

APPROVED MINUTES

Cumbræ Community Council

(Meeting held via Zoom)

10th of June 2021 @ 5.00pm

1. Present

Graham Wallace (Chair), Dr. Charlie Shaw, Lisa Christie, Sharon Hagan, Crawford Gillan.

Also present: Cllr Ian Murdoch NAC, Cllr. Alan Hill, Constable Hamilton. 2 x Members of Public

Apologies received: Cllr Tom Marshall, Alex Caldwell,

2. **Draft Minutes.** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th May 2021 were proposed by Sharon Hagan and seconded by Lisa Christie.

3. Police Report

Constable Hamilton updated the meeting. In the preceding month, there have been 16 incidents recorded.

4 x Crimes of assault, 2 x theft, 1 x fail to stop, road traffic accident.

Local officers have dealt with several matters of parked cars on yellow lines and have approached North Ayrshire council requesting reinstatement of yellow lines which have fallen into disrepair.

A request had been submitted to DVLA regarding continuing reports of untaxed vehicles parked on the highway and it was hoped that DVLA would be sending enforcement officers to the island in the near future. Various resolutions were opened to DVLA and it would be a matter for them to deal with vehicles as appropriate.

Due to the exigencies of Duty Constable Hamilton retired from the meeting. GW (chair) thanked the officer for her attendance.

4. Matters Arising

- a. Coronavirus update:- No relevant updates at this time.
- b. Fly-tipping, Recycling/ Bulk Waste Facility:- Once again the Community Council raised concerns about the lack of a permanent site for locals to legally deposit items and continued to press long-term full-time resolutions to this ongoing situation. The status quo is unacceptable and CCC would continue to press the elected councillors and North Ayrshire Council to resolve the situation. Councillor Murdoch informed the meeting that NAC were currently looking at alternatives but there were challenges around SEPA, staffing, and funding. It was pointed out that the island should be afforded the same access to such facilities as the mainland and that potential sites and local staff were available to manage such a facility on say 2 to 3 days a week for a limited number of hours of opening. Cllr. Murdoch suggested that CCC write once again to Craig Hatton. (A)
- c. Millport FPS Consultation:- It was felt that the proposals for the latest round of the consultation process had been poor but that due to the actions of CCC (via social media and by working with the MSG and the use of CrocTalk) at least the consultation was brought to the attention of all residents of the island. (NAC had subsequently agreed to pay for the printing of the last CrocTalk newsletter.) There were concerns that the consultation did not fully meet the needs of the community nor did it allow for a true expression of preferences.

Mr. Gregor Harvie, a member of the local community, who has relevant skills and expertise in this area and who was present, updated the meeting regarding contact he had made with the senior North Ayrshire Council representatives for this project. It was felt that the community had been presented with a solution and the consultation exercise had merely offered the question 'Do you like

what we have decided ?". This was not the proper or correct manner, in his opinion, to conduct community consultation and wider options including choices of colours, materials etc. to better reflect the existing townscape etc. should have been available in graphic form. It was suggested that better communication could have been conducted along with a presentation for the community to properly consider the plan's scale and the impact of the works. The response from North Ayrshire council was at this time, not to pursue such a course of action.

Councillor Ian Murdoch advised the meeting that he had submitted questions to the North Ayrshire Council Cabinet meeting and was happy to share his statement and his questions with CCC.

GW reminded the meeting that the funding for the flood defences could only be used for flood prevention works (80% of the funding was coming via the Scottish Government).

Supplementary/add on items to the main flood defence project would have to be funded by some other means. There was concern that as this was the case then there was obviously a great risk that with only a limited "pot" of funds being available, money was at risk of being diverted from other local projects currently underway – for example the Town Hall project and/or other heritage/community based projects being pursued in the town.

