

MULL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Draft Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 7 September 2022
at An Roth, Craignure, and also
via Zoom and livestreamed on Facebook

Present:

Adrian Stephens, George Burns, Jo Prior, John Maughan, Pam MacColl, Tom Nelson
(Convenor)

In Attendance:

Cllr. Hampsey, Cllr. Kain, Caroline Cherry (HSCP), Hazel Cowe (MESS) John Holliday (Tiree CC), Moray Finch (MICT), Norman Hickson (Craignure Bay Community Group), Tracy Mayo (THS Parent Council)

Procedure

Tom Nelson clarified points of meeting procedure, following the change from solely virtual meetings to a mix of in-person and virtual discussion. He emphasised that meetings were all open to the public, and that members of the public, Argyll & Bute Councillors and others might be invited to speak to help inform issues, but that discussion and conclusion of most agenda items were matters for Community Councillors. There are also specific items on every agenda where members of the public and A&BC Councillors could raise other issues. Points of Order should also be addressed through the chair of the meeting.

1. **Apologies:** Angus Williams, Moira Westland

2. **Declarations of Interest:** None

3. **Health & Social Care**

Caroline Cherry, Head of Adult Services, HSCP, joined the meeting via Zoom. She described a proposed health & social care survey to gather information about needs and services, and what improvements are most needed. The survey will also provide a particular focus on the needs of unpaid carers. The survey has already been carried out on Coll, although results are yet to be analysed, and Caroline asked for a point of contact with the Community Council to discuss how the survey could best be promoted and implemented on Mull.

She set out that that the HSCP had good, valid data to inform a profile of likely island needs and that the survey would provide more perspective, drawing on actual local experience: The HSCP recognised that there is a need to work differently and better with island communities and had reflected this in the HSCP Strategic Plan adopted earlier in 2022.

Moray Finch noted that MICT was also developing a survey about the need for a nursing and care home, and that a potential source of funding for a feasibility study had been identified. He suggested that the two surveys might be developed and implemented together. It was agreed that Caroline would send more detailed information about the HSCP survey to George Burns and Moray.

Tom Nelson emphasised that the Community Council would seek to support the survey so

long as there could be an assurance that it would lead to development and improvement in services.

Tom invited Andrena Duffin to join the meeting. Andrena expressed concern that a previous audit of social care needs had not been implemented and drew it to Caroline's attention. She also drew attention to the shortage of paid carers, which is becoming desperate, and asked that the HSCP take further steps to recruit carers; she felt that there is a lack of incentives, such as opportunities for progression, that might help attract younger people to carer positions. Caroline confirmed that it is difficult to recruit sufficient carers and that this is the case across Argyll & Bute and nationally. She offered to send more detailed information about recruitment and would welcome opportunities to work with island partners to help promote recruitment.

Andrena also drew attention to the pressing need for day activities for older people, both for them and to provide respite for unpaid carers. George asked about what resource support the HSCP could provide to help informal community activities of this kind. Caroline reported that the HSCP provided grant support to third-sector partners for such activities in some areas, but that the HSCP did not presently provide for structured respite care on Mull.

Tom Nelson asked Caroline for further information about the post of Craignure Campus Manager, which had been discontinued, and also emphasised that the Community Council felt that the HSCP house on the campus should be returned to use as housing, not as office space. He pointed that there was vacant office space at An Roth. Caroline undertook to look into the matters further.

4. Deposit Return Scheme

Hazel Cowe, MESS, drew attention to the importance that island businesses prepare for introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme. The DRS will be mandatory from August 2023. It will require that businesses in Scotland that are selling drinks (other than milk) in single-use containers (bottles, cans, cartons etc):

- operate a 20p per item deposit-and-return scheme;
- accept and store returned containers, pending their removal;
- verify that the containers are part of the Scheme (by scanning labels);
- manage the Scheme and costs at point of sale and return (business will have to accept and store containers, and provide refunds, irrespective of whether or not they originally sold the container).

