

**Mull Community Council**  
**Draft Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 1 March**  
**at 7.00pm at An Roth and livestreamed on Facebook.**

**Present**

Allan MacLean, Angus Williams, Billy McClymont (Convenor), Cameron MacLean, George Burns, Jo Prior, John Maughan, Mark Aston, Mary-Jean Devon, Pam MacColl, Tracy Mayo  
Joe Reade was co-opted as a Member during the meeting.

**In Attendance**

Gordon Milne (Beatson's Mull Rally), PC Neil Thallon (Police Scotland), Cllr. Andrew Kain, Cllr. Willie Hume

**1. Apologies**

Rupert Ormond, Cllr. Amanda Hampsey, Cllr. Jim Lynch, Moray Finch (MICT), Celia Compton (SWMID)

**2. Declarations of Interest**

John Maughan declared a non-pecuniary interest in a matter under Item 9 (Planning - Uisken Native Woodland) and did not take part in the later discussion.

**3. Beatson's Mull Rally**

Gordon Milne reported that Forestry & Land Scotland have agreed to the use a forestry track at Fishnish in 2023 to help alleviate the queue for the ferry on both the remain road and the single-track ferry access road. Mull CC, the Police and A&BC all support this in principle. Consideration of the practical arrangements is in hand.

Cllr. Willie Hume reiterated his hope that either the ferry car park would be extended and/or the approach road double-tracked at some point in future, as this would be of broader benefit as well as during the rally period.

**4. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Approved (proposed Allan MacLean, seconded Mary-Jean Devon).

**5. Matters Arising**

Tobermory Co-op

Tracy Mayo reported on a recent meeting with Michelle Devlin and Co-op company representatives. She thanked Michelle for highlighting the community concerns about Co-op supplies and researching matters such as performance. She also thanked the Co-op for their attention to the issue; the Food Operations Manager for the area (Daniel Simpson), the Format and Store Space Manager for Scotland (Alan Gordon) and the local Tobermory manager (Caroline Williams) had attended the meeting. Co-op representatives and Michelle are expected to attend the next Mull CC meeting to discuss matters in further. In the meantime Tracy noted:

- Local Co-op staff have sometimes been subject to negative behaviour from customers when they have no control over shortages of goods and that we should, rather, respect the service they work hard to provide.
- It has been recommended that the Co-op seeks to communicate about shortages in order that customers and other local shopkeepers can take this into account, although it was acknowledged that this could be a difficult balance for the local manager.
- The Co-op is introducing a range of changes in response to public views, but that it takes 7 weeks for the supply chain to make significant adjustments to lines. The Co-op has set a series of key dates for particular changes.
- The Tobermory store is classified as a 'convenience' store only because of the area of floor space. Classifying it as supermarket would have no effect of on the range of goods.

Jo Prior noted that the Co-op is now responding to customer concern as a result of the action taken by Michelle, but that it is important they implement and maintain improvements on a continuing basis.

#### Tobermory Tennis and Basketball/Netball Court

George Burns, Mary-Jean and Tracy reported on a meeting with Tennis Club representatives and Ian Elwys (A&BC). In summary:

- The position whereby the court is locked is not new. The Tennis Club had inherited arrangements whereby the court had been previously locked. Although it had subsequently been unlocked at times, the court had been damaged and the lock restored.
- What has changed is the arrangements for obtaining the key, which had become more difficult as a result of people moving on from other local roles.
- Tobermory School has continued to have unfettered access.
- The Tennis Club has carefully managed the court, which has a rubberised, rather than hard, surface and has invested funds in maintaining it.
- The Club will remove the lock and put up a notice that court is free for use of Mull residents, and that the School and people who have booked the use of the court through the Club have priority of use.
- These arrangements will be for 3 months in the first instance, which will be monitored against any damage to the court or other issues.
- Mary-Jean Devon will arrange a further meeting involving the Club and Cllr. Andrew Kain to discuss the upkeep of the court and how best to use A&BC funding and funds that have been raised by the Club.