Councillor Alan Hill suggested that CCC work with North Ayrshire Council to explore funding opportunities for these important works. GW stated that we should keep pushing for better consultation with and more involvement from local residents around the process. It was disappointing to note that around 60 people attended the three consultation Zoom meetings and only 24 responses had been received from the community in response to the Questionnaire. It was agreed that continuing efforts must be made by all to involve and inform local residents about this major project. A further meeting had been scheduled with NAC about the FPS on the 29th of June 2021 at which all matters relating to the Scheme would be discussed.

- d. Dawnfesh CAR Applications to SEPA:- CCC had submitted a joint response with Skelmorlie, Largs, Fairlie, West Kilbride, and Bute Community Councils about the three current fish farm applications in this area of the Clyde estuary submitted by Dawnfresh. It was a full and comprehensive response highlighting the detrimental environmental impact that fish farms of this scale and in these locations would have on the Clyde in general and on wild migratory fish stocks within the Clyde catchment etc. More particularly the potential damaging impact of all of the proposed fish farms on all of the island's beaches (west side & in town) demonstrated by the chemical and fish waste dispersal models provided by the applicant were highlighted. The worst affected areas, from the applicant's own evidence, included the (SEPA backed) award winning Newton Beach (the only beach to win such an award within North Ayrshire) and the Kames Bay SSSI. CCC would continue to monitor, liaise and press authorities, working jointly with other affected community councils and other such bodies as and when required, to ensure that the serious concerns of and impacts on the local community were fully taken into account.

5. Brief Reports of Meetings Attended

- a. NAC Ferry Users' Meeting (and Ferry Issues):- The continued issues surrounding passenger numbers, ferry frequency, cleaning breaks, priority travel for locals, booking system were continually highlighted to CalMac and NAC via the Ferry Users' Group, CCC, the Tourist Association, private individuals, Facebook pressure groups. CalMac was well aware of all the concerns of the island's community. During the ensuing discussions it was emphasised that CCC will continue, as it has been doing so at its meetings since Covid restrictions came into place, to highlight the negative impacts that the current situation is having on the local community and residents. This is not however purely a Covid related issue but of longer term impact.

Of particular concern to the Community Council is the need for the urgent introduction of a priority boarding system for the island's residents which should be implemented when necessary at peak

periods. It is unacceptable that island residents and businesses have to queue for 2 hours or more to travel to and from the island. CCC considers that the issues arising from this are further compounded through the vehicle and passenger queuing situations at Largs and on Cumbrae and the lack of passenger welfare facilities at either side of the crossing etc.

Other key issues for urgent consideration and action include the ability to purchase tickets locally on the island and further exploration of online booking options. It was highlighted by CG, that, as could be seen on some other of the Western Isles ferry routes, that online booking did not necessarily ensure travel as many of the bookings were being taken up by holiday travellers however on the Cumbrae route the number of pre-booked places on each run could be limited to say a max. 20% of capacity. Frustration with the lack of progress on these key issues by CalMac, NAC and Transport Scotland was again expressed.

Councillor Ian Murdoch reiterated that he and others had been attending meetings at North Ayrshire with CalMac and had been hearing the same rhetoric and little action from CalMac for several years now.

Councillor Alan Hill suggested that maybe he and Councillor Ian Murdoch could progress these issues with senior NAC officials. All agreed that these matters must be moved on with urgency.

- b. Hunterston SSG:- The main news to come from the latest meeting is that whilst both reactors (3 & 4) at Hunterston "B" are back in action this is the last time that an extension (approx.. 6 months) for continued operation will be requested and that both reactors will be permanently shut down in January 2022 and that de-commissioning proposals will then be pursued. This will bring to an end the production of nuclear energy from Hunterston A & B.
- c. North Coast Locality Planning Partnership:- The Elderly Grants budget was discussed. In the meantime any applications for funding would be considered in the usual way. The Partnership also discussed issues in respect of engagement with groups on the disbursement of Elderly Grants funding and exploring the potential for credit union services to be hosted on Cumbrae.

