

Minutes of Meeting of South Cowal Community Council Held in Innellan Village Hall on 10 May 2006

Present:
Dr C Valentine (Chair)
Mrs I Pratt
Mrs M Little
Dr S F Pearson (Vice Chair)
Mrs P Forsyth (Secretary)
Councillor J R Walsh

Attending:
Mr E Malcolm
Mr R Fairlie
Mr J Bamber
Mr I Gamage
Mrs S Gamage
Ms E Thomson
Mr V Bird
Mrs T Bird
Mr J Wilson
Mr P Norris

The meeting commenced at 7.10 pm.

1. Dr Valentine welcomed everyone to the meeting and attendees introduced themselves. Apologies for absence were tendered on behalf of Mr R McGilvray.
2. **Minutes of Meeting held on 5 April 2006**

The minutes were **approved** by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

2.1. Matters Arising

2.1.1. Constitution and Standing Orders

Mrs Forsyth reported that the Constitution and Standing Orders had been forwarded to the Argyll and Bute Council but that no reply had been received as yet. Councillor Walsh stated that a response would probably be received in due course, otherwise Mrs Forsyth **agreed** to let Councillor Walsh know.

2.1.2. 2005 Accounts

The 2005 accounts had been audited. They now required approval at a general meeting. It was **agreed** that this would be placed on the agenda for the June meeting.

2.1.3. Village Hall Collection of Funds

Dr Pearson reported that collections were still being taken, however, Dalriada Grove had been visited in this regard. In addition, the coffee morning held on 6 May 2006 had raised over £1,000. Meringues had been contributed by Mrs Little on behalf of the Community Council.

Minutes of Meeting of South Cowal Community Council Held in Innellan Village Hall on 10 May 2006

2.1.4. Matheson Lane

Councillor Walsh reported that he had had correspondence with the land agent, the Forestry Commission. He had drawn their attention to their duty of care in relation to the state of Matheson Lane. A meeting had been proposed in June between Councillor Walsh, the land agent and the legal offices of the Council to discuss this. The land agent in his most recent reply to Councillor Walsh suggested that two potential outcomes could transpire: owners with frontages on the lane could contribute to the cost of its maintenance, or the Council could carry out maintenance but re-charge the cost. Councillor Walsh was of the view that the cost should be charged to the Forestry Commission. If necessary, the matter could be escalated to the appropriate Scottish Executive Minister. Councillor Walsh had also raised the possibility of a joint initiative to maintain the lane that would involve the public utilities, similar to that which had occurred in relation to Trinity Lane. The referenced meeting in June would cover these issues and Councillor Walsh **agreed** to report back to the Community Council, after which time it could become more involved. This information could also be published on the Website.

3. Wind Farm Presentation

Mr Gamage commenced the presentation by indicating its purpose which was:

- to gain the Community Council's support in a campaign to stop the proliferation of turbine installations,
- to request that a sub-committee of the Community Council be formed to address this, or for the Community Council to give its support to the formation of a separate action group,
- to improve the understanding of "industrial wind installations" and how they would affect the community.

Mr Gamage emphasised that he did not represent opposition to wind farming per se, and that it was recognised that wind power had a role to play in a balanced energy strategy. Opposition was, however, being expressed to inappropriately located wind turbines or too many wind turbines in the Cowal area. It was believed that these would have a negative effect on people's lives and businesses, the local economy, the landscape and wildlife.

Mr Gamage provided information on the background to and implications of wind turbine installations. He noted that at least 4 applications would directly impact the local community and would potentially result in more than 40 turbines being erected. He also anticipated that more applications would be forthcoming in order to take advantage of the "Clyde wind tunnel".

He went on to state that if the community was to have any influence on the developers, operators, planners and landowners, it must take action now and that there must also be increased awareness of the implications of wind farms in relation to the long term future of the area. He advised that it was too late to react after the planning application had been made.

In addition, whilst outlining concerns relating to the turbines' installation, Mr Gamage highlighted the environmental implications of transportation of materials, cabling/pylons, road damage, and erosion of cycle tracks and footpaths.

