

HELENSBURGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Helensburgh – Be Better : Be Excellent”

Minutes of a Meeting of the Helensburgh Community Council Meeting Thursday 28th September 2008

Present: Sonja Aitken, Karen Brabender, Ian Fraser, Marion Gillies, James Gorie, Alastair Macbeth, Compton MacGill, Findlay McQuarrie, Nigel Millar, Jim Milligan, Stewart Noble, Maggie Sheen, David Sinclair and John White.

Councillors: Gary Mulvaney.

Helensburgh Advertiser: Fiona Howard.

The Public: One member.

Apologies: Vivienne Dance, Ronnie Finnigan, Catriona Malan, Ellen Morton, Andrew Nisbet, Al Reay and Kathleen Siddle.

Chair: Nigel Millar.

Topic	Minute	Decision / Action
1. Welcome	The Chair welcomed those present.	
2. Capital Works	Councillor Mulvaney updated the meeting on the awards for capital grants among the main town in Argyll and Bute. The Council have decided to invest in a five year programme:- £2.4m in Rothesay; £6.5m in Campbeltown; £6.7m in Helensburgh (on the esplanade and public realm, but not Kidston Park); £0.9m in Oban (plus from 2012 £6.0m from the roads budget on the development road). As the works in Helensburgh do not involve land acquisition or external funding it is likely that they will be able to start sooner than some of the other projects. The HCC thanked both the Partnership and the 10 H&L Councillors on a job well done.	The situation was noted .
3. Public Session	Neil Walden (of Victoria Road) raised three issues:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The lack of notices advertising the meetings of the Community Council, though he did welcome them on the notice board in Colquhoun Square and the Municipal Buildings.• There was no need for the Community Council to	It was agreed to invite Street Link and back Chat to a future meeting of the Community Council to advise them on youth.

Topic	Minute	Decision / Action
	<p>be involved with the distribution of water in Kirkmichael during the recent water crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of facilities for young people in the town. After a discussion dealing primarily with the third topic Street Link (operated by Dunbritton HA and ACHA) and Backchat were identified as organisations providing activities for youth. The HCC had a priority to involve young adults in the life of the town and this would remain. 	
<p>4. Community Safety Partnership</p>	<p>Robert Cowper of A&BC spoke about the Community Safety Partnership. Its function is to co-ordinate the work of the local authority and other agencies both within Helensburgh and throughout the whole of Argyll and Bute.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a Strategic Community Safety Forum which meets quarterly and takes an overview of the policy and statutory obligations. Additionally in each area there is a Community Safety Forum which deals with matters more locally along with the partner organisations. Community safety is considered under three thematic heads:- vulnerable persons, environment and anti-social behaviour. The aim is to prevent, failing which to divert perpetrators into positive activity failing which to enforce. <p>The Chair thanked him. Contact details for Robert Cowper Part of Corporate Services at Scotcourt Households Telephone 01 436 658 831</p>	
<p>5. Minutes of Previous Meetings</p>	<p>The minutes of 30th October were considered. Proposed for approval Stewart Noble; seconded Alastair Macbeth.</p>	<p>The Minutes of 30th October were approved.</p>
<p>6. Matters Arising</p>	<p>6.1 Local Plan The Local Authority accepted the recommendation of the Reporters on 6th November. This means that there is not space allocated behind the Victoria Hall for a possible future community centre and an open space of football pitch size is to be retained on the site adjacent to the old Clyde Street School.</p> <p>6.2 Helensburgh Partnership A consultation <i>Planning for Real</i> exercise is to be held in connection with the proposed development of the pier site based on retail, residential and recreation uses. Major stakeholders have given their views and now residents are being asked how they wish to see this all - important site being developed. Possible development scenarios will be shown Thursday 4 December Victoria Halls 6-9PM</p>	<p>The position was noted.</p> <p>Members were urged to attend and to bring family and friends with them</p>