It was agreed that the Locality Priorities be refreshed in light of recent community engagement work to incorporate the related themes highlighted during discussion – Work and Skills; Social Inclusion; Stress and Anxiety; and Financial Inclusion.

A verbal report was given by Sarah Baird, Senior Islands Officer, about progress in developing the island's 10-year socio/economic/environmental plan which is due to be released for consultation by the end of the summer. CCC felt this was an optimistic timescale and questioned the feasibility of such an early date as a substantial amount of background work would need to be completed identifying where the island was at present in terms of measuring and reporting accurately on social, economic, health and well-being issues as well as detailed breakdowns of the impacts of tourism, housing, education, transport, employment etc. on Cumbrae as a place to live in order to have an accurate baseline to work from. It was not yet clear whether CCC and the community groups would have sight of the report before publication. GW to contact Sarah Baird to clarify the process, the timing and when the base data will be made available for scrutiny/consultation prior to any report's release.

Council Alan Hill agreed with the comments made that the report must not be a watered-down version of the Arran plan as both Islands were unique and a one-size-fits-all plan would not work nor meet the needs of expectations of either island community.

A report was presented on the Council's roads, structures and street lighting maintenance programme for 2021-22 which included the already completed works at Stinking Goat (Balloch Bay), and proposed re-surfacing and repair works, which had been previously highlighted as necessary by CCC, for Hastie Avenue, Clyde Street and Woodlands Street.

Finally the NCLPP approved early release of previously approved funding for Millport Town Hall to allow the project to progress.

6. Standing Items

- a. Planning Applications – An application for a new house build at Craig-en-Ros Rd had been lodged.
- b. Licensing – None
- c. Roads Issues – The road from the boatyard to Fintry, Ferry Road and Kames Street are all excessively overgrown with weeds across the footpaths and at the kerb lines severely limiting pedestrian access and causing break-up of the road and pavement surfaces. Also of particular concern was the lack of maintenance of the verges, trees, shrubs and brambles etc. along the road around the island which is causing both walkers and cyclists to have to use the middle of the road causing extreme concern and danger to not just the walkers and cyclists themselves but also motorists and buses. This is particularly serious on the east side road between the ferry and the FSC and requires to be dealt with as a matter of urgency.
LC raised the continuing issue of loose gravel chippings presenting a hazard on some bends on the roads. The street sweeper had been over but the problem persists and is very dangerous for our many cyclists in particular.
- d. Cycle-Path/s - CCC again expressed its frustration at the lack of any progress having taken place about this important issue over the last 4 years. Numerous discussions, meetings, consultations, correspondence has taken place with North Ayrshire Council, Sustrans, SWECO etc. over several years but as yet nothing has materialised in relation to the community's priority route between the FSC and the ferry slip nor has the Council provided any updates despite repeated requests to do so. CCC have repeatedly confirmed that the Council's preferred option of a cycle path from Kames Bay to the FSC was not that of the local community who overwhelmingly supported prioritising of the cycle path from the FSC towards the Ferry Slip. It therefore appears that North Ayrshire Council is dragging its feet in making this happen. The need to ensure the safety of cyclists cannot be overstated given it is a main reason for tourist/family visits to the island and it was felt that it was only due to the diligence of local drivers that a serious incident had not occurred to date. CCC had written to Claire Fitzsimmons and her predecessors at North Ayrshire Council on many occasions but have yet to receive any meaningful reply. Further requests for updates are to be sent.
- e. Cumbrae Community Resilience Team/MSG Update - No relevant update at this time.
- f. Millport Town Hall - Millport Town Hall has been delighted to advertise its first paid for employment vacancy – that of a Fundraising/Marketing Officer. Subject to funding there will be future employment opportunities to come. A Conservation Architect is visiting the site this week along with our own architect to discuss exterior works that are being supported through the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme. Tenders are going out to our shortlisted contractors this week which is a great move forwards after the Covid 19 delays.
- g. Millport FPS/Millport Marina/Pier – CCC/MPHUG have been seeking further meetings with NAC to push forward with the proposed Marina planning. The FPS is due for completion in 2 – 3 years and it is considered essential that work is started now on: i. scoping out the work that requires to be undertaken to progress the development ii. to ensure that marine tourism funds earmarked for the Millport project are not diverted to other locations/projects and iii. that a “shelf” project is in place and ready to go immediately on completion of the breakwaters. Work also needs to be done on identifying the model/structure for developing and operating the marina, harbour and pier in the future. To this end and to start this process a meeting has now been agreed by NAC for the end of the June.