Minutes of Meeting of South Cowal Community Council Held in Innellan Village Hall on 10 May 2006

Subsequent to the presentation, considerable discussion took place amongst attendees concerning the future of such turbines after they had completed their lifespan, as well as noise levels, and the general impact of potential over-development within the area.

Councillor Walsh pointed out that broad allegations that the Council had taken decisions on wind farm planning applications were incorrect and he took the opportunity to explain the devolved responsibilities of the Council in relation to the development plans for Argyll and Bute. He indicated that current energy company planning applications were considered against the existing Local Plan, and explained the establishment of the Preferred Area of Search in the new Draft Local Plan. He noted that it did not guarantee approval of applications within that area. He also mentioned that only 4 objections had been received from the Cowal area during the consultation period in relation to it. He also noted that Argyll Wind Farms, an organisation set up to facilitate informed debate on the development of wind farms in Argyll, had supported the proposed Preferred Area of Search.

Councillor Walsh explained that the Code of Conduct for Councillors was such that he was required to remain impartial in a debate, until such time as the community requested him to forego his decision-making role in favour of a representative role. He went on to state that the Council had asked on behalf of the community to be part of the consultation process for the proposed Leapmoor Wind Farm, being decided by Inverclyde Council.

Dr Pearson commented that the Community Council must take a balanced view of wind farm development, whilst being vigilant to the potential for uncontrolled expansion. He expressed hope that the latter would be prevented by the planning process described by Councillor Walsh. He also felt that it would be desirable to campaign for money to be spent on other forms of renewable energy.

Councillor Walsh confirmed that the Community Council's role in this debate was to ascertain and co-ordinate public opinion. At approximately 8.30 pm, it was **resolved** that the Community Council members would proceed to deliberate a response and future course of action in camera.

The following actions were then **agreed**:

- Mrs Forsyth would invite Argyll Wind Farms to the next meeting of the Community Council.
- A sub-committee would be formed which would consist of 3 people. Individuals from the "pro" and "anti" groups would be invited to put themselves forward, as well as someone neutral.
- Dr Valentine would write the remit of the sub-committee. This would include:
 - To inform the community about the proposed development with balanced facts.
 - To ascertain community opinion.
- Mrs Pratt would approach Dunoon Grammar Head Teacher, Mr Joe Rhodes, to see if a group of senior pupils could solicit community opinion on the subject as part of a school project. Feedback would be presented at the next meeting.
- Dr Pearson would visit Ardrossan Wind Farm, accompanied by Mrs Pratt. They would also endeavour to make contact with the Ardrossan Community Council.

Minutes of Meeting of South Cowal Community Council Held in Innellan Village Hall on 10 May 2006

At approximately 8.40 pm the meeting resumed to discuss the remaining agenda items, with Mr Jim Bamber in attendance.

4. Matheson Garden Project

Dr Valentine reported that a brief was awaited from Ms Kelly, the landscape architect, and that a budget would be prepared upon its submission. Meantime, he and Rev Anderson had spent some time applying for grants. Mrs Pratt had provided Rev Anderson with the name of a quantity surveyor from Toward who was prepared to assist for no charge.

5. Planning Applications

Mrs Pratt stated that she had advised Councillor Walsh that she had not received any communication from the Council concerning planning applications. He reported that he had contacted the Head of Planning in this regard, but noted that there had been no applications that particular week. Councillor Walsh advised that, upon receipt of the weekly list, Mrs Pratt could request copies of plans from the Council and present any that were believed to be contentious to the Community Council. If eight or more people objected to a plan, a hearing would be held at which Mrs Pratt would be expected to speak in favour or against the plan as a statutory consultee.

6. Community Council Website

Mrs Forsyth confirmed that the site was live at www.southcowal.org and that she would continue to work on the secondary pages, including a page dedicated to wind farms. Mr Bamber suggested that the site be linked from www.dunoon.tv and Mrs Forsyth responded that she would look at all potential appropriate linkage.

7. Areas of Focus for Future Meetings

In view of the number of ongoing topics being addressed, it was **agreed** that this item be deferred for the time being.