Mary-Jean noted that there is a problem with a section of the surrounding fence which was bent. It had recently allowed a child to wriggle into the court to retrieve a ball, but not get out again. She asked that A&BC undertake a risk assessment.

Tracy noted that the Club have really looked after the court surface and had, for some years, sought to clarify who was responsible for what in respect of the court. She noted that the Club had banked funds for maintaining/improving the court. Some Club members would like to see funding used for installing floodlights which would enable more use of the court for all in Winter, but that the court will also need resurfacing in coming months.

It was agreed that it is helpful that representatives of the Club, A&BC, the THS Parent Council and Mull CC are now in a position to take forward these considerations together.

### Island Firewood Supplies

An imminent shortage of firewood had been reported to the last meeting. Representatives of Mull CC had accordingly looked into the matter and had held a meeting with community and other woodland companies and firewood suppliers. Billy McClymont and John Maughan reported that:

- Local firewood suppliers have almost no stock left; some have none.
- There is a need/demand for 1,000 tonnes to see out the Winter.
- Only 150 tonnes is available from island woodlands and that cannot be moved presently because of A&BC transport restrictions. Representations are being made about this.
- Some larch which had been unused because of disease precautions may also now be available, as the quarantine period is thought to have elapsed, but this is still being investigated.
- Enquiries have been made about the availability of larch in Morvern and the feasibility of importing it in bulk to Mull via a charter. Indications are that it is unlikely to be economically viable, but the possibilities are still being considered.
- It appears most likely that there will be no alternative but for wood to be bought from the mainland, significantly increasing the cost for consumers and potentially affecting the viability of local firewood supply businesses.

It was also noted that:

- Present contracts allow for only a small proportion of timber to be retained for island use from either community or private forests.
- As timber felled recently, or soon planned, will be green, there is likely to be little or no firewood from local sources available for 2-3 years.

### GP Practices

Billy McClymont reported that he had invited Dr. Eric Jespersen to join a future Mull CC meeting.

### Road Signage

John Maughan asked that A&BC correct recently erected road signs at Craignure and Pennyghael that had Gaelic spelling errors. John will email Cllr. Willie Hume with the details.

### Ardura Hill Gritting

Following the letter from Mull CC, Willie will propose a motion to change the A&BC Winter Services policy to reduce the threshold for gritting that is about the number of children travelling the route in question.

### Education

Willie reported that there is as yet no indication about when the Scottish Government will announce the outcome of the bid for a new school campus, which had originally been due in December 2022.

### Tobermory/Aros 30mph Zone

Allan MacLean set out the need to extend the 30mph zone to the Aros Park gates. ABC officers had advised that this was not possible due to the lack of street lighting, but the meeting considered this unsatisfactory and that there is significant risk to pedestrians from cars accelerating away from Tobermory. Cllr. Andrew Kain reported that the case would be strengthened if, as envisaged, a footpath was to be developed to the planned Aros waterfront development. It was agreed that Billy McClymont will seek to work with Andrew and Tobermory Harbour Association to develop a funding package for developments that will allow extension of the 30mph zone.

Cllr. Willie Hume reported that in the meantime countdown signs would be erected along the roadway towards Tobermory, which would go some way to slowing traffic and improving safety in the area.

## **6. Police Report**

Police statistics are now available later than the Mull CC meeting which is very early each month. Accordingly the meeting discussed police data and significant incidents from January 2023, presented by PC Neil Thallon. The data is in the last Minutes. The data for February, subsequently received, is further below.

## **7. Community Council**

### Co-option

Tracy Mayo proposed the co-option of Joe Reade, which had been advertised as required by the Constitution. The proposal was seconded by Mark Aston, Pam MacColl and George Burns. The terms of Co-option were set out. The proposal was unanimously agreed.

