

MULL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
7pm, 7th April, via Zoom and live streamed on Facebook

Present: Billy McClymont, Tracy Mayo, Adrian Stephens, John Maughan, Tom Nelson, Alasdair MacCrone, Jo Prior, Angus Williams, Pam MacColl, Duncan Swinbanks, Moira Westland, Norman Hickson.

In Attendance: Cllr. McGrigor, Moray Finch, Mairi Greig, Colin Morrison, Morven Gibson, PC Neil Thallon, PC Kevin Bonar, Rebecca Adams, Jenny Des Fountain, Neil Hutton, Douglas Ingram.
Also many members of the public as the meeting was streamed live.

Apologies: Iain Campbell, Mandy McKerl, Josh Liddle, Cllr Lynch.

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Andrena Duffin, seconded by Pam MacColl.

Matters Arising:

A.D. reported re the Forestry development in Glen Forsa that Ian Stirling was in communication with Alasdair Whyte about an archaeological survey in the Glen.

J.P. has helped with funding for local businesses, so far she knows 3 have not received grants but letters have been written in support.

A letter has been sent to the Scottish Govt., in support of ICC to request clarity as to when the Islands can open up for business. This letter was approved by the CC.

Police Report: PC Neil Thallon reported.

Total calls for Mull & Iona this month were 20. For Mull North 8 calls, 1 crime recorded. Craignure had 2 calls, 0 crimes recorded. Salen had 8 calls, nothing of note. The Ross & Iona had 2 calls, nothing of note.

Planning:

There were no objections to the Application to the Licensing Board for Calgary Tearoom & Park Lodge Hotel.

D.I. gave a presentation about his application for a fresh water facility near Aros in Tobermory Bay. This is to provide fresh water for the local fish farms to replace some of the chemicals used. This is an environmentally friendly and sustainable project providing 2 local jobs. The CC will send a letter of support to A&BC.

Update on Tobermory Parking:

D.S. reported on a meeting with Stewart Clark, A&BC, regarding the traffic management in the town. The subject of parking charges was raised, the Committee refused to discuss this as no mention of charges had previously been discussed so were not in the remit.

S.C. informed the meeting that there was funding for new car park at the top of the town on Council owned land. No plans have been drawn up for this as yet. Also the Council have been in discussion with the Co-op about a new store at Baliscate.

D.S. said that with the potential of a new car park and a new Co-op the congestion on the Main Street could be solved.

New traffic signs have been delivered and will be put up in the near future.

B.M. thanked D.S. for his report and for stressing that charges were not acceptable.

Arrangements with OVO for meter installation:

M.F. reported that new build projects had experienced delays of up to 10 weeks in getting electricity meters installed. Assistance was sought from Councillors and Michael Russell. SSE has transferred this business to a company, OVO, who seem to be having initial problems. They have prepared a leaflet explaining the process which will be distributed to builders etc. There is a telephone no. to call in case of delays and also details of a company representative in Oban.

Visit Mull & Iona update:

N.H. introduced himself, working for VM&I, as the link with the community, liaising with the various Island groups, A&BC and VisitScotland to promote the Island. They have 160 members and at the moment they are lobbying for clarity as to when they can open, in alignment with the Mainland. It is hoped that reopening will be a positive experience for all, consideration for the wider community is a priority. However an influx of visitors is expected.

B.M. stated that there were no cases after the opening up last year, businesses took appropriate care. He asked if any more training was needed.

N.H. replied that, because of last year, everyone was up to date with requirements. On being asked if we were to go into level 2, he replied that the members would prefer to stay aligned with the Mainland.

A.S. said it was important not to pressure the authorities to open up without heeding medical advice.

N.H. reported on meetings with the A&BC concerning Rangers for the Island, information leaflet for Campervans and waste disposal units.

M.F. said that MICT was bidding for a proportion of the resource for a Ranger, 2 Rangers have been employed by them for 22 years.

Cllr. M. asked about the main job of the Ranger.

M.F. said that it was to check on inappropriate camping, littering, access problems, etc. which were then reported to MICT, A&BC, Forestry Scotland and Nature Scotland.

Cllr. M. replied that 1 Ranger for Oban, Lorn & the Isles seems inadequate and he would enquire about funding for local Rangers.

A.D. reported that A&BC had agreed to fund the £150 needed to print the Campervan advice leaflet.

