

MULL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of a Meeting held on Wednesday 6 July 2022 at An Roth, Craignure, and also via Zoom and livestreamed on Facebook

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

In Attendance: Cllr. Hampsey, Cllr. Hume, Cllr. Kain, Fiona Davies & Morven McPhillips (HSCP), Margaret Matthew (VMI), Moray Finch (MICT), Nigel Burch (MOG), Norman Hickson (Craignure Bay Group) Tracy Mayo (Co-Chair, THSPC)

1. **Apologies**: Alasdair McCrone, Ian Campbell, Cllr. Lynch

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

3. **Tourism**

(1) Destinations

Adrian Stephens raised concern about whether the concentration of tourism in Iona and Tobermory might overwhelm some local facilities, while other island locations were under-frequented. Margaret Matthew of Visit Mull & Iona (VMI) observed that visitors tended to have specific destinations in mind when travelling to Mull and that soundings in Iona and Fionnphort indicated that facilities were not overburdened. Members of VMI, which include about half of tourist businesses on the islands, had not expressed concern about Tobermory or the levels of tourism at other location, as remoter locations appear fairly busy too although they do not have the same facilities as the larger destinations.

VMI accordingly promotes what visitors can experience around Mull & Iona. rather than individual locations and is seeking to promote off-peak tourism.

It was noted that there is no specific data about tourist interests and patterns. Moray Finch will send Margaret some data that MICT has and they agreed to work together to scope a study and seek funding for it.

(2) Disturbance to Otters

The Community Council agreed with a general strategy outlined by Nigel Burch of the Mull Otter Group (MOG) about how to help visitors and residents understand how to avoid inadvertent disturbance to otters : Educate, engage, explain and, when necessary, enforce. MOG has recently produced new leaflets and, separately, VMI is about to launch *Wild Isles* pages on their website, encouraging people to join organised wildlife tours.

MOG and VMI will seek to work together to help raise awareness and distribute information, and the Community Council will support this through its media.

It was noted that:

- Most disturbance arises from a lack of awareness about how people's behaviour can affect the otters and most people appreciate and accept advice.
- Some photographers, both visitor and residents, cause the greatest problems when intent on getting their shot irrespective of the distress it may cause to animals.
- It would be helpful if people stayed above the high water mark when watching otters.
- Engagement by, and visibility of, Rangers and the Police can be very helpful, while it is also appreciated that their resources are limited.

4. Health & Social Care

Fiona Davies (Chief Officer) and Morven McPhillips (Area Manager) of the Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) joined the meeting to discuss staffing and services at the Community Hospital (MICH) and Bowman Court.

They reported that;

- A Senior Charge Nurse has recently been appointed and started at MICH and a part-time Band 5 Nurse will start in August.
- However the HSCP is experiencing difficulty in filling other vacancies at MICH and in the Community Nursing Team, particularly for senior nursing posts, and this reflects a shortage of available staff across Argyll & Bute and nationally. Morven set out that safe levels of service continue to be provided, while this can be challenging at times.
- A post of Senior Community Staff Nurse has been advertised unsuccessfully several times. The HSCP will continue to seek to fill the post. All vacant posts are advertised locally and nationally.
- Bowman Court has its full quota of staff and the HSCP does not intend to reduce it. They are planning to increase out-of-hours cover.
- Policy and plans emphasise the importance of vulnerable people retaining their own tenancies, with care wrapped around that. Bowman Court is considered to an excellent model of this and the HSCP has no plans to change the services or care assessment arrangements and criteria for residence.
- The HSCP will also retain the Respite Bed provision. In response to a question, they will ascertain what statutory or standards requirements are associated with this.
- Shortage of accommodation on the islands has not so far prevented any staff from taking up post, but that is not known whether it may have dissuaded potential applicants. The HSCP has secured a house for staff when it is needed.

Billy McClymont expressed concern that a post of Craignure Campus Manager, which had been created following a Mull & Iona Health Review had been left unfilled for several years, despite the duties being passed to other staff only for a temporary period when the post became vacant. Morven understood that the funding had been used for nursing staffing at Craignure and Fiona agreed to make enquires about whether and when a decision had been made to discontinue the post and the rationale for the decision.

He also expressed concern about whether there was sufficient dementia care availability and that too many people suffering dementia were passed to facilities off the islands. Fiona and Morven emphasised that the needs of each person are assessed individually and on a multi-agency basis. They seek to provide care on the islands wherever possible. Fiona also reported on significant investment being made to upskill healthcare and social work staff in dementia care, although this is as yet at any early stage.