### Election of Vice-Convenor

There is no requirement to have a Vice-Convenor and there were no proposals.

### Resignation

George Burns tendered notice that he would have to resign from Mull CC but would continue to serve for a few months, if necessary, pending election of another Secretary. There was a discussion about administrative arrangements and election of a Secretary, to

be determined. It was agreed to use Administrative Grant funds to pay for a Minutes Secretary. Jo Prior agreed to take responsibility for Facebook and Zoom.

## **8. Sustainability**

### Ferries

Joe Reade reported that it is expected that:

- The 'Samsø' booking system, which will give some priority to island residents and regular travellers, will be trialled on the Craignure, Coll and Tiree routes this summer. Final details are still being worked through as the needs of the three islands are not identical.
- Oban-Craignure will continue to be served by a single vessel into April. An increase in capacity on the Lochaline route is being considered to partly compensate for this. The Mull & Iona Ferry Committee (MIFC) is pressing for a different replacement vessel on the Lochaline route than Calmac had envisaged; the proposed replacement would have been unsuitable for some HGVs.
- The new ebooking system will be introduced on 25 April. MIFC, supported by Mull CC, are continuing to press for Calmac to abandon planned changes to ticketing which would see the value of a ticket lost if booked cars arrive after the check-in time and also the return leg of a journey cancelled if the outward booking is not used. A reply from Calmac is awaited. Mark Aston reiterated his understanding that Calmac's proposals were contrary to contract law and reported that a lawyer has agreed to review the matter on a pro bono basis, to help our islands, once a reply has been received.

The MIFC is also pressing Calmac about planned Advance Standby ticketing which would provide some benefits, not least to businesses, but which would also have the effect, of providing standby priority to tourists with booked holiday accommodation over local residents returning to the island.

John Maughan reported concerns raised by a local farmer who had been unable to book livestock transport on the Loch Frisa and had to transport animals a long distance via Lochaline. He asked whether any progress had been made in seeking that ferries from other islands might also stop at Craignure. Joe reported that Calmac's had said this would not be possible due to scheduling and other issues, but that he would continue to press Calmac to seek a Craignure call even once or twice a week, or possibly ad hoc.

It was also noted that:

- Calmac are seeking MCA permission to reintroduce the Loch Coruisk in advance of the planned date of 1 April.
- Fuel transporters have been carried on the Loch Frisa on some occasions recently, thus reducing capacity. Joe will look into this matter.
- There are breaks in the Loch Frisa schedule because its slower speed means that public transport links to Iona would otherwise be broken; it needs to pause sailings

during the day in order to be in the right place at the right time for these links, if travellers from Iona are to have a reasonable amount of time in Oban during the day.

### Corran Narrows

Joe reported that:

- A meeting with other Community Councils was unfortunately beset with technical difficulties and full exploration of the view of other CCs was difficult.
- The conclusion of the meeting was, however, largely that a fixed link would be desirable but that it is accepted this is long-term goal. The ferries need to be replaced in the meantime.
- It is less clear whether Highland Council's planned replacements offer the best value for money, if a fixed link is to be developed within the foreseeable future.
- Around 80% of the people from Mull and Iona who responded to a poll favoured construction of a fixed link.

### Housing

West Highland Housing Association (WHHA) has replied to Mull CC's letter about vacant social housing. They reported that the average length of time to let Mull vacancies is 12 days and that there are no long-term voids. A reply from ACHA is awaited.

### Health & Social Care

#### *Bowman Court*

Pam MacColl raised concerns reported to her from local people that the care needs assessment criteria, which should underpin the allocation of Bowman Court accommodation, had been relaxed; there is concern that this will affect the availability of accommodation on the island for people in need of care. Mary-Jean Devon noted that A&BC had previously agreed to pay the tenancy on any vacant flat for up to 6 months, to ensure that people with significant care needs were given priority.