Topic	Minute	Decision / Action
	<p>Wednesday 5 December Victoria Halls 2-5PM Friday 6 December West Kirk 10AM-2PM</p>	
7. Local issues	7.1 Hospital Bus	The position was noted .
	<p>Marion Gillies reported on the proposed bus service to the Royal Alexandra Hospital. The initial proposal is for a bus to run from Colquhoun Square via Luss, Balloch, Vale of Leven Hospital, Bonhill, Dumbarton, Milton, Erskine Bridge, Glasgow Airport and Paisley town centre. This is felt to produce an unacceptably prologued journey which will ensure its failure to attract patronage. A letter on behalf of the Community Council has been sent.</p>	
	7.2 Community Service	It was agreed to invite Bill Freeland to talk to a future meeting of the Community Council on Community Service.
	<p>Alastair Machete drew attention to the possibility that offenders on Community Service might be profitably deployed on maintenance work on the footpath network around Helensburgh.</p>	
	7.3 Loss of Water	It was agreed to invite Scottish Water to consider whether there was sufficient reserves available in the system.
	<p>The recent loss of water in the town on two occasions was discussed. It was indicated that there is thought to be available about 15 hours supply, provided the public do not increase their usage. Scottish Water were apparently unaware of the area served by their system, eg Rhu, Kirkmichael.</p>	
	7.4 East Bay	The position was noted .
	<p>There is to be a meeting between interested parties about the reinstatement to be carried out after the completion of the works by Scottish Water.</p>	
	7.5 Shop Local	
	<p>The ongoing shop local campaign in the press was noted. In the discussion that followed, some points were made:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The letter in the Helensburgh Advertiser exemplifies the extreme contrasts which are inevitable in this debate. • For any success peoples' core shopping must be captured which Helensburgh is ill equipped to do. • It is necessary to establish a mind set of <i>think local</i>. • Huntly has a rewards scheme to encourage folk to shop locally. 	
8. Review of Community Councils	<p>Argyll and Bute Council are undertaking a review of community councils in their area (see Appendix I for the document). It involves proposals for an amalgamation of a number of community councils and a deferment of the spring elections until completion of the review. It is of concern that no comments have been sought from the community councils themselves.</p>	The position was noted .

Topic	Minute	Decision / Action
9. Town Maintenance	There will be a meeting with Alan Kerr, the person responsible for street maintenance in the Helensburgh Area. Reporting of defects may be made through RALPH operated by City of Glasgow Council on its own and neighbouring councils behalf.	The position was noted .
10. Planning	Marion Gillies reported, see Appendix II for the full details of her report.	The position was noted .
11. Statutory Plans	Alastair Macbeth reported, see Appendix III for the full details of his report.	The report was noted and it was agreed to express concern as recommended.
12. Finance	The Treasurer reported that current there the position was currently confused due to the amount of the grant from the Local Authority being incorrect and the number disbursements for expenses being processed.	
13. Next Meeting	The date of the next meeting will be held on Thursday 18 th December at 19.00 in the Victoria Halls.	

APPENDIX I

Argyll and Bute Council
Executive

Executive

Corporate Services

20 November 2007

Review of Scheme of Community Councils

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report invites the Council to pass a resolution which would have the effect of postponing Community Council elections from April 2009 until September 2009.
- 1.2 The Executive on 16 October 2008:-
1. Agreed a review of the Community Council Scheme be undertaken.
 2. Agreed a short life group comprising the Leader, Depute Leader and Area Chairs be set up to take the review forward and report to the Executive.
 3. Noted that the Council may require to pass a resolution to amend the constitutions of Community Councils to extend their lifespan which would have the effect of postponing the elections due to take place in April 2009.