Businesses that produce or import drinks in single-use containers in Scotland will have to register as part of the Scheme and abide by the requirements.

Hazel emphasised that there is much further detail and that all businesses should consult the information available on any of the following websites:

- [Zero Waste Scotland](https://depositreturnscheme.zerowastescotland.org.uk) (<https://depositreturnscheme.zerowastescotland.org.uk>)
- [Circularity Scotland](https://circularityscotland.com) (<https://circularityscotland.com>)
- SEPA (<https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/waste/deposit-return-scheme>)

It was noted that the Scheme is mandatory on all businesses with effect from August 2023

and that only limited exemptions are possible, although the specific arrangements and requirements will differ between shops and hospitality businesses. Businesses will receive 2.69p per item returned, but will have to manage the deposit-and-return cashflow, and other costs (such as staff time, storage and environmental health costs) within their own resources.

There is no exemption for island businesses in general and businesses can be fined for failing to operate the Scheme.

Reverse Vending Machines can be purchased, but Helen reported that she'd been advised that they are unlikely to be financially viable for businesses on Mull and Iona, although business owners may wish to look into this given that costs can change.

Similarly it had been assessed that it would not be financially viable for a community trust or other community group to act as a voluntary return point.

The Community Council will help to promote local awareness of the Scheme.

5. **Minutes of the Last Meeting.** Approved (proposed Adrian Stephens, seconded Pam MacColl)

6. **Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

- It is hoped that Morrison's will trial a Click & Collect delivery service on Mull. Jo Prior emphasised the importance that this does not undermine local shops and producers, but that it could provide more choice and help people on lower incomes. She has asked Morrison's to consider up to five Click & Collect sites.
- Tom Nelson will be meeting the owners of Little Colonsay about the proposed fish farm. The owners have some concerns but also understand the benefits.
- The deadline for receipt by A&BC of nominations for election to the Community Council is 4pm on Thursday 8 September

7. **Sustainability**

(1) *Education - A&BC's Collective Leadership Model*

Cllr. Andrew Kain reported that A&BC had decided to stop consideration of the Collective Leadership Model (CLM) as proposed and reconsider the way forward. He reported that 27 Community Councils had responded to the consultation. He considered that the CLM might be appropriate in some areas, but not for island and rural schools.

He drew attention, however, to research on small rural schools commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2011, and that challenges remained for small schools arising from, in particular, depopulation and curricular requirements. Adrian Stephens pointed out that the research did not set out that the CLM was the solution to these challenges

Andrew said that he felt that things would be more effective if Community Councils from different islands could collaborate more and produce proposals to Argyll & Bute Council. He

considered that A&BC officers were less familiar with island needs and circumstances and that the voice of island communities would be strengthened by more collaboration between islands.

Billy McClymont and Adrian drew attention to previous instances where A&BC had failed to listen to, and misrepresented, island views, seeking to impose developments against community wishes. Officers of the Community had also subsequently met with senior A&BC officials to discuss the need for improved community engagement. It was felt that the fact that A&BC had then paid an advertising agency to promote acceptance of their CLM proposals and also to manage public consultation, demonstrated continued lack of understanding of the need for transparent engagement and evidence-based proposals.

Tracy Mayo pointed out that Parent Councils as well as others had worked hard to assess and address the proposals. She felt that there should be an Inquiry into the approach taken by A&BC in this matter.

Following some discussion and determination of a Point of Order, Community Councillors considered a proposal to join with Iona and Ardrishaig Community Councils in calling for an enquiry. Adrian put forward the proposal, as forwarded from Iona Community Council:

"We call on elected members to instigate a short term independent inquiry to:

- assess and review the Council's existing structures, processes and practices when officers propose changes to public services, including how and when these are introduced to the relevant communities so they can be assured of their meaningful involvement prior to officers drawing conclusions about what recommendations they make to elected members; and the level of detail officers then present to elected members in seeking their approval thereafter;*
- consider the timing, substance, balance, objectivity, detail and length of reports presented to elected members;*
- make recommendations as to how they can be improved."*

Jo Prior supported Adrian's proposal. Billy McClymont noted that it would be helpful to know the views of Parent Councils about this.

