

Minutes of Meeting held at 19:15 on Wednesday 23 July 2014, at Kilmallie Community Centre

Present

- **Kilmallie Community Council**
- Christine Hutchison
- Mandy Ketchin
- Russell Leaper
- Maggie Mackenzie (part meeting)

- **Lochaber Sports Association**
Jane Blanchard
Christine Falconer
Scott Donald
- **Apologies**
Ben Thompson

The meeting was hosted by Kilmallie Community Council (KCC) to discuss the details of the planning application for an indoor sports facility at Lochaber High School, adjacent to the outdoor artificial pitch. The facility will be a 60m x 40m covered 3G pitch designed to enable schools, clubs and the wider community to train and play sport all year round, whatever the weather. Lochaber Sports Association (LSA) had approached KCC to ask if KCC would consider submitting the planning application on behalf of LSA. Under the 2004 Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Regulations, applications made by a Community Council are only subject to 50% of the planning fee. Due to the large size of the facility, submission of the application by KCC would save around £9,000 on the application costs (which would otherwise be around £18,000). So far LSA has raised £7,375 from businesses, clubs and individuals in the community towards the planning application.

Some KCC members had expressed concerns about KCC becoming involved in a planning application. However it had been agreed by majority vote for KCC to submit the planning application subject to (i) satisfactory answers from LSA to an agreed list of questions; (ii) confirmation in writing to LSA of any caveats or conditions KCC agreed needed to apply; (iii) LSA presentation of proposals to Kilmallie community at a public meeting; (iv) KCC being satisfied with the proposals.

The objective of the meeting was to discuss and examine the proposals and plans in detail so that any concerns could be raised.

Jane Blanchard (LSA) gave a presentation about the facility and particularly focussed on the community consultation to date and partnership arrangements. A public consultation had been held as part of the independent Feasibility Study conducted in 2012 (see <http://www.lochabersportsassociation.org/fs-final-report/>). LSA has been working closely with Hugh Fraser, Director of Education Culture and Sport and Ian Murray, Chief Executive of High Life Highland (HLH), on the development of the project. Highland Council and SportsScotland recognise the project as a partnership project between LSA and Highland Council.

LSA is currently waiting for HLH to identify the hourly charges for the use of the facility. Once these are known then LSA will be corresponding again with sports clubs to ensure that they will be willing to commit "in principle" to a level of usage that will ensure the facility's sustainability. Whatever the final management agreement with HLH, the charge for the indoor training facility will have to be commensurate with that of the adjacent outdoor pitch. The draft agreement from HLH proposes that the day-to-day management and maintenance of the facility should be undertaken by HLH, and that they will pay the insurance and deal with the annual accounts; any income left over at the end of the financial year will be split evenly between HLH and LSA. The aim is to ensure that there is a fund to cover the costs of replacing the pitch twice and the roof once over a 25 year period. LSA stressed the need to be totally confident of the financial viability before committing the community's money to the

funding application. The proposals in the Business Plan (drawn up with full consultation of all interested parties, and which have met with Highland Council's approval) propose that the school should get free use during the school day, and in return the facility will have electricity and janitorial services provided by the school.

Several issues that might affect the community interests had arisen from the pre-planning application. These included transport, lighting, impact on protected species, and noise. It was agreed that the proposed location adjacent to the High School car park should not raise concerns over transport; outdoor lighting will be minimal and lighting escaping through the canopy will be much less than the adjacent flood lit pitch which will have similar hours of use. The site is already a man made surface (former tennis courts) and so no impact on protected species is expected. The facility will have fans in the roof but the noise from these should be minimal.

Other outstanding planning issues still under discussion with the planning department include a Drainage Impact Assessment and a Flood Risk Assessment. Scott Donald, of Kearney Donald Associates, is working pro bono on LSA's behalf in order to see if these potentially costly consultation processes can be avoided. However, these are issues relevant to planning and unlikely to be of concern to the community. These assessments may also be submitted after the planning application although no decision would be made until all the necessary documentation had been provided.

There have been recent concerns by residents close to the new schools in Caol and Upper Achintore about the height and visual impact of the buildings and in particular the gym halls. This will be less of an issue for the LSA facility which is much further from the nearest housing. However, it was agreed that residents should be consulted about the proposals. LSA will produce a flyer and take it to the houses that back onto the grass pitches at Camaghael and to the houses next to the road on the other side of the existing outdoor astro-turf pitch.

Concerns had been raised about KCC's loss of the right to comment on the application in the usual way as a statutory consultee if KCC was itself the applicant. However, as the applicant, KCC would in fact be in a much stronger position to reflect the views of the community. With KCC as the applicant, if there were material objections and concerns from the community (such that would have resulted in KCC objecting to the proposal as a statutory consultee) KCC would have the power to withdraw the proposal itself, rather than simply objecting. Following examination of the plans and proposals it was agreed that it was extremely unlikely that there would be any substantial concerns from the community. Rather, the consultation process thus far has shown widespread support across the community for the facility (see <http://www.lochabersportsassociation.org/fs-final-report/>).

It was agreed that all planning correspondence would be directed to LSA (or their appointed agent) but that KCC should be copied in. LSA will also keep KCC up to date on developments relating to the application and allow time for KCC to consider any issues that arise.

An outline of the project and its development will feature in the next Kilmallie Community News.

Following the meeting it was agreed by majority that KCC would be able to be the applicant when the planning application is submitted.

Distribution

By email to all KCC members, Cllr Bill Clark, Cllr Allan Henderson, Cllr Ben Thompson, Elizabeth Toal (HC), Lochaber Archive Centre, Maureen McColl (ALCC), Andy Bilton
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