

MULL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 1 February 2023 at 7.00pm at An Roth and via Zoom

Due to technical issues this meeting of the Community Council could not be livestreamed.

Present

Allan MacLean, Angus Williams, Billy McClymont (Vice-Convenor), Cameron MacLean, George Burns, Jo Prior, John Maughan, Mark Aston, Mary-Jean Devon, Pam MacColl, Rupert Ormond, Tracy Mayo

In Attendance

Cllr. Andrew Kain, Cllr. Willie Hume, Joe Reade (Mull & Iona Ferry Committee), John Holliday (Tiree CC), Gordon Milne & Richard Crozier (Beatson's Mull Rally), Mairi Greig (MICT)

1. Apologies: Cllr. Jim Lynch, Moray Finch (MICT)

2. Declarations of Interest: None

3. Beatson's Mull Rally 2023

Gordon Milne reported that:

- 2023 road closure proposals have now been submitted to the relevant authorities;
- the route will not now include a Lochbuie leg, although consideration will be given to it for future years;
- discussions are being held with Calmac and the police about how the Fishnish ferry queue might be mitigated and Forestry & Land Scotland has been approached about use of a forestry track;
- it is also expected that there will be additional police resources this year;
- some feedback has been received about moving the Rally dates back a week in 2024 and beyond. A decision will be made about this by the end of June 2023 and more feedback would be welcome in the meantime.

Mull CC will write in support of the use of the forestry track this year. Cllr. Willie Hume will look into the feasibility of options for the longer term such as extending the Fishnish car park or double-tracking the road.

Gordon set out his understanding that while the rally organisers would continue to engage with the other bodies to find a way to mitigate the traffic queues at Fishnish, it would be for the other bodies to finalise a solution. It has not yet been determined how costs associated with use of the forest track would be met.

MCC members suggested that Calmac might consider putting a Fishnish ferry booking system in place for that weekend only, or that the rally organisers put in place a booking system, but Gordon felt that it remained primarily a matter for other bodies to determine. Rupert Ormond expressed concern about inconsiderate driving during the rally period, but outwith the competition, near to an otter holt. He asked that it be drawn to the attention

of competitors. Gordon made clear that unofficial practice runs and inconsiderate driving is forbidden under the rally rules and asked that any such behaviour be reported to the organisers.

Gordon will continue to update the MCC meeting each month.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Approved (proposed Tracy Mayo, seconded Mark Aston)

5. Matters Arising

(1) Health & Social Care

Billy McClymont reported that he would be contacting Dr. Eric Jespersen, to invite to him to join an MCC meeting every six months.

(2) Ardura Hill Winter Gritting

Willie Hume reported that the changes sought by the Community Council would require A&BC to amend the Winter Services Policy, which presently has a threshold of 12 children being transported to school in order for the route have a higher priority. Mull CC will write formally requesting that A&BC lowers the threshold.

Willie indicated that he might also take up whether Ardura Hill could have pre-gritting the night before, as this would give some benefit although still short of a morning gritting run.

(3) Bus Connection Wait Times at Craignure

George provided an update about the 495 bus timetable and had emailed Mary-Jean Devon with some details. It was noted that, in addition, to the sometime lengthy wait times for ferry departures, there can also be lengthy waits for the bus return leg to Tobermory, given that the late afternoon service also travelled to Lochbuie crossroads, for school pupil journeys. It was noted that there is no easy solution to these matters and no further action will be taken at this time.

6. Community Council Arrangements

(1) Election of Convenor

Mary-Jean Devon proposed the election of Billy McClymont, seconded by Pam MacColl and Cameron MacLean. The Community Council agreed Billy's election.

(2) Adoption of Constitution

George Burns set out the arrangements for signing-off the Constitution that had been adopted by the Community Council in December.

(3) Engaging Young People in the work of the Community Council

Tracy Mayo and Mark Aston recommended that steps be taken to engage young people in the sort of matters considered by the Community Council, possibly through a youth council. The meeting agreed and asked Tracy and Mark to explore how this could be best taken forward.

