

# Helensburgh Community Council



**"Helensburgh – Be Better : Be Excellent"**

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Helensburgh Community Council Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

**Present:** Sonja Aitken, Karen Brabender, Ronnie Finnegan, Ian Fraser, Marion Gillies, Catriona Malan, Alastair Macbeth, Stewart Noble, David Sinclair and Richard Trail.

**Councillors:** Andrew Nisbet and James Robb.

**Helensburgh Advertiser:** Fiona Howard.

**Apologies:** Councillor Vivien Dance, Findlay McQuarrie, Nigel Millar, Councillor Ellen Morton, Councillor Al Reay, Kathleen Siddle and Gordon Tran.

**Chair:** Stewart Noble.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Decision / Action</b>
<b>1. Welcome and Recognition</b>	<p>Marion Gillies, the Vice Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.</p> <p>She commented on the new bus service to the Royal Alexandra Hospital. The new service has started, but the timetables issued are unhelpful as they are in two independent leaflets (one for the section from Helensburgh to Vale of Leven operated by McColl's and one for the section from Vale of Leven to Royal Alexandra operated by Wilson's of Rhu) with no cross referencing, thus making it difficult for potential passengers to work out the times.</p> <p>Councillor Nisbet undertook to raise the matter of an integrated timetable with SPT.</p> <p>She then, with the concurrence of the members, handed over the chairmanship of the meeting to Stewart Noble.</p>	<p>It was <b>agreed</b> that there really needed to be a single integrated timetable.</p>
<b>2. Public Session</b>	<p>There were three members of the public present. Two issues were raised.</p>	

Topic	Minute	Decision / Action
	<p><b>2.1 Leaks of nuclear material to the Gareloch from Faslane Naval Base.</b></p> <p>A member of the public raised the issue of the recent disclosure that there had been leaks of nuclear material to the Gareloch on three separate occasions in recent years. She requested that the Community Council arrange a public meeting with relevant parties so the public could understand what monitoring and control is exercised in such matters. There is a Liaison Committee associated with the Base and Councillor Robb undertook to find out more about its function and who was involved with it.</p>	<p>It was <b>agreed</b> that the Executive should arrange such a meeting once the involved parties have been established.</p>
	<p><b>2.2 Helensburgh Partnership</b></p> <p>The question of whether the Helensburgh Partnership had finished its work was raised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Councillor Robb indicated that the recent article in the <i>Helensburgh Advertiser</i> was broadly accurate.</li> <li>◆ Funding had been provided for three years which were nearly up.</li> <li>◆ It was coming to the end of its natural life.</li> <li>◆ It had achieved its objective of establishing an outline business case for development within the town centre.</li> <li>◆ Argyll and Bute Council are now responsible for local regeneration.</li> <li>◆ The Partnership is not involved with the future of the old Clyde Street Community Centre. Argyll and Bute Council are bringing forward proposals for the development of the building and its site for municipal offices and civic facilities.</li> <li>◆ The reports promoted by the Partnership on various matters in the town will come in to the public domain. One, at least, is already published on their web site.</li> <li>◆ The benefit of traffic studies was questioned. Such matters need independent evidence.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Community Service</b></p>	<p>For reasons unknown, Ruth Pryce was not at the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>4. Minutes of Previous Meeting</b></p>	<p>The minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> March were considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The change noted in Item 9b (<i>sans serif italics below</i>) was not accepted as an</li> </ul>	<p>The Minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009 were <b>not approved</b> and will return</p>

## Topic

## Minute

## Decision / Action

accurate record. The precise change which had been proposed, and accepted, was not available at the time of the meeting, but has been located and is shown further below **(sans serif bold)**.

- ◆ *In Item 9b the first sentence should be made into two separate ones – Nigel Miller explained the way the Planning Group operated. He outlined the internal problems surrounding the handling of the Lomond School retrospective planning application which had now been decided upon by the Area Committee.*
- ◆ **In Item 9b the first sentence should be made into two separate ones – Nigel Miller explained the way the Planning Group operated. He then went on to explain the circumstances of the Lomond School retrospective planning application but said it had been handed outwith the Group."**
- ◆ In Item 5.1 the meeting referred to as being in *April* should make reference to *some future meeting*.

