

Minutes of Meeting held at 19:15 on Wednesday 19th November 2014, at Lochaber High School

Present

- **Kilmallie Community Council**
- Christine Hutchison
- Russell Leaper
- Jan MacLugash
- Kshama Wilmington
- Andrew Thin (Scottish Canals)
- **Other community members** (15)
- **Highland Councillors**
- Allan Henderson
- **Apologies**
- Bill Clark
- Andy Bilton (Police Scotland)
- Ben Thompson
- Mandy Ketchin

1. Approval of previous minutes

The minutes of 19 September 2014 were approved.

2. Collaboration with Scottish Canals

Andrew Thin, chairman of Scottish Canals gave an overview of the challenges facing the organisation, and the need to generate more income as a result of reduced funding from the Scottish Government. RL presented a community vision for the canal with a summary of the ideas and suggestions made at consultation events since 2011. These focussed on making the most of the canal as a working waterway and preserving the unique character and setting of the canal. Suggestions included better liaison with local boating groups, an exhibition focussed on the power of water, more boat trips between Banavie and Gairloch, and facilities at Gairloch for disabled access to boats. More recently, concerns have been expressed about a number of proposed developments by Scottish Canals including car parking charges at Banavie, camping pods and a large prominent toilet block in a particularly scenic location at Laggan Locks. KCC continues to have a very good working relationship with local staff and events organised by the Waterway's Trust such as Go Wild on the Canal were welcomed.

AT commented that few of the ideas in the community vision would make money. In response it was noted that although many ideas had been put forward at the community consultation events the main proposal that Scottish Canals had come back with were the camping pods and it was questioned whether these would make money. It was agreed that making the business plans and costings publicly available for all proposed developments by Scottish Canals could stimulate ideas and potentially allay some of the concerns.

3. Developer contribution related to Blar developments if supermarket is not built

When developments on the Blar were first proposed the community was led to expect new facilities including a new hospital, all-weather sports pitch, Gaelic primary school, police station and rescue helicopter pad. One by one these expected amenities fell by the wayside. The

last remaining consolation for the community for the loss of the Blar is an expected £500,000 Developer Contribution for community facilities. KCC will continue to highlight this issue to the developers and in the media.

4. Changes to bus services between Corpach and Fort William

Stagecoach have announced a reduction in local services which will particularly hit people travelling from Corpach with only around half the number of buses. Apparently the contract with Highland Council who subsidises the service only requires a half hourly service to Corpach. The proposed changes were announced with minimal time for consultation. KCC contacted Stagecoach offering to seek views on the proposed new timetable and Stagecoach have agreed to consider any suggestions that come forward.

5. Highland Council budget cuts

Highland Council continue to propose drastic cuts across a range of services in order to try and balance their budget. KCC had received a consultation questionnaire from Highland Council but did not find this a useful form of consultation. For all these questions we knew of a section of the community who will be negatively impacted by the cuts and so we would always tick the box that says 'Could cause some difficulty'. There was no option to indicate that cuts may be unacceptable instead other options were 'A change for the better' or 'May be a helpful change'. We have never seen proposed cuts to teaching jobs, qualified staff and frontline services described in these terms before and believe some services are too important to cut.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting of KCC will be at 19:15 on Wednesday January 21, 2015 at Kilmallie Community Centre

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
Paper copy to Corpach, Banavie notice boards

Chair – Mandy Ketchin – chairman@kilmallie.org.uk
Secretary – Russell Leaper – secretary@kilmallie.org.uk
Treasurer – Jan MacLugash – treasurer@kilmallie.org.uk
www.kilmallie.org.uk