2 Recommendation

In order to facilitate a Review of the Argyll and Bute Scheme of Community Councils, that the Council suspends the provision in the current Scheme of Community Councils and thereby in the Constitutions of Community Councils which requires elections to community councils to take place in April 2009

(It is anticipated that the new scheme would provide for these elections to be held in September 2009)

3 Detail

- 3.1 The last review of the Scheme of Community Councils in Argyll & Bute was undertaken in 2004 and implemented in April 2005. The next ordinary elections are due to take place in April 2009. There are a number of drivers for this review -

- The Scheme defines Community Council areas, and in 2005 their boundaries were made co-terminous

with existing polling district boundaries and a “near fit” towards the then ward boundaries. In 2006 there was a review of polling districts, as a result of which there were a considerable number of alterations to boundaries. These need to be brought back into line with the ‘new’ polling districts. Ward boundaries since 2007 are quite different, and the Assoc of Community Councils was advised before the 2007 elections that the new ward boundaries would see a need to review the Community Council Scheme.

- The scheme also sets out the constitutional arrangements for community councils. Issues and experience over the last few years suggests that improvements can be made.
- The Council is developing its Community Planning framework and is developing a Community Planning Community Engagement Strategy
- Scottish Government initiatives see a further developed role for community Councils and it is understood Government advise will be issued around the beginning of the new year.

Democratic, Representative and Accountability Issues

- 3.2 The existing Scheme allows for 56 Community Councils in Argyll and Bute. Of these, 26 are further split into sub-areas, meaning that there is a potential for 121 elections in the event of all sub-areas etc being contested. In 2005, however, there were only 20 contests. Only 82 of the 466 available seats were filled through contested elections, the remainder being either unfilled, or filled unopposed. By elections in community council areas do not always attract sufficient candidates, sometimes with no competition and sometimes with seats left vacant. Turnouts are generally small. This opens the door to accusations of Community Councils with no democratic mandate or representative accountability. It is essential that communities themselves and the Council and other bodies have confidence that Community Councils are representative of their communities.
- 3.2 The other major change since 2005 which affected Community Councils was the introduction of multi-member local authority Wards. A Member may now have several Community Council areas within his/her Ward and it is very difficult in such circumstances to attend every Community Council meeting and to build up a good working relationship with them all.
- 3.2 The Council’s relationship with Community Councils has been a fragmented one characterised by issues of consistency in the relations between this Council and Community Councils and current arrangements do not help Members of this Council in sustaining a constructive link with Community Councils.

Community Engagement and Community Planning

- 3.3 The Council is in the process of drawing up a Community Engagement Strategy. Local Community Planning is a developing feature of Community Planning in Argyll and Bute. Both of these issues have major implications for how the Council does business. The current Area Committees may well have a different, but vital role to play from that which they currently fulfil. Community Councils may also have a significant part to play and in doing so it is more important than ever that there is confidence that the Community Councils truly reflect the views of the communities which they serve.

It is possible to imagine a model of community engagement and local community planning with fewer community councils, respected by this Council as well as by those who live in them, where community councils (and others) in each of the Council’s four areas come together in one (or more than one depending on local circumstances) forum(s) with the local Area Committee.

Looking Forward

- 3.4 The purpose of this review is to create a strategy for community councils which is sustainable, with community councils engaged by this Council to play an enhanced role in helping the Council and CP partners shape the delivery of local services. This is a new emphasis on the development of effective partnerships, a better and more creative engagement with community councils for the future of their communities. In democratic terms the status quo is unsustainable. Fewer, but larger, Community Councils may be better positioned to make a more effective contribution.
- 3.5 Part of sustaining this development may well come from the Council. Fewer Community Councils can be better supported financially through a larger administrative grant. The development of a Community Engagement Strategy carries with it the need to develop the capacity of organisations to contribute and this applies equally to community councils, including eg. provision of training.

4 Natural Communities

- 4.1 When the Executive decided to proceed with the review of the Community Council scheme reference was made to start the geographic aspects of the review by reference to “natural communities”.