## 5. Matters Arising

### 5.1 Twinning

Following last month's decision, it was felt that it was not clear as to who should act in this matter.

It was **agreed** that Ian Fraser should initiate the action.

### 5.2 Planning Group Standing orders

A revised proposal for the Planning Group Standing Orders was submitted. See Appendix I (and note the decision in Item 11, below).

It was **agreed** to consider the proposed Standing Orders at the May meeting.

### 5.3 Hermitage Academy

The question of what £20k per month security charges on the old Hermitage Academy achieved was raised. All Argyll and Bute Councillors are completely aware of the concerns of some local residents. Negotiations are now at an advanced stage but Councillor Robb was unable to expand further due to commercial and confidentiality constraints.

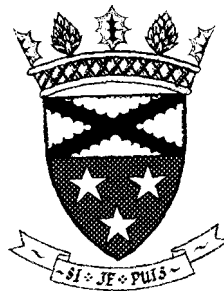
Topic	Minute	Decision / Action
	<p><b>5.4 Antisocial Behaviour</b> In last month's minutes it was reported that groups of youngsters are tending to congregate around Havelock Street. The Police and Community Wardens have become involved.</p>	<p>It was <b>agreed</b> that the Executive should seek to invite the Police and Community Wardens to a future meeting.</p>
	<p><b>5.5 National Spring Clean</b> There was no pressing enthusiasm within the Community Council to participate. Argyll and Bute Council are working on bringing forward applications in conjunction with local community groups.</p>	<p>It was <b>agreed</b> to let the matter drop.</p>
	<p><b>5.6 Town Centre Regeneration</b> The newsletter issued Gary Mulvaney as a Conservative Party candidate notes that community councils should become involved in town centre regeneration.</p>	<p>It was <b>agreed</b> that Stewart Noble should investigate what was involved.</p>
<p><b>6. Helensburgh Design Statement</b></p>	<p>The Helensburgh Design Statement has been completed (a draft was issued with the agenda) and a launch has been arranged for 21<sup>st</sup> May at the Helensburgh Lawn Tennis Club. Invitations to potentially interest parties have been issued and it was confirmed that a number had been received. It was commented that the Scottish Government have just issued their own Design Statement</p>	
<p><b>7. Local Issues</b></p>	<p><b>7.1 Policing</b> Two policemen on bicycles had been noticed about town and not just in the town centre. It is understood that a total of four neighbourhood police on bicycles are now deployed from Helensburgh Police Office. It is reported that they have caught a number of miscreants in the act, as they are silent in their approach.</p> <p><b>7.2 Unsightly Railway Embankments</b> Again the unsightliness of railway embankments caused by the recent extensive tree felling has been adversely commented upon. In time regrowth of vegetation will hide the scars. Action can be, and is being, taken by environmental wardens on Network Rail in connection with actually litter on the embankments.</p> <p><b>7.3 Woodlands Consultation</b> There are to be consultation meetings about woodlands at various places within Argyll and Bute. It was commented that without details is is hard to</p>	

