

MULL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 2 March 2022 via Zoom and livestreamed on Facebook

This was the second of two meetings that included, as a pilot, a Gaelic simultaneous translation on the Zoom channel, thanks to Iain MacIlleChiar and CHARTS. It will be determined later whether this can continue to be provided,

Present

Adrian Stephens, Alasdair McCrone, Angus Williams, Billy McClymont, Cameron MacLean, George Burns, Iain Campbell, John Maughan, Moira Westland, Pam MacColl, Tom Nelson (Convenor)

In Attendance

Duncan Swinbanks (Salen-Tobermory Road Action Group), Helen MacDonald (MICT), Iain MacIlleChiar (CHARTS), Jenni Minto MSP, John Holliday (Tiree CC), Moray Finch (MICT and Ferry Committee), Norman Hickson (Craignure Bay Community Group)

1. **Apologies** : Jo Prior, Cllr. Jim Lynch.

2. **Declarations of Interest:** None.

3. **Sustainability**

(1) **Education**

The Community Council's response to A&BC's consultation on the schools Collective Leadership Model was agreed, together with a press statement. Both are available on the MCC website. They express considerable disappointment with A&BC's consultation approach and unanswered questions, and urges A&BC to withdraw the proposals at this time. The Community Council has asked for a more constructive discussion.

(2) ***Health & Social Care***

Billy McClymont drew attention to a number of current and forthcoming vacancies and to the problems that had been encountered with island-based appointments being subsequently transferred to postings off the island. Billy and Cllr. Devon will pursue these issues in a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Health & Social Care Partnership.

(3) ***Recruitment to Seasonal Employment***

Billy also drew attention to recruitment difficulties being faced by local businesses, noting that seasonal worker visa arrangements do not include the hospitality industry. Jenni Minto noted that visa arrangements are a power reserved to Westminster and that the Scottish Ministers had contacted the UK government about the matter. She agreed to raise this again.

(4) **Ferry, Transport & Travel**

- ***Ferry Booking System***
It is considered that the first-come, first-served booking system discriminates against local residents and businesses, who often have to make bookings at shorter notice than visitors. Jenni reported that Calmac took the view that an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) was not required, as the booking system is only the method of implementing a policy determined by Transport Scotland. Jenni will be looking into this further. Calmac will also be conducting a ferry user consultation about priority bookings. The Ferry Committee has noted that provision of a service requires an ICIA, but Calmac does not agree with this.
- ***Craignure Pier***
Norman Hickson expressed disappointment that there had been no meeting called by A&BC with the Design User Group and the Craignure Bay Community Group since last December. Jenni agreed to raise this matter with A&BC.
- ***Road Infrastructure***
It was noted that the proposed dual-tracking of the Salen-Tobermory road remained in abeyance, despite having been promised since 1963 and despite reports over several decades that the road is unfit for traffic needs. There is also heavy traffic on the single-track Craignure-Fionnphort road and the limitations of the road infrastructure add to concerns about Calmac's introduction of larger ferries. It is felt that it has been inappropriate for a tunnel or bridge to Mull to be proposed when the island road infrastructure remains unimproved. Jenni agreed to discuss things further with an MCC sub-group when she visits Mull soon.

(5) **Housing**

It was reported that Mull has the highest average house prices in Argyll & Bute, a low % of social housing and high % of second homes. There is a significant shortage of housing for key and temporary workers and a teacher has recently left for this reason, despite there being a teacher's flat unoccupied because A&BC has let the condition decline. A recent survey has underlined the pressing need for key and temporary worker accommodation, while a good proportion of businesses have also indicated a willingness to make a financial contribution to housing costs. It is hoped that this will help to secure Rural Growth Deal funding as well.

It was also noted that the government open market shared equity scheme had yielded no sales on Mull, so MICT has developed a proposal for a local scheme and submitted this to the government's More Homes team. A response is awaited and Jenni agreed to make enquiries about it.

Helen MacDonald pointed out that it may not be possible to build our way out of this situation, because the benefits gained by building new social housing can be off-set by the loss of other housing to short-term letting or second homes. In addition, there are regulatory and financial obstacles to people hoping to invest in long-term letting or to convert short-term lets to long-term.