The meeting accepted that an inquiry, in the terms set out, did not envisage a long and costly public enquiry in the general sense of public inquiries. Moray Finch pointed out that, against consideration of the cost of an inquiry, there had already been a significant cost to local people and community groups, as well as A&BC, in the time and effort taken up in addressing the proposals which had then been withdrawn. He felt it important that A&BC undertake a cost-effectiveness assessment to learn lessons and that this should be in time to guide engagement about the proposed new school campus.

A majority of Community Council members attending the meeting approved the proposal. Tom Nelson summarised the feeling of the meeting that the Community Council could not be assured that A&BC would correct their approaches without some action of this kind.

(2) Education - Potential New School Campus for Mull & Iona

It was noted that A&BC had carried out pre-engagement public meetings in Tobermory and

Bunessan. Andrew said that this represented an effort by A&BC to more positively re-engage with local communities and there would be statutory public consultation should A&BC's bid for Scottish Government funding be successful.

Moray Finch asked whether the bid to the Scottish Government included a budget for the new school. He noted some concern in the community that, while a budget would probably have been required as part of the bid, this might already have predetermined considerations such as where school facilities could be sited. Andrew said he believed that the bid included an indicative budget based on averaged school costs. It was noted that Government funding, if agreed, would meet 60% of capital costs and that A&BC would need to meet 40%.

Cllr. Amanda Hampsey noted the Category C condition of the current THS building. She felt that this, together with other considerations, helped to strengthen the case for Government funding.

(3) *Environment - Scottish Water Septic Tank Emptying Services*

George reported that Scottish Water had not yet replied to the questions raised by the Community Council. It was noted that other companies also provided septic tank services.

(4) *Environment - Fionnphort Recycling Point*

George reported that the Fionnphort Recycling Point had been closed by A&BC, due to inappropriate use of the site for disposing of commercial waste and non-recyclable waste. He set out concerns about the lack of alternative facilities, while noting that A&BC had arranged for a number of large bins to remain in the car park and that residents could request additional bins from A&BC. In discussion, it was noted that the same concerns had been pursued when A&BC closed the Craignure Recycling Point, but in the end there was no reasonable justification for re-opening the site. It was felt that this would likely be the case at Fionnphort. To date three members of the public have contacted Community Councillors to express concern about the closure, but it appeared that some others have accepted the closure. The Community Council noted the current position.

(5) *Environment - Fionnphort Overflow Car Park*

George reported that it had also been brought to his attention that there is an overflow area next to the main Columba Centre car park, but that it is not used because it is not clear that it is a car park, while the main car park can become overwhelmed. There is also an amount of fishing gear in and around the overflow area. The meeting noted that A&BC had approved that fishing gear could be left in this area so long as it is tidily stored and that there are other considerations.

A suggestion had been put forward that, if A&BC could offer a compactor/crusher and a tip, this could support any local action to remove material that is no longer needed. However it was not clear how much local concern there was and how much appetite there would be.

It was agreed that George should contact A&BC seeking to improve the car park signage

and that, if use of the overflow car park raised concern about the storage of material there, then the matter would be reviewed.

(6) *Environment - Fionnphort Public Seating/Shelter*

George reported that he had written to Jim Smith, as Jim had requested, with advice about siting of public seating/shelter in Fionnphort, should this prove feasible. This followed a request from a local person and advice that John Maughan had sought locally. George had written again subsequently to ask Jim whether the matter would be considered further but had not yet had a reply. Andrew agreed to ask Jim for an update.