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	<p>know what the agenda and relevance of these are. Alastair Macbeth undertook to draft a letter to the Chief Executive indicating the difficulty that can arise when there is insufficient information as to content in the calling notice.</p>	
	<p><b>7.4 Civic Mindedness</b> The question of the civic mindedness of proprietors of shops and banks was raised. It is felt that they should take an interest in maintaining the cleanliness of the area around their premises disfigured by litter from their premises.</p>	<p>It was <b>agreed</b> that the Chairman should raised this matter with the Chamber of Commerce / Retailers next time he meets them.</p>
	<p><b>7.5 Obstruction of Footways</b> The question of the obstruction of footways by the activities of shop owners was again raised. Councillor Nisbet undertook to enquire as to the legal position. There is perhaps a case for licensing such activity (as is done in some towns) which would have the effect of defining what areas may be obstructed. In the event that greater areas for pedestrian movement are established in the town centre then perhaps the local authority should consider this option. Parking vehicles on the footway is a traffic offence.</p>	
	<p><b>7.6 West King Street</b> It was commented that the work of resurfacing is largely complete. It had been evident that Argyll and Bute Council have put a great deal of thought and effort into thinking about how to carry out the works with minimum inconvenience to the public in the shortest time and at the same time informing and helping the public. They should be commended for their efforts.</p>	
<b>8. Planning</b>	<p>Catriona Malan reported on the activities of the Planning Group. See Appendix II.</p>	The report was <b>noted</b> .
<b>9. Elections</b>	<p>The Chair again drew attention to the fact that there would be elections in September for a new community council. At present there are a number of vacancies on the council, and a number of the present members have indicated that they will not be standing for election again. It is therefore not too soon to identify and interest suitable people who might stand for election in September.</p>	
<b>10. Finance</b>	<p>The Treasurer presented the unaudited accounts (see Appendix III) for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March. He</p>	

Topic	Minute	Decision / Action
	anticipates presenting the audited accounts to the May meeting.	
<b>11. Any Other Business</b>	Sonja Aitken suggested that all correspondence, prior to sending, should be approved by the Executive or by the full Community Council. It was further suggested that all decisions minuted should include a note as to the party required to take the action.	It was <b>agreed</b> to remit this to the Executive to bring proposals to the May meeting of the Community Council.
<b>12. Next Meeting</b>	The next meeting will be held on Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> May 2009 at 19.00 in the Victoria Halls.	

## APPENDIX I

### Helensburgh Community Council (HCC)



1. The Planning Group, on behalf of Helensburgh Community Council, will respond to planning applications, subject to the subsequent endorsement and adoption of its decisions and actions by the full HCC,
2. The Planning Group will make a report of its latest actions at each Helensburgh Community Council meeting.
3. Group decisions will focus on understanding the requirements of applicants, the views of the objectors, the HCC's 'Helensburgh Design Statement' and the provisions of the approved development plan.
4. There will be at least five Community Council members on the Planning Group.
5. Decisions within the Group will be by majority vote or consensus.
6. All formal communication with residents, A&B Council Planning Departments or any similar body will be by letter or e-mail, rather than by phone call. Records of these communications will be filed for access by Community Councillors and members of the public.

7. All correspondence from the Group, regardless of who writes it, will be signed '(NAME) for Helensburgh Community Council Planning Group'.

8. Minutes will be taken at every Group meeting. These minutes will be included in the minutes of HCC meetings, which are lodged in Helensburgh Library and will be available to members of the public.

## **APPENDIX II**

### Planning Group Report - April 30th 2009

#### Planning Applications Discussed (6.04.09)

##### 1) Argyle Lodge, ref. 08/01931/DET erection of a 3-storey extension

This application had not been seen by the Planning Group. However, a member of the public, Mrs Catherine Beaton, who lives in Colquhoun Street, had phoned Marion Gillies to ask for support for her strong objection. Marion invited her to attend the Planning Group meeting at the library to explain. She was objecting on the grounds of:

- lack of privacy
- extra traffic
- loss of light because of the height of the proposed building

Mrs Beaton also claimed there had not been correct neighbour notification. Because of her objection she had been invited to a site meeting on April 7th, and was able to show us plans and other relevant documents. The group agreed to register an objection on the additional grounds of:

- overdevelopment of the site
- scale of the building

In a phone call to Howard Young, Nigel Millar claimed that the application had not been available for view in the library. He was advised that he could attend the site meeting if HCC's objection as lodged by 9.30 the following morning.

#### Argyle Lodge follow-up

After the planning meeting, the group visited Mrs Beaton's garden to assess the impact the new development would have on her house and garden. It was agreed that this would be significant. The grounds of Argyle Lodge were then looked at to see where the extension was planned. It requires the removal of several trees.