M.F. stated that all the public toilets on the Island are now open.

Tobermory High School adoption of aligned timetables:

J.D.F. said she had knowledge of the system as an ex teacher and had concerns about the current situation.

1. Concerns about lack of transparency and information on the Argyll and Bute Education Service's (A+BES) process for researching, modelling, planning the introduction of shared timetables and senior phase options and consulting with parents, pupils and staff.
2. These changes are being introduced at a particularly difficult time, with Covid lockdown after-effects/ ongoing restrictions on schools; Salen Primary decanting into Tobermory premises in August; connectivity issues; unresolved transport issues affecting public transport; temporary staff including headteacher. Why?
3. A+BES officers outline two possible benefits: expand pupils' curriculum choices and create equity of provision. But in fact these benefits would be limited e.g. few additional subjects offered and courses with a significant practical element not offered. Pupils deserve equity in terms of quality of learning and distance learning, currently, is unlikely to provide this.
4. On the other hand, much could be lost e.g. small class sizes, high quality learning and teaching, flexibility and attention to individual needs, staffing and autonomy.
5. It seems clear that more time is needed to consider the proposals and plan careful implementation. Do no harm!

A.S. asked what impact on line learning would have on subjects such as science, wood or metal work, art and other subjects needing practical work.

J.D.F. that had not been explained and needed more thought.

T.M. gave her report.

At the last CC meeting she had been asked to put together a report on the ongoing problems at Tobermory High School.

Lack of a permanent Head Teacher is worrying especially with the prospect of a new timetable aligned with other schools.

The dilapidated state of the building has given rise to many complaints.

The proposed Salen Decant is another worry as there are Health and Safety issues which have not been thought through.

At a meeting with the Education Dept it was suggested that a pilot project for the proposed aligned timetable was tried as there were connectivity issues.

T.M. had received 60 letters calling for a new school and asking for a survey to determine the way forward.

Also there were issues with Childcare and difficulties in communication with A&BC.

It was evident that there was strong support for the acting Head Teacher and his dedicated staff.

A.W. said that T.M. had come under a lot of pressure. There was a lack of information from the Education Dept. There was worry about temporary contracts for staff. He suggested forming a working group to support staff and the PC.

N.H. said discussions about these issues had started and there was positive engagement with all. Also there was progress on the Salen decant and repairs for THS were now underway.

The location of a new High School was not in the PC's remit and should be a question for the community.

A.D. commented that we should work together, as the whole community, to achieve the best outcome.

A.W. asked about feedback about these issues. N.H. reported that feedback has gone to the acting head teacher.

Rebecca Adams, Salen PC, gave a report on the progress, or lack of it, on the Salen decant. This has come about as A&B C have to provide 1140 hours for childcare and they decided to alter Salen Primary to accommodate this. There has been a lack of consultation with parents who are still unsure of how it will work. The plans are not clear and there are worries about the loss of the fairly new ELC building as unnecessary as well as the use of the Hall as a village hall. It has proved difficult to work with A&B council. More transparency and clarity is needed.

Parents of younger children have concerns about the disruption and transport.

There are concerns for the older pupils of THS with the influx of smaller children. There are worries over the budget which has now increased to over 1 million. There are issues over the longevity of the plan and that it is a short term fix.

T.N. suggested the CC support the PC calling for the repair of the school buildings and also ask for a long term strategy for THS.

Also there is a need for a permanent Head Teacher, A&B C must make it clear how they are going to proceed with this.

D.S. said he had been on the Board of THS and the current problems are more serious than he had ever faced. This is a community issue as THS is the heart of Mull. We must all work together to get a strategic plan from A&BC.

A.W. suggested a small committee is set up with 2CCs, the PC and J.D.F. to look into the current problems.

Alan Parker and Mark Stevens, members of the public, made relevant comments.

A.O.B.

A.S. had received complaints about potholes on the Lochbuie road

A.D. had received notification concerning an underwater electric cable between Mull and Coll. The relevant landowners had been contacted.

P.M. stated that the street lights in Bentalla Crescent had not been working since November despite the Council being informed.

M.F. had been notified that the car parks at Bunessan and Fionnphort were partially closed for supplies for road mending. This will mean problems for visitors.

B.M. thanked everyone for attending and commended Tracy for her work.

The meeting ended at 9.30. Next meeting [5th May](#).

