

## MULL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### Draft Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 6 April 2022 via Zoom and livestreamed on Facebook

#### Present

Angus Williams, Billy McClymont, Cameron MacLean, George Burns, Jo Prior, John Maughan, Moira Westland, Pam MacColl, Tom Nelson (Convenor)

#### In Attendance

Jo Reade (MI Ferry Committee), John Holliday (Tiree CC), Moray Finch (MICT), Norman Hickson (Craignure Bay Community Group), Cllr. Devon, Cllr. Lynch

Item 3: Richard Crozier & Gordon Milne, Mull Rally 2020 organisers

Item 4: Chris Nall, Ian MacIntyre, Penny Hawdon, Zane Pretorius (all Scottish Salmon Company), Nick Turnbull (Mull & Iona Fishers' Association), Simon Macdonald (West Coast Regional Inshore Fishery Group and Aquaculture Regional Fishery Group) and Kenny Coull, Scottish Whitefish Producers Association and Mallaig & North-West Fisher's Association).

1. **Apologies** : Adrian Stephens, Alasdair McCrone, Angus Williams, Iain Campbell

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

3. **Mull Rally 2022**

Richard Crozier from the organisers set out proposals for the route and schedules which had been amended following the initial public consultation. It was noted that the formal consultation period with statutory bodies, including MCC, would close shortly, but that discussions will continue with farmers, other businesses and residents. Comments can be sent to residents@mullrally.org or consult@mullrally.org. Gordon Milne added that the organising and marshalling team would step-up measures to prevent annoyance to the local community in the days before and during the rally, in respect of reconnaissance driving, littering, camping and campervans.

Cameron MacLean thanked the organisers for the steps they had taken to consult and reflect the view of local residents and businesses. The Community Council agreed that they were content with the proposals and would make a response to the final consultation accordingly.

4. **Little Colonsay Fish Farm Proposal (Scottish Salmon Company)**

Chris Nall set out the Scottish Salmon Company (SSC)'s proposals for a new farm off the south-east coast of Little Colonsay. The farm would have six pens, arranged in two rows of three, with a total 2,800 standing biomass. There would be no additional land-based development as the farm would be serviced from existing sites.

SCC set out that the company had operated in the Mull area for 20 years and wished to expand its operations. They estimated that 6-8 new jobs would be created. It was also

noted that SSC has employee accommodation on Mull.

SSC reported that they still held licences to farm at Inch Kenneth, but that this site had been decommissioned and was considered no longer large enough to return sufficient economic benefit. SSC also considered that the Little Colonsay site would have less visual impact.

SSC reported that they had initially proposed the Little Colonsay farm some years ago and that, following objections from local fishers, they had assessed other possible sites off the west coast of Mull. They had been unable to identify any other site, however, that provided the high flow of current that would allow SEPA to grant approval for a high biomass and the feed/treatment requirements for supporting it. To go some way to accommodating local fishers, however, the pens would be sited off the main coastal shelf.

SSC noted that planning is at a preliminary screening and scoping stage. They would shortly ask A&BC and SEPA to determine what environmental assessments will be required prior to making a formal planning application. They would also continue discussion with local fishers, the Ulva community and tour boat operators. It was envisaged that a formal planning application would be made in 9-12 months time.

Nick Turnbull (MIFA) reported, however, that the proposed is prime fishing ground for lobster, crabs and prawns, fished by four local creel boats as well being trawled regularly by boats from Mallaig and more occasionally boats from the Clyde.

He emphasised that MIFA had supported some previous fish farm developments by SSC, but that this proposal would adversely affect local fishing to such an extent that it had to be opposed. He did not consider that the move of pens off the coastal shelf was sufficient to mitigate the probable losses. It was noted that creel boat owners had estimated a loss of £10-12k per annum each, and that there might be additional losses to Mallaig or other boats.

Simon Macdonald (Chair, WCRIFG and Aquaculture FG) considered that the loss of jobs was likely equivalent to those generated by the proposed farm and that, while larger boats such as those from Mallaig could more easily go elsewhere, local boats could not easily do so. The losses would therefore be felt most by the small, local boats. He also expressed considerable concern about the affect of unused feed and treatment outflow on wild fish and shellfish.

In response to a question from SSC, Nick and Simon indicated that it would not be sufficient for the local creel boats to fish in between the pens' mooring lines; that there might be no alternative should the proposal go ahead, but that it would also be risky.

Kenny Coull (SWPA and MNWFA) noted that the conditions that made the site valuable for the fish farm, were the conditions that made the site valuable for local fishers. He also noted that, where existing fishing interests could not be protected, marine planning

policies required the proposers (SSC) to develop a management and mitigation plan. Penny Hawdon reported that planning was as yet at an early stage. Norman Hickson expressed concern about further losses to local, small-boat fishing.

In response to a question, Zane Pretorius set out that SSC would not consider financial compensation for the local fishers, as it would not be possible to obtain evidenced data about losses. He indicated that SSC might well contribute to local infrastructure and facilities, and currently transported material at no charge from Ulva Ferry to Ulva to help local renovations.

Tom Nelson confirmed that MCC would contribute to the later formal planning consultation and to any discretionary planning inquiry.

#### 5. **Minutes of the last Meeting**

Approved (proposed Jo Prior, seconded Pam MacColl).

