

# Cumrae Community Council

Minutes of monthly meeting held via Zoom  
Thursday 11th of February 2021 @ 5.00 pm.

## **Present**

Graham Wallace (Chair), Dr. Charlie Shaw, Lisa Christie, Crawford Gillan and Sharon Hagan (left meeting early @ 5.55 pm to attend Largs Academy meeting)  
NAC – Cllrs Tom Marshall, Ian Murdoch, and Alex Gallagher.  
Two members of the public

## **Apologies**

Received from Alex Caldwell, Constable Beattie, and Cllr Alan Hill

## **Minutes from the previous meeting**

Submitted for approval. Proposed by Sharon Hagan. Seconded by Charlie Shaw.  
One amendment was requested concerning the Millport flood protection scheme that the date should read 2023 and not 2013 as per the minutes.

## **Covid Update**

An update was given by Graham Wallace regarding the coronavirus vaccination scheme on the islands. Residents over the age of 65 had started to be vaccinated and this has been carried out at the DA Hall. The system was well operated and those residents attending seemed to be very happy with the arrangements by the Local Health Board.

Whilst Scotland is still awaiting Covid lockdown updates from the First Minister the potential for issues arising with the numbers of people attempting to travel to/from the island during the Easter holiday period and beyond was raised. A query was tabled about whether NAC/CalMac/Police Scotland and other relevant agencies had yet entered into discussions about the proposed introduction of any measures necessary to ensure public safety and compliance with the Covid restrictions in place.

It was strongly represented by the meeting that any potential issues needed to be identified and resolved before the start of the season given the inevitable large increase in visitors to the island which will be experienced possibly before, but certainly after, the Scottish Government has set the timelines around the framework for the lifting of lockdown/introduction of Tier levels etc.

Councillor Murdoch reiterated the Isle of Cumrae is different from other western Isles in respect of the number of day trippers who come over with visitors travelling from differing tier areas. It was agreed that CCC would draft a letter seeking clarification of plans in place to deal with any issues that might arise in this respect to North Ayrshire Council, regional MSPs and NAC.

Cllr Marshall updated that planning permission for provision for campervans had been granted for the Garrison area and a question was raised as to whether, in common with other Western Isles, given the amount of investment made in the Garrison site and the requirement for income to be generated by CCDC, that motorhome owners should be asked to provide evidence of a booking at the site before being allowed to travel to the island. There was tacit recognition that enforcement of this could be difficult however this subject, together with that of wild camping, had again been raised with the North Ayrshire Council's Access Officer as complaints

have been received from last season regarding campervans in the town and the mess being left by some irresponsible campers around the island. It was noted that many motorhomes visiting the island do not follow CAMPA's (<https://www.campa.org.uk/>) own Code of Conduct and that much of the camping undertaken on the island does not meet with the criteria to be officially recognised as "wild camping". It was noted that Argyll & Bute had commenced an online consultation to gather residents' views on these matters and it was suggested a similar exercise might be worthwhile on Cumbrae. This will be explored with NAC's Access Officer.

### **NAC Councillors' updates**

Online ticketing on CalMac ferry. A contract had now been awarded to a service provider for this which was hoped would be in place by the end of 2021.

The expectation that the new ticketing system would be able to meet the needs of Cumbrae residents was again expressed particularly in respect of the purchase of concessionary tickets and the ability to handle pre-booking/priority boarding if required.

Cllr Murdoch advised the meeting that a decision regarding funding for a cycle path on the island could be made within the next few weeks.

SPT was being looked at regarding funding for the queuing issues at the ferry terminal on the island and the NAC access officer was looking at the feasibility of cycle parking in the area of the Garrison.

Councillor Marshall advised the meeting that's the new Islands Officer Sarah Baird had been appointed and would be starting her position in the next few weeks. CCC expressed their pleasure at this and looked forward to meeting and working with Sarah on proposals for the development of a 10 year social/economic/environment plan for the island.

CCC had attended the recent Ferry Users meeting where parking & queuing proposals for Largs and Cumbrae had been discussed along with associated traffic management issues. No decisions have as yet been made regarding the changes necessary at either side and it is still the intention that the preferred options will go to public consultation in due course.

A reduced ferry timetable was due to start forthwith and this was due largely to staffing shortages due to Covid-19. There is still a ban on loose freight being transported to the island.

No other regular meetings had been scheduled so therefore nothing further to report.

### **Standing items**

#### **Police Report**

As previously mentioned Constable Beattie had been unable to join the Zoom meeting and had passed on apologies. The officer had sent through the monthly crime reports as requested but the meeting was unable to access them in time for them to be considered by the meeting.

*Post Meeting Note: 11 January to 11 February - Number of incidents in total - 4  
Number of Crimes identified - 0*

**Cumbræ Resilience Team.**

No relevant update at this time.

**Planning Applications**

A planning application for Rigg Hill wind farm which was due on the 27th of February had been delayed until the end of March perhaps April.

No applications had yet been made for the fish farms earlier proposed for three locations around the island. NAC have not yet made a decision on the application for the fish farm nr. Lochranza and it is likely the outcome on this is awaited before the parties proceed further.

