

Isle of Arran Community Council

Meeting held on Tuesday 28th July 2009, Ormidale Pavilion

Those present were: Campbell Laing, Chair, Alison Prince, Secretary, Cllr Margie Currie, Ian Small, Howard Driver, Gillian Langley, Brenda Stewart, John Inglis, Jenny Meade, Willie Kelso and Richard McMaster. Also present was Kenneth Gibson MSP.

Apologies were received from Harry Davidson.

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be correct, with one minor change.

Matters arising

- re the Pilot Scheme, a 250-word submission from the Arran Sports Association had been submitted and accepted. A meeting between all parties concerned with the new Astroturf surface is expected shortly.

Correspondence

- Campbell Laing (CL) had written to Ronnie Small of NAC in appreciation of work done on Arran's roads and the tasks that remained outstanding, but had received no answer.
- CL had received a reply from Craig Hatton to his letter addressed to Trevor Jones on the potential setting up of bulk composting. Mr Hatton was 'more than happy to meet groups to discuss waste disposal.'
- CL had heard from NAC that licence applications could only be viewed in Irvine, and asked why the details were not available in the local office. Margie Currie to investigate.
- Alison Prince had received no reply from Ronnie Small or Crawford Forsyth, NAC, to her letter about the proposed bollards in Middle Road, Whiting Bay and the question of public right of way.

Housing

- Alison Prince (AP) had made enquiries of www.self-help-housing following a Guardian piece by its organiser, Jon Fitzmaurice (JF). Kenneth Gibson confirmed that he has spoken to Alec Neil, Scottish Housing Minister, about the possibility of using empty property for people on the housing list and AP said JF had already been contacted by the Minister. It was agreed after some discussion that the main problem on Arran would lie with the land-owner, though CL pointed out that some unoccupied property belonged to other individuals. Margie Currie said the scheme presented 'neither stick nor carrot' to property owners. Following a query from AP about SNP policy on feudal land tenure, Richard McMaster (RMcM) pointed out that the threat of this has meant that land is now only let seasonally.
- John Inglis drew attention to the Forestry Housing feasibility study and the drop-in consultations to be held on July 11th and 12th at Shiskine, Corrie and the High School.
- Kenneth Gibson (KG) said HIFAR was now down to a choice of 6 areas from the original 18 under consideration for forest housing. The project will need a full-time funded manager. RMcM said the Forestry holds some land on a 99 year lease that, taken out in the 1950s, is now not very long. KG said the question would be tackled by the feasibility study.

Arran Plan

- John Inglis (JI) read out a summary of his detailed plan, and now proposes to liaise with other interests such as building, transport, housing, environment etc, initially sending out the document. CL suggested a meeting with the other bodies to discuss a skeleton outline of the proposals. He will ask Jim Nichols of ACVS for a list of Arran's voluntary organisations.
- KG asked why not mount a 'road show' of the proposals, to be presented village by village, followed by a public meeting for all those interested. CL,JI and AP will draw up a scheme of approach to the villages.

Planning

- Howard Driver (HD) presented plans for a revised scheme for the Brodick Nursery site, now showing a reduced number of houses. It was considered acceptable, provided an access footway was included. The applicant is to be asked if this can be agreed.
- HD said Henry Murdo had appealed against the turn-down of his plan for a house on stilts. JI said it would have created a precedent, being outwith the village envelope. It was agreed to leave the Community Council's original comments on the application unchanged, though Jenny Meade argued strongly for sustainable, energy-conserving houses.
- HD said the e-planning system was proving 'patchy' and difficult to use. Margie Currie said paper applications were still acceptable and advised contacting the planners if dissatisfied.

AOCB

- Gillian Langley had received complaints about 'heavy' police presence at every incoming ferry, which incoming visitors are finding disquieting. Ian Small (IS) reported that breathalysing of every driver coming off the busy Friday boat had resulted in serious congestion in the Pier area and the boat's captain had protested about the impossibility of clearing the traffic and re-loading the boat so as to make the scheduled departure. IS said a similar exercise the following week had taken place further up the road, but had still resulted in serious congestion. He added that Sgt MacKay's assertion that the NAC work on some road sections had yet to be completed was incorrect.
- Campbell Laing (CL) expressed concern that over-aggressive policing on Arran was resulting in a loss of public confidence in the police. Kenneth Gibson (KG) advised a consultation with the sergeant on the general policing approach, and this was agreed. CL will organise a meeting with a small group of councillors when Sgt MacKay returns from holiday.
- Richard McMaster suggested drivers should reverse into parking spaces along Brodick front, to avoid backing out into heavy traffic.
- Willie Kelso asked if the Standing Stones could be signposted, and complained of bad parking near the Shiskine surgery.
- Ian Small (IS) complained that a couple from Islay had been given an Isle of Arran Homes house but then did an exchange with unemployed people from Irvine. KG said it was for NAC to decide on the weight of 'local points' as the decision is not within the remit of the local committee. John Inglis said the allocation policy was more pro-Arran now.
- IS complained that he had been implicated in the reasons for ripping down a sign for the Shiskine Valley Sports Day, following NAC action in removing his own signs announcing the potholes campaign. CL suggested a complaint to the Chief Executive.
- IS also pointed out that the bridge over the Knocken Burn had collapsed. Margie Currie said NAC is looking into the legalities of who owns it. Meanwhile, a warning sign is needed.

The next meeting will be at the Ormidale Pavilion on Tuesday August 25th 2009, at 7.30pm.