This is not unfamiliar territory for the Council. During the process of the Boundary Review leading up to the 2007 multi member ward elections, the Council produced a number of papers for the Boundary Commission including a paper

which concentrated on community focus explaining how communities in Argyll and Bute are structured.

The paper noted the highest level communities as –

- Mid Argyll and Kintyre, with Islay, Jura and Colonsay
- Oban and Lorn, with Mull, Tiree and Coll
- Bute and the Cowal peninsula
- Helensburgh and Lomond

4.2 Within each of these areas, communities were perceived to aggregate as follows

Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands

1. Campbeltown; and the south and mid Kintyre villages to a line drawn from a point between Tayinloan and Clachan on the west of the peninsula to a point near Grogport to the east, and including the island of Gigha, all looking to Campbeltown for services
2. Islay and Jura
3. Colonsay
4. Tarbert; and the area south to beyond Clachan on the west of the peninsula, south to near Grogport on the east, and northwest to include Kilberry, and north to include Erines, all looking to Tarbert for Services
5. Lochgilphead; and its hinterland including, in a clockwise direction, Ardferrn, Ford, Inveraray, Furnace, Minard, Ardrishaig, Ormsary, Tayvallich, looking to Lochgilphead for services.

Oban, Lorn, Mull, Tiree and Coll

1. Tiree and Coll
2. Mull
3. North Lorn including Lismore, looking to Oban for services
4. South Loch Etive villages (Dunbeg, Connel, Taynuilt) Awe, Dalmally, Glen Orchy, settlements on Loch Awe (both sides) down to north of Ford, all looking to Oban for services
5. Oban urban; and the hinterland south to Arduaine looking to Oban for services

Bute and Cowal

1. Bute
2. Dunoon urban; and including Kirn, Hunters Quay, and west to include Innellan
3. North and west Cowal – the area from Colintrave north to Cairndow, generally bounded by Loch Fyne to the west and Loch Striven to the south east, looking to Dunoon for services
4. East Cowal – the area from the summit of the Rest and be Thankful and lying to the west of Loch Long south through Lochgoilhead continuing to Sandbank and the Holy Loch, all looking to Dunoon for services

Helensburgh and Lomond

1. Cardross
2. Helensburgh urban; including, within it, Craigendorrnan, Colgrain, Kirkmichael, Churchill, Clyde Arran, Glade
3. Rhu, Shandon, Garelochhead, Rosneath Peninsula
4. Arrochar, Tarbet and west Loch Lomond side south to Arden

4.3 The review will examine these natural communities in terms of a future model for community councils. That does not mean that what is outlined above would be community councils but a workable proposal would be developed based on the principles of “natural communities”.

5 Way Forward

5.1 The intention is to develop options for discussion, and the consultation model envisages Area Chairs and Area Corporate Services Managers leading a consultation with their respective area committee members and representatives from current community councils, around boundaries. At the same time options around developing the constitutional and participative arrangements for community council will be developed and will take into account the

advice expected from the Governemnt around the early part of the year.

5.2 A possible timeline is –

Initial Consultation - Responses by end of March 2009

2nd Consultation (if required) – responses by end May 2009

Draft Scheme to Council – June 2009

Community Council Elections – September 2009

The Scottish Government guidance will need to be taken account of during the initial consultation period.

5.3 These issues have been discussed with the Leader, Depute Leader and the Area Chairs. In view of the scope of the exercise it is necessary to extend postpone the elections in April 2009 until September 2009

Nigel Stewart
Director of Corporate Services
10 November 2008

APPENDIX II HCC PLANNING GROUP REPORT

1. Lomond School – Retrospective planning permission to convert an area of green garden ground to hard paved playground. Neighbours contacted HCC asking for support. They informed us that the loss of the garden, including 3 trees, contravened the conditions under which a previous planning application had been granted to build accommodation for an Art Department. Further, the neighbours say that the extension of the school playground has had a serious detrimental environmental impact on their properties and also on their right to have quiet enjoyment of their houses and gardens.

