

North Knapdale Community Council

Minutes of the North Knapdale Community Council meeting held at the Achnamara Village Hall on the 22nd August 2024 at 7.30 pm.

In Attendance: Richard Stein, Iain Ritchie, Catherine MacLennan, Sgt Matt Shaw, Jane McArthur, Dulcie Raynor, Mike Raynor, Alan Hutchinson, Kathie Baer, Jan Aksnes, Frances Ryan, Mike Lindup, Gordon Doughty, Liz Swan.

1. Welcome: Iain Ritchie welcomed everyone.
2. Apologies: Cllr Dougie Philand, Andy Grant, Alka Foster, Jean Whittaker Libby Butler, Sue Hillman, Chris Purslow, Martin Mellor, Ewan Halley, Peter Burrell, Jim McArthur.
3. Approval of minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the meeting on 23rd May 2024 were approved.
4. Matters arising/ Correspondence
The following outstanding matters had been raised with Cllr Corner, with no response to date:
Bellanoch Brae enforcement/inappropriate marketing; Improvements to planning application searches on land without easy identification; Inspection/repair at Crinan Acid Quay; Dog mess on roads around Crinan; Road repairs have been carried out on part of the loop to the Crinan Hotel, but not the other half.
Agreed we would ask Cllr Philand (now with us for the next 6 months) to chase these matters.
5. Police Report: Sgt Matt Shaw provided us with an excellent detailed update on policing in Mid Argyll, based on a report he has prepared for the MAKI Planning Committee. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.
6. Argyll & Bute Council update
In Cllr Philand's unavoidable absence, he sent us a note with the following points. The Council are consulting on a new 30 MPH limit on the canal towpath in Cairnbaan. At our request, he has written to the Roads Department suggesting that a 20 MPH, if not a 10 MPH limit would be more

appropriate; He has written to Planning to ascertain if Scottish Canals require planning permission for any works; Consultation is coming out about the Council's intention to adopt a visitors levy which is a local tax on businesses providing accommodation; There is an estimated £9 million gap in the Council's budget for next year and so officers are working with councillors to identify measures to manage this gap and have a balanced budget.

7. Scottish Canals (SC)

Crinan Basin landscaping proposals – SC have proposed draft landscaping proposals for the Crinan Basin once the works on the lock gates etc are completed in the coming winter. Members & residents met with SC to express concerns about the scheme which have a basic 'modernising' and 'simplifying' concept. Our view was that the replacement of grassy areas with large areas of rather brutal smooth stone undermines the quaint and quirky historic feel of the Basin. Our hope is that they were listening. They will come back with an amended draft in early October for our views before the scheme is finalised.

Winter closure update – 'in due course'.

Dunardry Bridge update – SC 'discussing with colleagues' – ie no progress!
Crinan Canal quarterly meeting 24 July – the meeting was badly attended (only 2 people). Bizarrely, no notes of the meeting were produced because there were only 2 people there! Concerns were raised about the poor notification of the meeting dates, placing reliance on their website. Also, the failure to engage with us on details of winter works and canal closure by the end of August, is reminiscent of the unacceptable position last year. Agreed, we will communicate these concerns to Laurie Piper, copying in the SC Chief Exec John Paterson.

Mackenzie Construction community contributions 2023/24 – No response to our request for the list of projects undertaken. We will chase.

8. Forestry & Land Scotland (FLS)

Yet again, so much better communications from and relations with FLS compared with SC. We have an update on a number of points.

Dunardry Ridge - massively oversized trees to be felled have caused further delays. Felling is on hold. FLS are in discussions with the few contractors who have the machinery to be able to winch the material up to the forestry track for removal.

Crinan Walk – (up to Castle Dounie) diseased and dangerous ash trees have been removed close to the path. Some infected but still alive trees have been left, hoping they will recover. They will be kept under annual inspection.

Gleann a Gealbhan/Arichonan – at the end of the squirrel season (in the next few weeks), felling will commence. Arichonan will be closed to the public while works continue.

Achnamara site – will also be felled once wildlife restrictions are lifted.

The ancient monument Achnamara clapper bridge was discussed. In 2018 conservation works were carried out. A huge block was washed out 2/3 years ago. FLS surveyed it some time ago, but nothing has been done. The next big storm could cause the bridge to collapse. Agreed, we will raise it with FLS.

The orienteering event in July was a well-organised & well-attended success. A training weekend is planned in Achnamara by the same group.

9. Tayvallich Initiative – In Martin Mellor's absence, the note he provided was read out. Copy attached to these minutes.

10. High Brenfield Community Ownership Share – Rowan Aitchison from TI raised an initiative at our last meeting for the North Knapdale communities to buy a share in this proposed privately owned 100 megawatt windfarm. Grants and advice are available from Local Energy Scotland, sponsored by the Scottish Government. It is suggested that our communities, via limited liability Development Trusts, would buy 20% of the £200 million project (ie £40 million!). The funds would be borrowed on the open market, supported if necessary by Scottish Government backed funders. Ardrishaig, Cairnbaan & Tayvallich already have established Development Trusts. It will now be for Achnamara, Lochgilphead & Crinan/Bellanoch to decide whether to participate. This is a long term project. High Brenfield hasn't got planning permission yet. The aim is for it to go live in 2031. If successful, it would generate substantial funds for local community projects. Watch this space!

11. Planning Issues

Development Plan: Local Place Plans - Argyll & Bute Council is starting to prepare its third Local Development Plan. In doing so, it will consider registered Local Place Plans (LPPs) adopted by local communities. We could 'use an LPP to highlight issues, gather ideas and look at needs &

aspirations for the future of our community'. It could set out our proposals for the development and use of land in a locally defined area. It could be a single place or building or cover a wider geographical area. Once registered, an LPP would be taken into account in the preparation of the County wide Local Development Plan and would form part of the basis on which decisions were made on planning applications in our area. We would need to have our LPP in place by 30 June 2025. Does North Knapdale want to consider preparing an LPP?

Speed limit Cairnbaan Towpath Road – See Cllr Philand's report above.

12. Highway/Transport issues

See matters arising above.

Signage replacement in Crinan Harbour car park – nothing to date. Agreed will chase.

13. AOCB

Concerns were raised about the proposed digital phone system in areas where we have no mobile phone signal. BT say they will not transfer users who are vulnerable or have no mobile phone reception. Some present had useful discussion with BT at the open day and will not be switched over but others were transferred without consultation. Agreed will seek clarification that areas with no signal will not be switched over.

14. Next Meeting – 7.30pm Wednesday 20th November 2024, at the Tayvallich Village Hall.