

PORT OF MENTEITH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Port of Menteith Community Council held in the Port Hall on Monday, 11th October, 2021 commencing at 7.pm.

Present : Peter Stewart, Chair
Sheena Makgill-Crichton, Vice-Chair & Secretary
Penny McCoull, Treasurer
Alison Forrester

In Attendance : Councillor Jeremy McDonald
Willie Nisbet, Deputy Convener, NPA
Valerie Graham, Minutes Secretary

1. **Members Present & Apologies**

Apologies from Jim Riach and Quint Glen were noted.

2. **Declarations of Interest in Items of Business**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Adoption of the Draft Minutes of the Meeting held on 30th August, 2021**

3.1 The adoption of the Minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 30th August 2021 was proposed by Penny McCoull and seconded by Alison Forrester.

3.2 Valerie Graham reported that there had been an enquiry about the possibility of the Minutes being published and circulated to the Community within a week of a meeting but she had responded to explain that the Community Council has to abide by the rules of Stirling Council's Scheme of Establishment which dictates how the Minutes are dealt with.

However, she suggested that from time to time and as appropriate it would be possible to notify local residents about what the Community Council is working on or proposing to do via the email circulation list. This was agreed by Members.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

4.1 **Port of Menteith Church & Cemetery**

Sheena Makgill-Crichton reported that there will be the normal Remembrance Day service in the Church on 14th November and that the usual Carol Service will be held on Christmas Eve. Because of the current regulations, the numbers will be restricted making it a 'first-booked' event, however the Community will be notified of this in advance.

5. **Road Issues**

As agreed at the previous meeting, queries about all of the following items were submitted to Stirling Council and a response had been promised within 10 working days of 24th September. However, this had not happened.

5.1 **B8034**

There has been no response to this enquiry.

5.2 **Cardross Bridge & A811 Warning Sign**

In addition to the enquiry to Stirling Council, it had also been agreed write to the MP and MSPs expressing the CC's concern regarding the condition of Cardross Bridge and asking for their support by raising the matter with Stirling Council. Members were advised of the current situation as follows:

5.2.1 Evelyn Tweed, MSP, using the content of the CC's letter, had written to Stirling Council and to the local Chief Inspector of Police.

5.2.2 Dean Lockhart, MSP had contacted Councillor Earl for details of the situation information and had said that he would respond to the CC when further information had been received from Stirling Council.

5.2.3 Nothing had been heard from Alyn Smith, MP.

5.2.4 Subsequently, Councillor Earl had also advised that in response to his own enquiries about the condition of Cardross Bridge, he had received a message from the Council on 22nd September to say that it was unable to answer his enquiry due to an emergency situation within the service but that a response would be provided as soon as possible. However, so far he had not received that.

5.2.5 Members were also advised that there had been no response to the enquiry regarding the missing Bridge weight-limit sign on the A811 at Arnprior.

5.2.6 Councillor McDonald reported that he had learnt that Stirling Council had submitted a bid into a Government fund seeking £300k to assist with repairs to the Bridge.

5.3 Hammersmith Junction

There had been no response to the enquiry about Hammersmith Junction.

5.4 Road Signs

Members were advised that there had been no response from Stirling Council to the enquiry about the directional sign and the Inchmahome/Fisheries sign at the A81/B8034 junction, which had been lying on the verges for a very long time. However, the signs have now been remounted on the posts.

5.5 Road Surfaces and Verges

There was a lengthy discussion about the poor condition of local roads generally and the risk to drivers and their vehicles resulting from the soft verges especially on narrow roads, where it is necessary for drivers to pull over to let larger vehicles pass. Often the edge of the road is higher than that of the verge resulting in a serious drop which can cause burst tyres or other serious damage to vehicles. There had already been several incidents where vehicles, including a timber lorry, had gone off the road as a result.

6. Financial

6.1 Financial Statement

Members noted the financial statement to the end of September which had been previously circulated.

6.2 Subscription Renewal

The renewal of the subscription for Broadband and the Domain Names for the Community Council, Church etc., was approved by members.

7. Correspondence

7.1 General Correspondence Received

Members noted the list of general correspondence received which had been previously circulated.

7.2 Letter of Condolence

Members agreed to the proposal to send a letter of condolence to Vivien Leckie following the death of her husband.

8. Planning & Licensing Issues

8.1 New Planning Applications

Valerie Graham reported that there had been no new planning applications.

8.2 Planning Update

8.2.1 Shelloch Windfarm Development Proposal for the Fintry Hills

Members were advised that as far as it is known, no decision has yet been made about this.

