, Alan Hutchinson, Rowan Aitchison, Libby Butler, Cllr Garret Corner, Ewan Halley, Kathie Baer, Sue Hillman, Peter Burrell, Jan Aksnes.

Welcome: In Iain Ritchie's absence, Andy Grant welcomed everyone.

1. Apologies: Iain Ritchie, Catherine MacLennan, Paul Chadderton, Martin Mellor, John McArthur, Jane McArthur, Norma Kelly, Mike Kelly, Chris Purslow, Maureen Brankin.
2. Approval of minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were approved.
3. Matters arising/ Correspondence  
All on the agenda.
4. Police Report: Sgt Matt Shaw referred to the May 2024 Community Council Police Report for the whole MAKI area (copy attached with the agenda). More locally, Matt reported the actions/calls involving police since December. They included 3 crimes. The published reports will be in a more statistical form in future.  
Unfortunately Maureen Brankin from Cairnbaan was unwell and was not able to attend to raise concerns about speeding in Cairnbaan. Matt will respond to her directly, but reported that it is not considered that there is a significant speeding problem in Cairnbaan.
5. Argyll & Bute Council update  
Cllr Corner updated us that a new administration was in place in Argyll & Bute and our ward councillors Dougie Philand & Jan Brown were elected as Provost and Vice Provost respectively.
6. Scottish Canals (SC)  
*Winter closure update* – the canal opened as planned at the end of April.

*Dunardry Bridge update* – No progress. Laurie Piper promises progress now that the winter works have been completed. We will ensure that community involvement in the project will include engagement with canal users and local residents.

*Mackenzie's Community Benefit update* – Mackenzie's are contracted to replace Lock 7 gates and to finish the dummy lock repairs next winter. As a result, they will take on additional community projects. We agreed to think about projects we would like to be considered. We will ask for details of the projects completed this winter.

*Meeting with Scottish Canals at the Scottish Parliament* – As discussed in the Chair's annual report at the AGM, the meeting with SC Chief Executive John Paterson & our MSP, Rhoda Grant was positive. We are optimistic that, with John Paterson's background in local government and the NHS, SC's poor community engagement will improve.

We will insist on being involved in closure dates and plans for the winter works next winter. We are concerned that there are still substantial leaks between Crinan & Bellanoch. Also worries were raised as to whether the basin is to be drained again this winter.

The confusing signage limiting usage of the public bottle bank in Crinan Basin to canal customers only will be removed.

We asked Cllr Corner to get the council to put up signage at the Canal Basin for the public toilets in Crinan.

## 7. Forestry & Land Scotland (FLS)

It is hoped that harvesting of Dunardry Ridge will start in October this year and carry on through to late March. The process and timing are still subject to change. When details are firmed up we will advise.

As reported in the Chair's report to the AGM, the walk with John Taylor, Environment Forester at FLS, was informative and enjoyable. Further meetings will be arranged, including on archaeological sites and peatland restoration.

An orienteering event will be taking place in North Knapdale on FLS land, organised by Coast and Islands Orienteering from Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July. They anticipate 150-200 participants. To avoid parking & traffic problems, participants will be bused from Lochgilphead. Caution needs to be taken on our local roads as 30 or so cyclists are anticipated. The event on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> will start from Crinan & those on 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> will start from Achnamara. Details can be found on the Coast and Islands website here: <https://coastandislands.com/>

8. Tayvallich Initiative – Ewan Halley updated us about developments with Tayvallich Initiative. A copy of Ewan’s note is attached.
9. Community Renewables and Climate Engagement – Rowan Aitchison led a really interesting discussion about Community Renewables initiatives taken by Tayvallich Initiative. Tayvallich Initiative are looking at two renewables energy ventures at feasibility stages. The first a solar array of 500KW -1MW capacity to be sited on community land. This would be to facilitate a community Local Energy Club which could provide the village with cheaper electricity at the time of generation.

Secondly Tayvallich Initiative have been discussing the possibility of shared ownership in the proposed High Brenfield wind farm sited between Ardrishaig and Achnamara. This would be visible from Tayvallich but is separate from the community benefit payments of £5K per MWh. Tayvallich Initiative would be looking to invest in the scheme for a share of the profits. We are being assisted in this by Local Energy Scotland who we are going to apply to for financial and legal advice. Our aim would be to draw up an MOU with the developer that other community groups could sign on to if they were interested in being investors. We understand that we are not the host community and don’t want to cause tension if the Ardrishaig community does not want the development to go ahead. We are simply preparing for the possibility that it does go ahead.

This item then developed into a wider discussion about renewables.

#### 10. Planning Issues

Bellanoch Brae – The plots still continue to be marketed to the unsuspecting public. We had hoped that Trading Standards would be able to take action under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations. We have heard nothing. Cllr Corner agreed to investigate for us.

#### Balliemore

We discussed the difficulties that exist in locating proposed developments locally, as exemplified by this development. The planning portal which is a GB wide framework works well for urban planning developments. A number of difficulties arise when searching for new developments on land without easy identification. Cllr Corner agreed to raise the issues with the Planning Department.

## 11. Highway/Transport issues

*Acid Quay – Crinan Harbour* was damaged by the storm in January. Despite the Council Piers & Harbours Team's promises to inspect and repair, nothing has happened. We have had no response to our chasing emails. Cllr Corner agreed to chase on our behalf.

*Signage replacement & trailer dumping in Crinan Harbour car park* – the car park is regularly full in the summer. We have chased the Council to replace the out of date signs and enforce the new Traffic Order. Apparently new signs are on order and steps will be taken to enforce.

## 12. AOCB

*Dog shit locally* – concerns were raised that dog owners are failing to clear up after their dogs on local roads. Cllr Corner agreed to raise the issue with the dog warden. Apparently he uses DNA testing to provide the necessary evidence to secure convictions against abusive dog owners.

*Damage to roads in the loop around Crinan* – The state of local roads up and down around the Crinan Hotel have deteriorated greatly over this winter. It is thought that this is likely to have been caused by the heavy vehicle traffic resulting from the Canal winter works. Cllr Corner agreed to take this up with the Council Highways Department, leaving them to approach Scottish Canals, if appropriate, to get repairs carried out.

We asked Cllr Corner to find out whether our council has adopted the new 'best practice' policy on repairing pot holes that has been developed by other highways authorities.

## 13. Next Meeting – 7.30pm Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024, at the Achnamara Village Hall