

Minutes of Meeting held 19:15 on Monday 24 September 2018 at Kilmallie Community Centre

Present

Kilmallie Community Council

Carol Anne Campbell
Christine Hutchison (Chair)
Mandy Ketchin
Russell Leaper

Sgt Ross McCartney (Police Scotland)
Matt Simpkinson (WHC-UHI)
Alasdair Ferguson (Ferguson Transport)

Highland Council

Clr Allan Henderson
Clr Denis Rixson
Clr Ben Thompson

Apologies

Jan MacLugash
Jim Ramsay

1. Declarations of interest.

None

2. Approval of previous minutes.

The minutes of the meetings on 25/06/18 and 27/08/18 were approved

3. Treasurer's report

The available balance on 01/09/2018 was £2455.73. It was agreed to donate £200 towards the Banavie play park.

4. Police update

Sgt Ross McCartney noted there had been two recent incidents of dogs posing a possible risk to sheep and urged dog owners to be careful. Several officers in Lochaber have now been trained in the use of Taser, a brand of electroshock weapon, and these will now be regularly carried. Tasers fire two small dart-like electrodes, which stay connected to the main unit by conductors, to deliver electric current to disrupt voluntary control of muscles to incapacitate the recipient. Although some deaths have been attributed to Taser use, they are less likely to be fatal than conventional firearms. Sgt McCartney noted that he felt safer being equipped with a Taser and that in many cases it was an effective deterrent which allowed the police to resolve a situation without actually firing. Nevertheless, concerns were raised about further arming of police and an associated escalation of violent crime.

5. Presentation about the proposed Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) centre on the Blar

Matt Simpkinson from WHC-UHI presented plans for a new teaching building on the Blar that could provide opportunities for around 350 students at any one time. UHI has identified a need for construction and engineering provision for teaching young people after leaving school. The new facility would take skills to apprenticeship level. If the proposed alloy wheel factory goes ahead then this could also change the skills needed in the area and allow access to additional funding sources. The NHS also has training needs related to health provision and the building will include a clinical training ward. The costs of the project are around £14million and UHI are hoping to submit a funding application in October.

Concerns were raised that there are a number of proposed developments on the Blar that are being considered separately, but little integration of these to create a pleasant and functional built environment with attractive civic spaces. In particular, more attention needs to be given to public transport, cycle tracks and walking routes linking the campus with An Aird and ease of pedestrian access throughout the Blar site. The current design is rather similar to typical out of town retail parks with areas of parking to the front of the building further emphasising the focus on cars rather than active travel or public transport. It was also suggested that the building could be aligned so that the roof sections were suitable for solar panels. Consideration could also be given to shared heat and power systems with other neighbouring developments such as the hospital.

6. Presentation by Ferguson Transport on new plans at Annat

Alasdair Ferguson presented plans for expansion of port and rail activities at Annat. Planning permission has already been granted for a rail terminal and the intention is to bring in around 50,000m³ of wood a year from forests around

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Loch Rannoch to Corpach over the next ten years. This would require around three trains a week which would likely arrive at Corpach between 0700 and 0800. There are also plans for a new pier to accommodate vessels with a forward ramp, just east of Annat narrows. This would allow timber to be unloaded directly from vessels. This would be in addition to any developments at the current pier.

KCC members commented that noise associated with timber movements is already a major issue for residents both in Corpach and on the south shore and that any increase in activities could make this problem worse. There is a need to consider minimising noise and light pollution at all stages of the proposed operation. It was also stressed that the timber trains should not be allowed to interfere with any increased use of the railway for passenger transport. However, the general principle of moving timber by rail and sea as opposed to road was welcomed.

7. Complaints of smell from Duiskey

KCC had received complaints from a resident in Fassfern regarding smells from Duiskey. A log had been kept of the days and weather conditions when the smell was bad and also photographs showing the extent of cover at the site. Some of these photographs showed no cover on occasions when the operator had reported to SEPA that the site was covered. SEPA are investigating the complaints and will also make a routine visit to the site in October.

8. Highland Council development 'masterplan' FW2040 consultation

Two members of KCC had attended the consultation event on the FW2040 vision on 12/09/18. The FW2040 vision is intended to become an appendix to the WHILDLP and won't have the legal status of the Local Plan which has been through an extensive consultation process but nevertheless will have status by being included with the Plan and sent to the Reporter. KCC had also submitted comments via the Highland Council consultation portal although it was noted that the questions on the portal did not really match with the objectives of the workshop. Although the workshop had been well run, it had been rather dominated by business interests rather than community representatives. The next stages of reporting back from the workshop include;

- 1 October – Lochaber Ward Business Meeting (briefing ahead of Lochaber Committee)
- 2 October – Lochaber Community Planning Partnership Core Group
- 4 October – Highland Community Planning Partnership Board
- 16 October – Lochaber Liberty Project Board
- 7 November – Lochaber Area Committee

Of these only the Lochaber Area Committee is open to the public. Concerns were expressed that there was a democratic deficit in the process which did not seem to envisage further community engagement. It was agreed to invite Highland Council to discuss the next version of the FW2040 at a public meeting of Community Councils.

9. Highland Council review of the Community Council Scheme

KCC members had met and agreed a joint response to the questionnaire which had been submitted.

10. Update from Fort William Community Councils Partnership meetings

At the meeting on 11/09/2018 it had been agreed that the partnership would request a review of the viability of a port authority in light of the potential increases in traffic. A partnership meeting would also be an appropriate forum to receive further details of the outcomes of the FW2040 master planning.

11. Kilmallie Parish Church

There is a possibility that Kilmallie Parish Church in Corpach may close. DR noted the historical importance of the graveyard at the church. This is an old centre of burial in the area and a significant Christian site shown on a 16th Century maps of Scotland. If church was to close then it would be important for someone to ensure that important historical artefacts are preserved.

12. Access to Cnoc nam Faobh community woods

Concerns had been raised that a new fence being constructed at the former BSW site would block an access to the woods over a small footbridge that was also in a poor state of repair. It was agreed to contact the Kilmallie Community Company who own the woods about this.

13. Next meeting

The next meeting of KCC will be at 19:15 on Monday 22 October in Kilmallie Community Centre.

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