CCC raised the issue once again that it was extremely difficult for it to properly deal with major or controversial planning applications. In some cases the applications might have been under discussion between the Council and the proposed developer for several months (pre-application discussions) but the community are not notified until the application is formally submitted at which time there can be as little as 21 days for the Community Council to seek the wider community's view and/or to respond. In certain cases, even though the applicant may have to hold consultation events, applications can stretch to hundreds of items of detailed and technical documentation which the Community Council has a limited ability and time frame to respond to. It was agreed that for the more complex applications support and/or funding should be offered to community councils to allow them to seek relevant professional advice. Whilst the applicant may have had months of preparation time plus input and advice from third parties it seemed inequitable when the application could have a major impact on or introduce a major change to the island that the same time and advice that may have been provided to the applicant via NAC Planning was not made available to the Community Council at the same time to allow it to make a valid and coherent decision in support of or against the application.

**Roads issues.**

Potholes are currently a major issue on certain roads with the current cold weather conditions the freeze-thaw cycle is in full effect and some of the recently resurfaced parts look like they are going to break up.

Councillor Ian Murdoch stated it was difficult to justify council officers travelling to the island to examine the roads due to the current restrictions.

CCC plans to compile a new photo record of the issues and send it to North Ayrshire Council. Blocked drains on Ferry Road are also a problem and are causing water to pour into the town. This is the third year and the umpteenth occasion that CCC had raised the issue of NAC not clearing foliage and mud on Ferry Road the debris blocks all the drains on the road and when it rains heavily it all flows down the hill into the town. We have previously been advised that NAC staff only come over every 18 months to clear the gullies. Councillor Murdoch said he will raise the issue once again. It was recognised that improvements had been made in respect of the flooding in College Street.

A resident raised an issue surrounding a dangerous loose manhole cover in Bute Terrace.

**Millport Town Hall** - Millport Town Hall Charity is delighted to report the success of the £1.5 million application to the Scottish Government Regeneration Fund. Along with the generous funds already pledged by NAC, the Land Trust, the Hugh Fraser

Foundation and the continuing support from Cumbrae Lottery proceeds it will now be possible to commence the project. Solicitors are processing the asset transfer of the site from NAC to the Charity and once the funding agreement has been received from the Scottish Government this will be agreed to allow further progression. It is very much hoped that work will commence sometime during May – Covid restrictions allowing.

### **CCDC**

Work is coming on well at the Croc Rock toilets and the new furniture is due for delivery at the end of February, Covid-19 permitting and aiming for completion mid – end of March.

The Bomb Shelter toilet block is progressing well and this will offer toilet facilities for those with disabilities and also baby changing facilities for parents/carers.

Campervan Site - hard standing – work has begun this week in the grounds at the site, awaiting confirmation of when the tarmac will be getting done. Funding bid result for stonework/pointing repairs awaited.

### **Flood Protection Scheme.**

The meeting was informed that the contract for the landscaping for the surrounding flood defences has been awarded to a company from Newcastle. CCC noted that this appeared contrary to North Ayrshire's Community Wealth Building initiative. Unfortunately, Cllr Gallacher had had to leave the meeting earlier and was not available to respond. Councillor Marshall stated he would take this matter up with North Ayrshire Council.

The meeting expressed the hope and expectation that whenever work was required locally, local contractors would be given the opportunity to deliver the services as promoted under the CWB initiative when appropriate.

### **Agenda items**

#### **Millport Support Group**

The weekly dinners were continuing and it was hoped that this would continue until the end of March. Other support continues to be provided by the MSG volunteers to many in the community.

#### **Water Sports Centre Update.**

The sub-group initially set up by Cumbrae Community Council is looking into the options for this asset being transferred to the community.

The sub-group is very much aware that any proposal should enhance, and complement existing facilities, and create opportunities for islanders and island businesses, and of course tourism but without impacting in a negative way on the existing provision in the town. This discussion and research is at an very early stage and in order for the proposal to be progressed the sub-group would welcome anyone willing to lend their skills, to help and share the considerable work ahead. We have offered the CCC email address to ease this process of recruitment pending the sub-group setting up its own. Support has been provided by NAC's professional business advisory service. The high-level initial contact with Sport Scotland has been positive to date.

**Peel Ports Mooring Incident.** CCC felt that the severity of this incident could not be overlooked and that a full, open, and transparent multi-agency inquiry is needed to identify the issues that caused these two vessels to break their moorings. The vessels were only a few minutes from grounding on the rocks at the Wishing Well/Keppel

Pier area of the island. A lively debate ensued and it was agreed essential that North Ayrshire Council be given and take up the opportunity to submit its input to any Inquiry and that the serious concerns of CCC about the potential impacts be taken into account. It was noted that the Inquiry may take some time to reach a conclusion but CCC expect to be kept updated with any findings or proposed outcomes that result as the island would have been the area that suffered the worst effects from the groundings.

#### **National Island Plan Consultations**

Graham Wallace was due to attend several of the ScotGov workshops on the delivery and the measuring of outcomes of the 10 Strategic Objectives in the Islands Plan. The Island Officer's involvement in the delivery of the Islands Plan will be critical to successful outcomes for Cumbrae.

#### **AOCB**

None

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021 @ 5.00pm

#### **End of Meeting**

APPROVED