8. Issues of Maintenance for Auchamore and Innellan

The meeting noted the content of Councillor Walsh's previously circulated list of areas requiring maintenance, as reported to Argyll and Bute Council. He advised that there would be a significant amount of road repairs in the area the following week. He also stated that the Community Council could report such issues direct to the area manager and that a protocol should be established for this.

Mrs Pratt raised 2 points on behalf of Mrs Gamage: she indicated that the overflow at Cluniter Beach was emitting raw sewage, plus there was a hole at High Cluniter where a developer had left a metal covering that was presenting a hazard on the road. No-one appeared to be taking responsibility for this. Councillor Walsh stated that the best point of contact was the Council and that he should be contacted if no progress was being made.

9. Projects for Consideration for Funding from Capital Infrastructure Monies

Councillor Walsh advised that £40,000 had been allocated for the Cowal area out of Council capital infrastructure funds. Periodically such monies were allocated and a bidding process ensued amongst the Councillors. The meeting noted the content of Councillor Walsh's previously circulated document which listed projects for consideration for funding. He indicated that the

Minutes of Meeting of South Cowal Community Council Held in Innellan Village Hall on 10 May 2006

Community Council was at liberty to compile such suggestions and pass them to him. He stated that he could supply details of the Council's capital programme in due course.

Councillor Walsh informed the meeting that South Campbell Road was owned by the Council and that there was an issue with the state of the road, particularly in relation to regular ambulance transportation. A bid was in place to gain funding for its repair.

He also reported that further landscaping would occur in the area of the recent sewerage installations.

10. Toward War Memorial Hall - application for financial support to the Community Environmental Renewal Scheme (CERS) of the National Lotteries Funds

Councillor Walsh reported that he had been working with Ms Jane Kelly on a plan to upgrade Toward War Memorial Hall through the CERS, noting that up to £100,000 was available for projects within 5 miles of a working or disused quarry. Community Council support was required for the Memorial Hall application. It was **agreed** that the application should be supported and that Mrs Forsyth should write to Ms Anne Mitchell to confirm this.

11. Vision Statement for Community Council

The Council referred to the draft statement previously circulated by Dr Pearson. Mrs Forsyth suggested that more mention should be made of preservation and conservation of natural resources and she **agreed** to write a sentence for inclusion in this regard.

The meeting discussed the potential for the operation of a ferry from Ardyne Point to Bute and Councillor Walsh indicated that this was an example of a project in which the Community Council could become involved. Dr Pearson felt that this would be beneficial to Innellan in that it would provide through traffic. Councillor Walsh commented on the significant heritage in the area that was worthy of publicising.

It was **agreed** that the vision statement should be posted on the Website and that the public should be invited to comment upon it. It was also **agreed** that individual photographs of Community Council members should be posted on the site alongside a short biography to be written by each member prior to the next meeting. Members were asked to attend the June 14th meeting early at 6.30 pm in order to be photographed.

12. Any Other Business

12.1. Ferry Lane Flooding

Mr Bamber raised the issue of flooding in Ferry Lane, caused when heavy rain led to blockage in a pipe in the ditch running down the lane. Mr Bamber and a neighbour had tended to this over the years, however, the pipe was becoming increasingly blocked by tree roots. During the recent severe thunderstorm, they had had to work to avert the flooding of a nearby house. He also pointed out that the Council trap needed to be cleared out. Noting that Ferry Lane was private, Councillor Walsh **agreed** to clarify whether the Council had any remit under the Flood Prevention and Land Drainage Act, and to look into having the trap cleared. He also suggested that a potential solution might be water redirection from the top.

Mr Bamber left the meeting at 9.40 pm.

**Minutes of Meeting of South Cowal Community Council
Held in Innellan Village Hall on 10 May 2006**

12.2. Innellan Pier

Dr Pearson presented the meeting with a sketch that he had made of a possible pier for Innellan. He stated that he would be speaking to local architect, Mr Ken Adams, about it. It was **agreed** to post this on the Website in order to seek public interest.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:50 pm

Signed **Chairman**

Date