Billy McClymont reported that he had made some enquiries about the matter. While it appeared that multi-agency needs assessment arrangements were no longer, it also been stated there is currently no-one on the island in need of the level of care support provided at Bowman Court. He felt it important, however, that further steps are taken to assess the care needs of people on the islands and ensure that Bowman Court accommodation is available to those in need.

It was agreed to invite representative of the HSCP and WHHA to a future meeting to address these concerns.

It was also noted that the lift at Bowman Court had been broken for some months, meaning that residents in top flats could not get out. It was understood that WHHA had sought a contractor to fix it as early as possible and that it ought to be fixed this week, but

the clearly this was a very disturbing length of time for access to be obstructed. George Burns will seek an assurance that the lift has been fixed.

Billy also raised concerns about gaps in meals provision at Bowman Court and the hospital. He understood that staff are on limited, temporary contracts and there is understaffing. As a result carers and others have had to provide meals. Andrew Kain agreed to look into the matter.

### *Accident & Emergency*

Pam expressed concerns also that guidance advising that people called 111 when they thought they needed emergency help does not work on the island. The meeting agreed that if people in need considered that there has been an accident or an emergency they should call 999 or travel directly to A&E. It was agreed also to raise this with Dr. Jespersen when he attends a Mull CC meeting.

### Education

Tracy Mayo drew attention to the loss a Culture Coordinator post as a result of ABC 2023 budget cuts, which she feared would in turn lead to a loss of Creative Scotland (CS) funds. In recent years some £200k of CS funds have been brought to Argyll & Bute, but the loss of the Co-ordinator means that school or other education staff will have to take steps themselves to apply for the funding, while the saving from loss of the Co-ordinator post will be only £15k. Tracy contrasted this with ABC's much greater spending on the failed CLM consultation, noting also that ABC had not consulted Parent Councils about the proposed cut. Mary-Jean Devon expressed significant concern about the stresses facing young people as a consequence of mental health lockdowns and the loss of support for music and arts that could be so helpful to young people. She expressed huge concern about the pressure on mental health services and regretted the loss of services that would have helped alleviate the pressure on services and on young people. Cllr. Willie Hume set out his agreement

Cllr. Andrew Kain reported that this cut in the budget had been debated by ABC Councillors at length, but it was in the end felt acceptable given the pressures on the budget and that CS funding could be bid for directly by other Council officers or schools. He said that the funding for young people would be unaffected and noted that, if the cut had not been made this year, he expected it would have to be made in 2024 as the budget pressures are expected to be even greater then.

Tracy also reported that she and Mark had made contact with some youth groups towards involving them in the work of Mull CC. She noted in a recent workshop, young people had set out the importance to them of issues similarly important to the CC, such as ferry services; missing education; medical and mental health support; roads; Wi-Fi; and the availability of sports coaching and driving instruction. They valued the environment and safety of the island.

## Tourism

Jo Prior reported that the government had confirmed a 6 month extension, to 30 September, for short-term letting legislation and also that there seemed to be significant delays in action being taken after businesses had registered and paid the fees.

## **9. Planning**

### Proposed Native Woodland Creation near Uisken

Mark Aston will make enquires with local crofters about whether the land near Uisken is valuable grazing land.

### Proposed Little Colonsay Fish Farm

It was reported that:

- Bakkafrost will hold a public engagement event at An Roth on 15 March.
- The M&I Fishers' Association (MIFA) remains opposed to the loss of the valuable fishing ground. MIFA has sought compensation, should Bakkafrost proceed, in the form of annual payment into a trust fund to maintain fishing facilities at Ulva Ferry (rather than any payment to individual boats), but Bakkafrost has not agreed to this.
- The residents of Little Colonsay have written to the Community Council setting out concerns about the proposed fish farm.

It was hoped that Bakkafrost and MIFA would reach an agreement that would sustain both industries and enable them both to thrive. Cllr. Andrew Kain reported that he is in touch with both parties and was optimistic that there would be agreement.