It was noted that nation-wide policies often had unintended consequences for rural and island communities and that matters such as the high logistical costs of building

and the nature of island economies may not be well understood. It was agreed it would be helpful if the Cabinet Secretaries responsible for Rural Affairs & Islands and/or Housing, together with senior officials were able to visit Mull to gain more insight. Jenni indicated she had already recommended visits and would renew these. John Maughan asked whether the self-build loan scheme that is due to end later this year might be extended and Jenni agreed to look into it.

(6) **Tourism**

Concerns were expressed about unintended adverse effects of the legislation on short-term lettings. Arrangements will be made for Jo Prior to discuss this with Jenni.

Concluding the discussion, Tom Nelson stressed that the island communities are active and resilient but look for early and active engagement from local and national authorities in matters of planning and policy.

4. **Jenni Minto MSP**

Jenni echoed these sentiments and agreed the need for a collaborative and bottom-up approach to planning and policy. She paid tribute to the resilience of island communities and how they had pulled together during the pandemic. She reported on her recent parliamentary activity, including the work of the Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee.

Members expressed concern that regional and national agencies too often lacked understanding about how their policies and plans would actually affect islands and failed to appreciate when ICIAAs were required, or shied at the prospect of additional costs arising. Jenni indicated should would raise these concerns with the government's islands team and give other consideration to how this might be addressed.

5. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Agreed, proposed Adrian Stephens, seconded Cameron Maclean. [Clarification: The last Minutes referred to a MICT property at Ulva. It is at Ulva Ferry].

6. **Matters Arising**

Correspondence with Argyll & Bute Council:

- Other than acknowledgements, no reply has yet been received to the letters sent about Fionnphort-Craignure early public transport; the Tobermory car park construction timetable; or Tobermory street lighting. More recently a letter has been sent regarding public seating/shelter at Fionnphort.

- A&BC have stated that they are making arrangements to repair the all-weather pitch in Tobermory.

Community Council Website :

- The website has been updated with information about scams; patient transport to hospitals; and climate change training. Tom Nelson thanked Mark Strevens of Mull Web Design for his work in keeping the website updated.

Eas Brae Trees :

- Tom will contact the relevant agency about this.

7. **Planning**

- George Burns will contact Cllr. Devon for further information about a site in Salen where enforcement action had been proposed.
- There has been no reply as yet from FLS about the representations made about archaeological sites in Glen Forsa.
- TSL will be asked to provide further information about what they propose in respect of the potential care home within the proposed Craignure development when they attend an MCC meeting in the coming months.

8. **Police Report**

To follow.

9. **Councillors' Reports**

It was noted that Jim Lynch had been in touch to offer his apologies for this meeting but would attend future meeting whenever possible. He is happy to provide a short report and take questions. A report provided for this meeting will be circulated and Jim would happy to hear from MCC members about the matters it covers.

10. **Any Other Business**

- The nomination period is still open for people to stand for election to A&BC in May.
- George Burns will provide information about 2022 Community Council elections.
- Angus Williams asked that steps be taken to promote use of the RBS bank van through the MCC website and in other ways.
- Adrian Stephens will contact A&BC about their engagement with the MCC since the the meeting between MCC members and A&BC officers last year.

11. **Public Questions**

None.

Date of the Next Meeting

Wednesday 6 April 2022 at 7.00pm, via Zoom and livestreamed on Facebook.

[Join Zoom Meeting](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84395913935?pwd=a3lleXcrVmFyR0cyUFRoOG5hbC9LUT09)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84395913935?pwd=a3lleXcrVmFyR0cyUFRoOG5hbC9LUT09>

In addition to it's regular monthly agenda, this meeting will include discussion with the 2022 Mull Rally organisers and the Scottish Salmon Company about a proposed fish farm at Little Colonsay, Loch na Keal.

The regular monthly agenda includes:

- Declaration of Interest
- Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising
- Island Sustainability Issues
- Planning Matters
- Police Report
- Councillor's Reports

- Public Questions.