Moray Finch noted that land was earmarked for a potential Nursing & Care Home within the proposed TSL housing development at Craignure and Fiona indicated that a meeting would be arranged between Moray and Caroline Cherry, HSCP Head of Adult Services and Chair of the HSCP Care Homes & Housing Group.

He also expressed concern that an HSCP house on the Craignure campus was being used as an office, while office accommodation was available for rent or lease at An Roth. Fiona and Morven reported that the house could not presently be released because of an increase in social work staffing, but that they noted the possibility of using An Roth; Fiona said she would bring it to the attention of relevant HSCP officers.

5. Minutes of the Last Meeting: Approved (proposed Adrian Stephens, seconded Billy McClymont).

6. Matters Arising

Eas Brae Trees

Tom Nelson reported that FLS had let him know that they were planning remedial work on the land they owned and were seeking to identify other owners. Remedial work will be done towards the end of the summer once they enough work to come to the island.

Other matters arising were dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

7. Sustainability Issues

Education

(1) Tobermory Teachers' Accommodation

Cllr. Andrew Kain reported that work to renovate the accommodation had now been put out to tender, with a closing date of 14 July. He noted that the accommodation would likely be housing for three individuals, rather than a family. The Community Council welcomed the progress, but noted that this arrangement might not help retention of staff in the longer-term; Andrew accepted that this arrangement was a compromise but would enable things to be taken forward. Cllr. Willie Hume noted that he had raised this matter on his first day as an elected Councillor and that he was glad that things were now being taken forward.

(2) School Leadership

Adrian Stephens set out that the Collective Leadership Model proposals remained a matter of concern, despite the volume of opposition expressed during and after the formal consultation period. The A&BC Community Services Committee is due to consider a report on the consultation findings in August but the analysis has been prepared by the Stand agency, an advertising company contracted to promote acceptance of the Model. Tracy Mayo added her concerns that some people and groups appeared to believe that consideration of the proposals had already finished.

A&B Councillors all expressed a view that there had been faults in the approach to presenting and consulting on the Model. Cllr. Willie Hume considered that the proposals were unacceptable. Cllr. Andrew Kain and Cllr. Amanda Hampsey noted the considerable opposition from some Community Councils but that they had to consider the views of all 56 CCs in the Argyll & Bute area.

Andrew noted that changing demography and pressure on resources have to be taken into account, and that he had also considered Scottish Government research on leadership in small primary schools. He also made clear that, if the proposals go ahead, they would not be implemented as a one-size-fits-all approach across Argyll & Bute and that the position of the islands and rural areas would likely be different to that of rural areas.

Amanda set out, in addition, that if the consensus from public consultation was against the proposals, then they would not go ahead.

Community Councillors and others expressed considerable concern about the process followed by A&BC. It was noted that project documentation had only been released by A&BC after considerable pressure and after the formal consultation period had ended, and that matters might appropriately be taken up with the Information Commissioner and Standards Ombudsman.

The Community Council agreed to write to all A&B Councillors:

- calling for a halt to current consideration;
- enclosing a copy of the MCC submission to the formal consultation which emphasised that,
 - the MCC is not against change and would welcome a proper discussion about the competing pressures facing education services and how to resolve them,
 - but that the lack of clear information and transparency has left community representatives unsighted and unable to reach an informed view.

It was noted that the elected officers of the Community Council had met with officers of A&BC in 2021 to discuss concerns about A&BC's engagement with, and listening to, communities. A&BC officers had accepted there was a need to improve their culture and practice. A&BC had then, in 2022, pointed to the CLM consultation as a model of how they had changed their approach. The meeting considered that this was not the case.

(3) Teacher Re-Location Allowance

George Burns reported that an encouraging reply had been received from Wendy Brownlie, A&BC's Head of Education Services, and that he would circulate it.

Ferry, Travel & Transport

(1) *Tobermory Car Park Development*

George Burns reported that he had written to Jim Smith seeking clarification of issues and funding regarding development of the car park. It was noted that expansion of the Tobermory cemetery, originally brigaded with the car park, was proceeding in the meantime and is very necessary. Cllr. Kain confirmed that funding for the car park development is in place and that a two month extension of the tender arrangements has been arranged to allow for conclusion of decrofting application for the car park land.