#### 6. **Matters Arising**

A reply had been received to MCC's letter to A&BC about lack of public transport on the Ross to catch the first ferry sailing each day. It was felt that A&BC had not addressed the point of medical necessity. The MCC will write again about this, and to ask for liaison with the HSCP and RoMICTS about costs, support and services, including support for people who need to stay on the mainland overnight in order to access medical treatment.

Replies had not yet been received from A&BC about Fionnphort public seating/shelter; the Tobermory car park development timetable; and Tobermory street lighting. A letter has also been sent to FLS about the Eas Brae trees.

#### 7. **Sustainability**

##### ***Salen-Tobermory Road***

Following a meeting with Jenni Minto MSP, she has agreed to raise the need to upgrade the road with A&BC.

##### ***Ferry***

The Ferry Committee has identified a booking system used in Denmark which might provide more equity in booking arrangements for visitors and islanders here, but where any effect on tourist businesses needs further consideration. The Ferry Committee is consulting VMI and proposes to conduct a public survey. Calmac is also seeking year-round accommodation for 14 crew for the MV Loch Frisa.

##### ***National Planning Framework and Transport Review***

MCC's response to the NPF will be placed on the MCC website. It was remitted to a working group to consider whether to respond to the transport review.

##### **Health & Social Care**

Some vacancies have been filled at the hospital, but concerns were expressed about future levels of service there and at Bowman Court. It was agreed that the MCC will write to the HSCP's Chief Executive.

### ***Education***

MCC's response to A&BC's consultation on school leadership changes has been submitted and a copy is available on the MCC website. Other Community Councils, Parent Councils and other bodies from Mull and elsewhere have submitted responses with similar views.

Tom Nelson reported that, although this stage of formal consultation had closed, Iona CC had proposed to issue two further statements, to A&BC Council candidates and to existing A&BC Councillors, respectively, and invited MCC to become a co-signatory. The first had been received and circulated to MCC members earlier in the week and members confirmed that they had had the opportunity to read it. Iona CC required a response by the following day.

The second statement had however only been released by Iona CC a few hours before the MCC meeting and only a few MCC members had been able to consider it. Iona CC required a response by Friday 8 April.

John Maughan had expressed concern in advance of the meeting about the demanding language in the first statement, as drafted. Adrian Stephens, on the other hand, had expressed support in advance of the meeting for the adoption of both statements. Jo Prior also expressed her concern about the language used in the statements, and George Burns and Pam MacColl agreed. Tom proposed that MCC would not be a co-signatory to the first statement and George supported the proposal. In discussion, it was considered that the demanding language would not be conducive to the purposeful dialogue with A&BC that MCC had called for in its submission. The meeting agreed Tom's recommendation.

It was noted that there was no difference of substance between the views of MCC and ICC about the school leadership proposals, and the decision simply reflected how the two Councils wanted to express their approach to further engagement with A&B Councillors. Moira Westland suggested that MCC write to A&BC Councillors after the election and this was agreed.

Tom observed that, in this light, it was unlikely that MCC members would wish to become co-signatories to the second statement. He recommended this position, subject to any contrary views expressed over the next 24 hours, in order to meet the timetable requested by Iona CC, and this was agreed.

Separately, concerns about A&BC's approach to teacher recruitment had been brought to the attention of MCC by Tracy Mayo. Concern was also expressed that A&BC had taken no action to renovate the teacher's flat in Tobermory that had been allowed to fall into disrepair. It was agreed that George should write to A&BC.

## 8. **Planning**

No additional issues.

## 9. **Councillor's Report**

Cllr. Jim Lynch reported that:

- There is a backlog of demand for housing, road and lighting repairs as a result of COVID, and that he is seeking a clear plan of approach from A&BC officers.
- Further funding would be provided to money advice services and for food-purchase cards for those in hardship. but was concerned about how these would reach island communities. Moray Finch offered to provide information about how Co-op and Spar stores had engaged with the Waterfall Fund.

Jim will also enquire about the development of the Salen-Tobermory Road business case as part of A&BC's bid for UK government funding.

## 10. **Police Report**

To follow. Tom Nelson asked that everyone be vigilant about livestock worrying especially during the lambing season.

## 11. **A&BC Consultation about Community Councils**

A&BC is conducting a consultation about how CCs work. The first stage of consultation includes eligibility for election and complaints procedures and closes on 22 April. Anyone can respond. Details are on the A&BC and MCC websites.

## 11. **Any Other Business**

- John Maughan will write to A&BC about gaelic road signage and gaelic education.
- George Burns will write to Royal Mail about understaffing
- The Lord Lieutenant has written encouraging events to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in June, as asking for information about events to be shared (see the MCC website). It is understood Tobermory Guides & Scouts are planning a beacon and event.
- MCC will accept an offer of £100 that has been made for the purchase of its marquee floor. The MCC no longer has the marquee tent.
- The Craignure Pier Design Group and the Bay Community Group will be meeting shortly.
- It was agreed that an election hustings should be organised on Mull; subject to final confirmation it will be held on Wednesday 27 April at 7.00pm in Craignure Hall.

## 12. **Public Questions**

None.

## **NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 4 May at 7.00pm via Zoom and livestreamed on Facebook. *Join Zoom Meeting*

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