8.2.2 Force 9

As agreed at the previous meeting, a request was sent to Stirling Council Planners for a condition to be attached requiring Force 9 to include Port of Menteith in its Community Benefit Scheme should the Shelloch Windfarm Development proposal be approved.

9. Lake & Port of Menteith Visitor Monitoring

9.1 LEADER "Community Led Visitor Management Enabler Fund"

Details of this had been passed to Quint Glen as a possible funding source for the Hall carpark.

9.2 Lakeside

It was reported that although the number of visitors overall has reduced, on a good day Kate's Brae, the small carpark and the entrance to the Ferry carpark can often still be busy with cars, motorhomes and the occasional tent etc.

Despite the fact that it had not been possible to take forward some of the key actions of the visitor management project due to a lack of landowner co-operation, many of the issues continue to exist and there has been a significant increase in wild camping, swimming and other water based activities such as paddle boarding and canoeing. Some of this is as a result of displacement from other areas but much of it is part of a general trend as a result of Covid.

On a voluntary basis, Callum McNeill-Ritchie continues to monitor the situation on the Lakeside and has recently reported that Stirling Council's 'Please Take Your Litter Home' sign had been pulled down and broken in two. The posts for that and some of the fence posts beside the steps have also disappeared, presumably for use as firewood. Also that a large white builders-type bag has been left down on the shore and filled with tins, bottles, rubbish etc. This will require two people to get it back to the roadside and there will need to be discussions with Stirling Council about its removal.

9.3 Water Safety

As discussed at the previous meeting, the Head of Visitor Management at the NPA had been contacted to request that the Lake of Menteith should be included in the discussions between the National Park and Stirling Council about Water Safety signage.

9.4 A81 Stonefield Layby

As suggested by Jim Riach, the two main cycling organisations – "Scottish Cycling" and "Cycling UK" had been contacted with a request for them to put an item about the misuse of the Layby by groups of cyclists in their newsletters which will go out to the majority of the clubs using it.

10. Inchmahome

10.1 Island & Priory

As agreed at the previous meeting, letters of complaint about the condition of Inchmahome and the Priory were sent to HES, NPA and The Stewart Society.

Members were advised that:

- HES had acknowledged receipt of the letter and will respond as soon as possible;
- The Stewart Society responded to say that it would be interested to hear what HES has to say;
- There had been no response so far from the NPA.

10.2 Inchmahome Ferry

It was reported that HES has advised that it plans for the Inchmahome Ferry to operate normally next year within the usual operating season from 1st April - 31st October.

11. Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration : June, 2022

11.1 Sheena Makgill-Crichton reported that the Kirk Session had enquired if the CC was planning to do anything to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and if so, whether it could be a joint project. Members were advised that the Community Council, and probably the Church, would each be able to apply to Stirling Council's Community Grant Schemes for funding up to £400 for this purpose.

Members discussed the proposal and were in full support of the idea.

12. Strathard and Trossachs Place Based Visitor Management Group

Jim Riach had reported that there was nothing much to report from the initial meeting although it has the potential to be a useful forum by which to share concerns and solutions with other communities in the area. It makes sense for the Community Council be included in this group and for some solutions to be applied locally. However Port of Menteith is not considered to be one of the real hotspots despite the fact that there are several attractors - accommodation, event venue, Fisheries, historic monuments, food outlets etc.

13. Countryside Trust

Members were advised that there was nothing new to report.

14. Local Place Plans

Jim Riach reported that he had attended a workshops hosted by the National Park on Local Place Plans and followed that up with a conversation with Derek Manson one of the NPA's planning officers supporting this area. He had said that it would be necessary for the Community Council to decide whether a Local Place Plan is the right thing for us, and how to go about preparing one which is quite a lot of work. There would be some support from the Park, but we would have to do quite a lot of the legwork. Locally, Callander and Strathard have been through this process and have volunteers and officers who would share their experience.

The alternative could/would be to further develop our own Community Action Plan based on existing Community Council Actions and those outlined in the Visitor Management Review and Action Plan. After further discussion, it was agreed to contact Joyce Kelly of Strathard Community Council for advice.

15. Forestry & Land Scotland Update for the Community Council Area

15.1 Sue Morris, Area Visitor Services Manager for FLS had advised that it is intended to send the Community Council monthly reports about upcoming works and events in relation to the following sites - Cardross Forest, Flanders Moss, Letter and Rhynaclach Forests. She had included details of current activity on those sites.