7. Agenda Items.

- a. Newton Beach Award & Monitoring – Newton Beach has been successfully awarded a Keep Scotland Beautiful Beach Award – one of only 70 in Scotland and the only beach in North Ayrshire to do so. A request has been received for the island to monitor the condition of the beach on an ongoing basis and we are fortunate that Beecology has offered to undertake this on the town's behalf. Many thanks go to them !
- b. Watersports Centre Update – a written update had been provided by The Wave team before the meeting and a full verbal report was given by Cllr. Alan Hill on the latest developments. Copy report:

“The team have been working hard since the last update, published within the May CROC TALK, to draft our constitution in preparation for our application for a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) status.

We have submitted three funding applications: North Ayrshire Venture Trust (NAVt); NAC&VT Community Renewal and Recovery Fund; and Kelburn Windfarm Fund.

Alongside this we have opened an online Treasurer's bank account and are also exploring a local account with the Bank of Scotland.

Our team has received a welcome boost with an additional two members joining. Others will be joining the group soon, as we focus on our immediate, and long-term needs.

We continue to refine our business and project plans to take into consideration the ongoing Covid 19 restrictions, and the impact they have on our progression.”

8. NAC Councillors' Update.

Most of the updates had been given during the main agenda items in the meeting. Counsellor Murdoch updated CCC the flower beds were currently being prepared and anticipated that the planting will commence on the 21st June.

9. AOCB

- a. Garrison Model Railway Club - A report has been received from the Garrison Model Railway Club detailing the important work that had been enabled to maintain and improve the layout and the buildings through the £500 grant award issued via Cumbrae Community Council. Thanks were extended to the Club for taking the time to provide the update and best wishes offered for their future success.
- b. Scottish Water had submitted a planning application to have a water fountain installed on the Southside of Guildford Street.
- c. The free bus consultation for residents under 22 years of age was coming online and those eligible should be encouraged to complete the survey.
- d. A member of the public raised the issue about amounts of Japanese Knotweed on the island and that this was the responsibility of North Ayrshire Council. A very kind offer was made to properly map the locations of the Knotweed and this would be provided to North Ayrshire Council and CCC would be requesting that urgent steps be taken to destroy this highly invasive weed and to limit its spread.
- e. Lisa Christie once again raised the issue of seagull proof litter bins better bins needed to be considered for the promenade area as the amount of litter caused by seagulls removing items bins was still a big issue and causing additional work for our local Street Scene team. It was also agreed that CCC would contact Wallace Turpie regarding the grass cutting policy on the island.
- f. A question was raised concerning rumours circulating about the sale of land at the Cathedral with the believed intention of building holiday chalets. GW advised the meeting that as far as he was aware that no planning application had been lodged with NAC for the development of the site and

no other confirmed details were to hand and as such CCC was not in a position to make any comment at this time.

- g. Flower Beds – Following on from CCC's previous enquiries Cllr Murdoch again informed the meeting that he had made contact with the relevant department at NAC and it was still his understanding that planting was scheduled for early June.

10. **Date of Next Meeting** - It was agreed that no meeting would be held in July and that the next meeting would be on Thursday 12 August @ 5.00 pm via Zoom.