In addition, several neighbours were asked if they had received planning notification. From this it was found that some of the neighbours had indeed been contacted in earlier – before January – but they had to go to Blairvadach to view the plans. Some did this. Some said that they had not realised the scale of the building, and felt the plans may have been changed since their last notification.

## Site Visit to Argyle Lodge

Jim Milligan accompanied the chairman on this visit and has produced a detailed account for the Planning Group. The Application was agreed, subject to fewer trees being removed, and the planting of screening between Argyle Lodge's grounds and Mrs Beaton to afford her more privacy.

### 2) 101, Sinclair Street retrospective application for the erection of a boundary wall

The Planning Group had made an objection to this in January, following several conversations with members of the public. However, it was notified that no application had been applied for.

Now that an application had been lodged, months later, there had been no further comments from the public, and it was decided on a vote not to take any action on this.

### 101, Sinclair Street follow-up

Two days after the Planning Group meeting, Catriona Malan received a phone call from Morag Jardine, a planning officer at Blairvadach, inquiring why there had been no objection to the Sinclair Street wall now that there was an application. It was explained that

- a) there were no recent complaints and
- b) that the group had changed and had consensually decided not to take action.

Ms Jardine was disappointed, but accepted a suggestion that the wall should have its decorative protuberances removed to make it more acceptable. She said that welcomed this as a useful suggestion and looked forward to liaison between HCC and Blairvadach in future over objections.

## 2. Standing Orders

The chairman did not accept the group's Standing Orders and altered them, including the new version with the distributed minutes. The Planning Group asked him to attend the group meeting to discuss this. The result is a new version, with some minor alterations to the previous.

## 3. Helensburgh Library

It would be useful if the Planning Group were allowed to use one of the vacant rooms for its meetings. It is necessary to meet in the library to view the plans for discussion, but discussion in the Helensburgh Room is not welcome, and the group sit at the far end the balcony, by the lift.

Karen Brabender suggested that the chairman might approach the head librarian to see if the use of a room would possible.

#### 4. Proposed Erection of Kennels (ref: 08/02181/DET) [at Colgrain]

The Planning Group had not taken action on this, but had left it to the chairman to support the views of the Green belt Group, as he suggested. However, the applicant was unhappy because he had previously received a letter from the secretary telling him that the proposed kennels were not within HCC's area, yet HCC had seemingly objected nonetheless. Nigel wrote to explain

- that there had been an error and that it was not outwith our area,
- that he had not actually objected, but commented
- that, in any case, HCC was entitled to act on any application which

has been commented on by the community or is in the interests of the community.

The Planning Group does not have a copy of the secretary's original letter, but does have the letter of explanation the chairman sent in reply to to Robert Hay, the architect who is dealing with this application. There is also a copy of the letter of objection lodged by Helensburgh Green Belt Group, should any one like to see the correspondence.

Perhaps there should be more thought about making comments without stating support or objection. This has caused concern before and is not considered helpful by the planning department nor the applicants.

#### 5. Clydeview Home (ref: 09/00479/CONNAC)

The Planning Group received a letter from Dunbritton Housing Association regarding its involvement in the proposed demolition of the former Clydeview Care Home. The Association is working in partnership with CrossReach, the Church of Scotland, and intends to provide 'a purpose built progressive care building for the benefit of older people living within the community'.

The Association is anxious to discuss its proposals with HCC and the Planning Group. To that end, the Planning Group will visit its offices in Dumbarton to look at the plans.

In addition, information was passed on from Nigel Millar about a phone call he had received from the architect involved in the project. Mr Jim O'Neill, of Austin Smith Lord, wishes to speak to HCC and also meet those living next to Clydeview.

In a subsequent phone call to the Planning Group, he expressed his wish to attend the next HCC Council meeting in May and suggested he invite the neighbours of the site to come and listen to his presentation.

When Nigel returns from holiday, Mr O'Neill will contact him, to seek endorsement for this and to arrange this visit.

APPENDIX III  
(See separate sheet.)