15.2 Jim Riach welcomed the fact that FLS will provide regular updates on the listed forest sites and suggested that the Community Council should continue to lobby for public access to these sites and where possible, that access should connect with key parts of the community. Most of the work on these sites is funded by the public purse including the development of planting and extraction roads many at great cost, e.g. on the Letter site this is a massive road construction. The deer fencing at Rhynaclach has caused significant displacement of wild

deer - which was obviously the intention - but has had other consequences to neighbouring sites and gardens. There is also no provision for local access such as gates in these areas and the Rhynaclach site hosts part of what was the old Callander Road - so at one time a significant route.

There is no mention of Braeval in this report part of which, it is understood, is within the Community Council Boundary. There have now been some improvements made to the access to the car park there, due to water and traffic erosion and it would be good to ask if this site is included in the updates.

- 15.3** Valerie Graham advised members that she had contacted Sue Morris about the inclusion of Braeval in her reports who had requested a copy of the Community Council's Boundary Map to check if it would be appropriate to do so. This had been sent.

16. Consultation : Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils

Members had been previously advised that Stirling Council had proposed to hold a consultation on the Scheme of Establishment but with the announcement at the recent Stirling Council meeting that amendments to the Scheme had been made to allow 'in-person, remote or hybrid' meetings to take place, it was not clear if any further consultation would be required.

17. Reports:

17.1 Port Hall Report

Quint Glen had reported that there was not a lot to say about the Port Hall other than the fact that the Primary School is now using it which is good news.

17.2 Port School Report

Peter Stewart reported that the current school roll is 17.

17.3 Police Report

The Police Report for the period from 30th August had been previously circulated.

17.4 Carse of Stirling Project (COSP)

Jim Riach reported that he had attended a workshop hosted by COSP on the 9th October with the theme of 'Paths, Pollinators and the Past'. He is a Trustee with COSP which is made up principally of representatives from local communities having been nominated by and succeeded Keith Graham in this role. The meeting had recognised the large amount of pioneering work carried out by Keith and in particular around connecting the key themes of paths, nature and heritage captured in the theme of the workshop.

The workshop had received updates on path developments most significantly the initial work carried out on the 'Kings Highway' project connecting the communities on the south of the Carse which had been commissioned to improve the safety of the junctions around the Smiddy and the ongoing desire for strategic links on both the south and north of the Carse and connections between communities. There had been talks from 'Buglife Scotland' and their B-line initiative and the support they could give. The Stirling Council's Archaeologist had outlined the support it could give and some suggestions in promoting key heritage sites in the area.

A key outcome was to have a more collaborative and strategic approach with all communities working with COSP to develop strategic routes and to have a collective approach to provide local information, host events and to share COSP information with local groups. COSP is developing a new website and has a Facebook page which hosts updates and information. Anyone interested in developing any further ideas around path development, heritage information or relevant local events should contact Jim Riach

18. Any Other Competent Business

18.1 Broadband

The issue of poor Broadband in the area, as a result of which the Community Council had been unable to hold virtual meetings, was raised. During the lockdown as a because of Covid restrictions, discussions about how this might be improved had lapsed and there had been no contact with the Stirling Council's officer responsible for Broadband.

Penny McCoull reported that her husband has degrees in electronics and has recently retired from Scottish Enterprise where he led a team of innovation specialists working with companies seeking to improve their processes through better use of technology. In a past life, he had designed the software systems for military jets, machines in the banking sector and had his own software company. On a personal note, Penny said she would not be able run her own business from home if he did not support all the IT systems in use for this and for her daughter who is studying at University and he would be happy to use his expertise to assist the Community Council on Broadband issues.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed to co-opt Ian McCoull as an Associate Member of the Community Council to advise on Broadband issues.

18.2 Meeting Dates for 2022/23

A list of proposed meeting dates for 2022-2023 had been previously circulated and these were duly approved by members.

18.3 Waste Disposal

Having mentioned in the past the ongoing problems that she and her neighbours have with passers-by regularly fly-tipping rubbish into the bins at the end of their track, Valerie Graham reported that recently a green bin full of household waste had been deposit there. Although the Waste Services Manager at Stirling Council had been notified and had assured her that he would arrange for it to be removed, it had still not been uplifted and it now has a sticker on it stating that it won't be emptied because it contains incorrect refuse.

19. There being no further business, the meeting closed.

20. Date of the next Scheduled Meeting : 6th December, 2021

It was proposed that the outstanding AGM should take place at the same time.