(2) *Salen-Tobermory Road Upgrade*

It was noted that funding for an upgrade of the Salen-Tobermory road had been dropped from a A&BC bid to the UK Levelling Up Fund. Cllr. Kain explained that this was due to pressure on the likely funding, Jo Prior pointed out that the road upgrade had been promised for 60 years MCC welcomed the excellent work that had been done recently by the roads team to add passing places and resurface the road, but noted that the budget for improving the road totalled £178k while there were community expectations that it would be more. The Community Council asked that A&BC Councillors continue to press for improvements to the roads

Housing

Moray reported that the vacant house owned by A&BC is to be used by the pier manager while pier development is in progress. Discussions will continue about whether it can be sold on preferential terms to a community body for long-term local housing.

Anyone with housing needs is encouraged to register with HomeArgyll and help with the application process is available from HomeArgyll and MICT.

8. Planning : No further issues.

9. Police Report for June 2022

	Calls	Crimes
Mull North	27	6
Craignure & surrounding	3	1
Salen & surrounding	8	1
Ross of Mull & Iona	7	0

Attention was drawn to the importance that dogs are kept on a leash when outside, in view of incidents of dog bites and sheep worrying.

10. A&BC Councillors' Reports

Willie Hume, Andrew Kain and Amanda Hampsey reported on a number of matters and Jim

Lynch provided a written report which had been circulated.

- Willie reported that A&BC has had to make £54m saving over the last 10 years and forecasts a very substantial savings requirement over the next 5 years, exacerbated by inflation.
- In addition to £178k being spent on the Tobermory-Salen road A&BC will spend £675k on improving Mull roads between July and August 2022.
- Funding has also been approved for renovating 6 houses on Ulva at a total cost of £1.6m (£200k A&BC plus regeneration funding).
- The Tobermory all-weather pitch has been repaired.
- Andrew reported that he has joined the HiTrans Board which has met for the first time following local authority elections, which works to improve transport in the highlands and islands.
- He is also attending meetings concerning Craignure Bay development and is continuing work in his broader policy lead portfolio concerning roads, infrastructure and ports.
- Amanda reported on her role as Policy Lead for Health & Social Care and meeting and work she taken forward with regard to hospital, nursing and care services on Mull and across Argyll & Bute.
- She noted that regeneration funding of £200k had been confirmed for the Tobermory harbour wall development and that she would be meeting with the Ferry Committee.
- Jim's report noted that there continued to be a high number of housing-related issues eg. repairs, re-housing and potential homelessness and on work he was undertaken to help address business recruitment difficulties and unemployment. He has also asked for monthly A&BC report on street lighting.

11. AoB

- *Swimming Pool Public Access*
Trustees of MICE will be meeting with the hotel management.
- *Aros Park*
Jo Prior will contact FLS to discuss what can be done to restore public amenity following the demolition of the Look Out Tower and will raise the matter of the public toilets which remain closed at present.
- *Geese on Roads*
Deferred to a future meeting.
- *Scottish Water Septic Tank Emptying Service*
George Burns will contact SW to ask whether they will maintain their tanker service, with a replacement when needed, and continue emptying at the Tobermory site. It was noted that there are alternative contractors.
- *Deposit Return Scheme*

To be discussed further at the August meeting.

- *Community Council Elections*
George will look into ways to publicise the coming elections and encourage candidates to come forward.
- *Fionnphort Recycling Bins*
A&BC will be contacted about the Recycling Bins which are no longer being emptied they are broken. It was noted that non-recyclable waste was being deposited and this could lead to the bins being withdrawn
- *Bunessan Sheep*
Attention has been drawn to damage and nuisance being caused by sheep. The Community Council had examined this matter before, including reviewing common grazing land maps and had found that it did not have any means to address or control the matter as the whole of the area is common grazing.
- *Overhanging Branches*
A&BC will be contacted about overhanging branches on the Ross of Mull road and near Duart road end.
- *Grass Cutting in the South of Mull*
Although planned to take place in June/July, Willie Hume reported that the roads staff are now engaged in the road improvement works and it is likely that further grass cutting will be postponed until mid-August.
- *Bentalla Crescent Parking*
Salen school has written to parents advising that the small number of school parking spaces should not be used and that Bentalla Crescent should be used, but this is for resident parking. Willie agreed to look into the matter.
- *Community Council Website*
An invoice has been received and authorised for payment for the costs of hosting the Community Council website.

Next Meeting

Wednesday 3 August at 7.00pm