2. Disused Petrol Station on East Clyde Street. A resident contacted HCC to ask (a) who owned the disused petrol station site (b) would the owner consider letting the land and (c) how ABC would view a planning application to convert it into a car wash. We contacted Esso, the owner of the petrol station land who said the site was being sold and was well on its way through the necessary legal processes. Esso informed us that the buyers of the site wanted it for "commercial purposes".

3. Scottish Water Development – Update. A meeting of representatives of the Residents, ABC Councillors and Executive, Scottish Water and HCC is to take place regarding the reinstatement of the East Bay Esplanade Area. Suggestions will be considered including returning the Area exactly as it was before work started, surfacing the stony ramp that runs down the west end of the site and improving the appearance of the boundaries of the Scottish Water property at the top of Sinclair Street.

4. Proposed Vodafone Base Station outside the County Hotel. No response has been received so far from Vodafone regarding the HCC survey of opinion in the area and no planning permission for the proposed mast has been submitted to ABC. HCC has been contacted by a South Colgrain Group who would strongly object to any further telephone masts in Colgrain. HCC sent the Group a copy of our letter to Vodafone and the accompanying survey and promised to advise them of any further news about the proposed mast.

5. Erection of Conservatory at 29 Queen Street. HCC made a site visit and looked at the plans in the public library. The style of the conservatory and the materials used seem completely in keeping with the style and materials used in the original bungalow. HCC decided not to take any action unless

neighbours or the owners ask for our support.

6. Erection of 1½ storey extension to side and rear of Dwelling House at 12 West Argyll Street.

HCC made a site visit and looked at the plans in the public library. While the style of the proposed extension and the materials used are a good match with the existing dwelling house, it is of a considerable size and the appearance of the house would be considerably altered.

HCC is concerned on 3 counts: (a) some work seems to have started on the other side (the east side) of the house (b) yet again, the plans have no mention of energy efficient measures (c) the extension extends into the neighbouring garden to the north taking up a narrow slice of it. The information in the library shows that this neighbour has received neighbour notification of the plans.

For more details of the work of the Planning Group, contact Catriona or Kathleen

December 2008

APPENDIX III HCC Statutory Plans Group

LOCAL PLAN

1. The A&B Council's main decision-making on the draft Local Plan was taken on 6th November based on the recommendations of the Reporters who heard the Public Local Inquiry. Although there will be statutory procedures to carry out before the Local Plan comes into effect, the November 6th meeting was substantially determinant.
2. As previously agreed, the HCC and the three other co-operating groups (HSG, Civic Soc. and HGBG) jointly set up an editorial committee to prepare a bulletin to go to every household in the town reporting on those decisions. That has been completed and will be circulated as an insert into the December edition of the Community Advertiser magazine. The bulletin concentrates on key decisions on the Local Plan affecting Helensburgh and its setting.
3. After certain further formal stages (including a consultation on modifications) the Local Plan is likely to become effective early in 2009. It is already a 'material consideration' regarding planning applications prior to that.
4. The next significant stage will be the SPP 21 Review of the Green Belt which will require assessment of all aspects of settlements in the Green Belt. (i.e. it should not just be about housing.) We expect main work on it to start in 2009.

ALSO...

5. The Scottish Government seems to be looking into a modified approach to planning in the run-up to completion of the new Planning Act. We understand that regulations about development plans are due to go before the Scottish Parliament before Christmas.

National bodies have been consulted. These include the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Scottish Water, Architecture and Design Scotland, Historic Scotland, Transport Scotland, the Scottish Property Federation, Homes for Scotland, the Scottish Society for Directors of Planning and the Royal Town Planning Institute.

Local communities and bodies representing them have seemingly not been included. **It is proposed** that HCC expresses concern to Scottish Ministers at this exclusion.

Alastair Macbeth
December 2008