6. Sustainability Issues

(1) Education

Tracy Mayo reported that:

- the Scottish Government has not yet announced the outcome of A&BC's bid for funds for a new school campus;
- Parent Councils have become aware of proposals for 'virtual' head teachers in some parts of Scotland. Parent Councils will be looking into this matter and whether there are any such arrangements envisaged in Argyll & Bute.

(2) Ferries, Transport & Travel

George Burns reported that the ICC, MIFC, MICT, SWMID and NWMWCW have agreed with MCC's proposal to submit a joint letter to the Transport Minister and others, and that the terms are being finalised. He reported the comments received on the draft letter that had been circulated to MCC members. It was remitted to George to finalise the letter with partners and to circulate it.

Joe Reade reported that:

- MIFC's submission about the next Winter timetable is about to be finalised and emphasises the need for a two-vessel service.
- Calmac is proposing that, where check-in has been missed on a booked ferry, the value of the purchased ticket will be lost. MIFC is protesting against this, not least given clear circumstances where late arrival can be no fault of the traveller. It was agreed that the Community Council will write in support of that position. Mark Aston noted that Scottish law recognised the effect of force majeure on contracts and thought that this would likely apply to ferry tickets. Mark will send further advice to Joe.
- Calmac has improved the Emergency Medical Appointment Protocol arrangements.
- It is hoped that 'Samsø' booking arrangements which would provide some priority for islanders will be trialled on the Craignure and Coll & Tiree routes later this year.
- Some 300 people in Mull have responded to a poll about the Corran Narrows crossing and around 85% would wish to see a fixed link put in place.
- Joe also confirmed that, should the Outward leg of a booked ferry service not be used, then Calmac will cancel the Return leg as well: This can be avoided if the traveller contacts Calmac to change the booking before the required check-in time on the Outward leg. Or an alternative is to buy two Single tickets.

Angus Williams drew attention to:

- A recent instance where a passenger had been informed, after boarding and just eight minutes before sailing, that they could not travel because they did not have a ticket for their dog. After protest it was not enforced. The meeting noted that the requirement for dog tickets was not widely known and was not generally enforced.
- That students were entitled to free travel on other forms of transport, but not necessarily the ferry as there appeared to be a limit on the number of free return trips. Joe agreed to look into the matter.

It was agreed that Joe and Billy McClymont would, subject to availability, attend a meeting proposed between a number of Community Councils to discuss the Corran Narrows options. Joe will assess how many vehicles use the Corran Narrows crossing en route to/from Mull.

(3) *Energy & Environment*

- As proposed by John Maughan, a special meeting will be held to discuss the forecast shortage of firewood logs facing Mull.
- Willie Hume will seek to arrange that A&BC removes the waste batteries from the Bunessan collection point.

(4) *Housing*

Mary-Jean Devon noted that some social housing properties had remained vacant for some months, despite there being a pressing need. George Burns will write to both housing associations about this matter.

It was noted that the Fionnphort harbour house owned by A&BC and let to Calmac has remained empty pending the start of the harbour developments, and that MICT has been seeking some way to use the property in the meantime.

Willie Hume reported that the flats in the County Buildings in Tobermory were nearly ready for tenancy.

(5) *Tourism*

Jo Prior noted that some 17k bookings ferry bookings had been made since summer timetable booking had been opened.

7. Planning

It was noted that:

- The applicant for a new timber pier on Loch Scridain had written expressing concern about Mull CC's objection to the proposal. However the application together with reports and letters of support and objection are now under consideration by A&BC.
- John Maughan reported that there is strong support for the proposed Tiroran Forest crofts.
- The Community Council has written a letter of support for Inverlussa Marine Services' application for a Seafood Fund grant to improve energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.
- The Fourth National Planning Framework is expected to come into effect on 13 February. A&BC's Second Local Development Plan remains under statutory Examination at national level.

Rupert Ormond raised a question about the appropriateness of further, recent planning applications in the Aros-Arle areas, where there have been a number of developments in recent years in what is an area of considerable natural landscape interest. In discussion, the Community Council supported development where it met the interests of the island

communities and noted that the area is within the Tobermory-Dalmally Growth Corridor.