(7) *Traffic, Transport & Travel - Craignure Bay Infrastructure*

Norman Hickson reported that the Craignure Bay Community Group have had no contact from A&BC for some 7 months and were concerned about any implications for the proposed development arising from A&BC's budget pressures. The Group has accordingly written to Jim Smith. Andrew agreed to speak with Jim Smith about re-engaging with the Community Group.

(8) *Traffic, Transport & Travel - Ferry Services*

Billy advised that the draft Winter Timetable has just been released and that Joe Reade would be putting details on the M&I Ferry Committee website. He encouraged members of the community to use the website to get further details of this and other ferry service developments. Billy also advised that there had been a very positive and constructive meeting with the Transport Minister.

[*Housing* : A written update from MICT was circulated to MCC members after the meeting due to pressure of time at the meeting].

8. Planning

A company has asked for a pre-application meeting with the Community Council about potential retail development at Baliscate. In addition, A&BC has now invited a formal response to a planning application from TSL for a development with 97 residential units, a retail unit and other possible developments at Craignure,

George Burns will circulate the details and asked that Members who wish to meet the company about the Baliscate development contact him with their availability.

The Community Council also re-affirmed their previous decision to submit a planning application to A&BC for development of a sports hall at the Rugby Club. This will be less costly than should the Rugby Club submit the application.

9. A&BC Councillor's Reports

Cllrs. Kain and Hampsey reported on a number of matters:

- A&BC will issue a further Invitation to Tender to local businesses for redevelopment of the three-person teachers' flat in Tobermory. The previous ITT had been unsuccessful because of both technical registration difficulties and the amount of work that some local

contractors already have underway.

- Development of the Tobermory cemetery will go ahead.
- Development of the Tobermory car park has been stalled because of decrofting issues. There is no guarantee that funding for the car park development can continue to be ring-fenced for that purpose, although it is hoped that it will be.
- Funding for Tobermory Waterfront Phase 2 works is secure and the work will be going ahead.

The Community Council expressed considerable disappointment over the car park position and asked why decrofting had become an issue at this late stage, when the principal decision to develop the car park had been taken many years ago. Cllr. Kane indicated that there were considerations of some sensitivity around decrofting the site and that it was being addressed, but that it was not known how long this could take. He felt, however, that the pressure placed on Tobermory this summer could not be allowed to continue next year and hoped that the Tobermory Traffic Management Group could be reconstituted to help find a way forward.

Moray Finch raised concern that the plan for increasing availability of key worker accommodation in Tobermory, under the Rural Housing Deal, also envisaged development of a site that is crofting land. He expressed concern that the development should not be delayed because of this, not least given non-crofted sites had been identified. Amanda and Andrew agreed to look into the matter.

10. Police Report for August 2022

	Calls	Crimes
North Mull	17	6
Craignure & Area	18	2
Salen & Area	9	0
Ross of Mull & Iona	15	2

Crimes of note are in the full Police Report circulated after the meeting. The report, including the information above, was not available at the time of the meeting due to police duties elsewhere.

11. AoB

It was noted that:

- The new owner of Dunard House had been in touch and would be dealing with the overhanging trees.
- John Holliday of Tiree Community Council has asked whether Mull and Iona Community Councils wish to follow their meeting with the government's Islands Team held last year. George Burns will circulate information.
- Tom Nelson and Jo Prior had met with Jenni Minto MSP and will update the Community Council further when they have heard back from Jenni.
- The Scottish Government launched a Land Reform consultation in July. John

Maughan will circulate details in order that Members can consider whether to prepare a response alongside that being prepared by MICT.

12. Public Questions

Tracy Mayo drew attention to the closing date, on Friday 3 September, for A&BC's pre-engagement consultation on the potential new school campus. She noted that there had been a report by students which underlined the need for a new school and that there had been a good turnout at A&BC's pre-engagement meeting at Buinessan. She felt that community drive would help secure funding from the Scottish Government and encouraged everyone to respond to the A&BC consultation.