George Burns will write to the Little Colonsay owners about the public engagement event and to advise that MCC will consider all views expressed to it, when considering what position to take as a statutory consultee for the Bakkafrost planning application. The meeting recognised that there may well be environmental concerns alongside the interests of MIFA, Bakkafrost and the Little Colonsay owners, but that as yet no such views have been put forward. It could not yet be determined whether the Community Council will ultimately express any objection or support for the planning application. The timetable for the planning application has not yet been determined.

## **10. Argyll & Bute Councillors' Reports**

A written report from Jim Lynch will be circulated.

Cllrs. Willie Hume and Andrew Kain reported that:

- Funds for repairing the damaged wall at Breadalbane Street, Tobermory, have been carried into the 2023/24 ABC budget. Discussions with the landowner are ongoing. It is hoped that this will lead to re-opening and, possibly widening, the road for two-way traffic.
- ABC has allocated a total of £8.1m for roads and infrastructure work across A&B in the 2023/4 budget.

- An Oban Harbour Revisions Order has been proposed to government Ministers. This will in turn lead to the creation of a stakeholder group that will include island Community Councils.

Mary-Jean Devon noted that the Breadalbane St. wall is dangerous and agreed to write to the ABC Head of Roads & Infrastructure for a monitoring station to be placed on the wall. She also expressed concern about adjacent trees that appeared to be in a dangerous condition and asked that ABC take action to address this.

#### **11. Public Questions : None**

#### **12. Any Other Business**

##### Fionnphort Recycling Point

Willie Hume reported that, following the public petition, the recycling point would be reinstated. He reiterated that it would, however, be removed again should non-recyclable material be dumped.

##### Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) Consultation

M&I Fishers' Association had drawn the attention of Mull CC to the government's HPMAs proposals, which would ban commercial and much recreational activity in at least 10% of Scotland's seas, possibly more. The government also envisages additional fishing control measures in the existing MPAs and in other, undefined, key areas. MIFA considers this an existential threat and has asked Mull CC to respond to the consultation in addition to its own response. It was agreed that George Burns will draft a consultation response for consideration.

##### Recognising Our Community Ambassadors

Mary Jean Devon report that Mull CC had a bank balance of £5,600. She proposed that some of this be used to promote the Community Council, in line with the Constitution, through a scheme to recognise outstanding contributions to local communities and the island. It was agreed and Mary-Jean was asked to work up the details.

##### Tobermory All Weather Pitch Floodlights

Willie Hume reported that action would be taken to stop the floodlights being left on all night.

##### Salen Street Lights

It was noted that several street lights are still out of action. Willie reported that the matter is in hand but that as it is an underground problem the matter is awaiting SSE attention and can't be resolved by ABC staff.

##### Gaelic Signage on Loch Frisa Vessel

Joe Reade will contact Calmac about the need for Gaelic signage on the Loch Frisa.

#### **Next Meeting**

Wednesday 5 April, 7.00pm at An Roth, via Zoom and livestreamed on Facebook. Go to the Mull Community Council website for the Zoom link.

### **Police Report**

Police Data for January 2023 was reported to the meeting by PC Neil Thallon, who answered questions raised by Mull CC members.

#### **Police Report January 2023**

	<b>Calls</b>	<b>Crimes</b>
<b>Mull North</b>	25	2
<b>Craignure &amp; Area</b>	4	2
<b>Salen &amp; Area</b>	2	1
<b>Ross of Mull &amp; Iona</b>	4	0

Police Data for February 2023 has subsequently will be received and will be considered at the next meeting.

#### **Police Data February 2023**

	<b>Calls</b>	<b>Crimes</b>
<b>Mull North</b>	29	1
<b>Craignure &amp; Area</b>	2	0
<b>Salen &amp; Area</b>	10	0
<b>Ross of Mull &amp; Iona</b>	6	0

*The majority of calls were notifications to the police of planned deer shoots.*