8. Police Report January 2023

	Calls	Crimes
Mull North	25	2
Craignure & Area	4	2
Salen & Area	2	1
Ross of Mull & Iona	4	0

Top 3 demands: Planned shoots (9 calls), Road Traffic (4 calls), Audible Alarms (3 calls)

9. A&BC Councillors' Reports

The meeting noted the written report from Cllr. Jim Lynch highlighting, amongst other things:

- That he had taken over the Chair of an islands' stakeholder group;
- cost of living support for island communities and businesses;
- housing and employment issues.

George Burns will ask him for further information about the Argyll, Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Stakeholder Group.

Cllr. Willie Hume reported:

- the award of Regional Growth funding for development of the Aros Park waterfront and the next stage of development of Nonhebel Park;
- new street signage at Kinloch Junction and other places;
- A&BC's budget for 2023/24 is under discussion, amid significant budget pressures, and it will be decided in February.

Allan MacLean asked whether and when the Tobermory 30mph zone might be extended to the Aros Park gates, as had been sought for quite some time. It was agreed that there is a danger to pedestrians in the area as things stand. Willie reported that A&BC officers advise that the speed restriction cannot be extended to this point, but that 300m countdown signage might be put in place, which would help slow down traffic approaching but not leaving from, Tobermory.

Cllr. Andrew Kain reported that he had chaired an inaugural meeting of a Marine Infrastructure & Transport Liaison Group. He hoped it would act as a vehicle for developing island-focussed solutions and proposals on transport, reflecting the government's National Transport Strategy and Islands Connectivity Plan. Billy McClymont and Mary-Jean Devon had attended on behalf of Mull CC. The group will also involve, in the first instance, representatives from Coll and Tiree, together with other bodies such as Transport Scotland, HiTrans and Highland Council as well as A&B Council.

He considered that islands needed a joint voice to develop island-focussed proposals on

transport and other matters.

Tracy Mayo noted that, while island groups and communities are active in expressing their views, the government and government agencies need to become more receptive to island communities' perspectives and proposals. Mark Aston drew attention to a ferry consultation event attended by three members of Mull CC, but from which it had been impossible to get any feedback about whether their proposals had been listened to.

In discussion about A&BC's 2023/24 budget, it was noted that a petition had been started in other parts of Argyll & Bute about the importance of retaining school crossing patrols. There is also concern about finance for toddler groups. Andrew agreed the importance of these matters, whilst also noting the significant budget pressures that could and that these could affect discretionary, non-statutory spend.

Mairi Greig noted that it had been misreported that MICT had been awarded funding support for the community foodbank, but that in fact it is Mull & Iona Community Pantry.

10. Public Questions

Michelle Devlin joined the meeting and set out the petition she had raised about the range and affordability of goods in Tobermory Co-op, and the need for supermarket rather than a convenience store. Mull CC will write to the Co-op as well and some Members will join a planned meeting with the Co-op.

11. AoB

Tobermory Tennis/Basketball/Netball Court

Difficulties with public access to the court were raised. George Burns will contact the Tennis Club about the matter.

Community Council Facebook, Website and Noticeboards

Technical issues with the Facebook page are still being addressed. The Community Council regrets that a public livestream of its meetings has not been possible recently and is seeking ways to fix this. The website has however recently been updated and suggestions about how to further improve access would be welcome.

It was agreed that Community Council noticeboards would be removed and not replaced, where they are broken and no longer updated or used for other community purposes.

Community Council Treasurer & Financial Arrangements

Mary-Jean Devon reported that she would be meeting Adrian Stephens shortly to effect the handover of Treasurer responsibilities. She proposed that a Standing Order be put in place in respect of the Community Council's monthly hire of the An Roth meeting room. It was seconded by Billy McClymont and the proposal was agreed.

Next meeting: Wednesday 1 March, 7.00pm at An Roth and via Zoom, and livestreamed on Facebook. To join by Zoom see the link on the Mull CC website or Facebook page.

