

HELENSBURGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL



BE BETTER: BE EXCELLENT

Minutes of a Meeting of the Helensburgh Community Council Thursday 30 October 2008

Present: Nigel Millar (Chair), Ronnie Finnigan, Ian Fraser, James Gorie, Alastair Macbeth, Maggie Sheen, Richard Trail, James Milligan, Karen Brabender, Marion Gillies, Stewart Noble, Kathleen Siddle

Councillors: Ellen Morton, Andrew Nisbet, James Robb, Gary Mulvaney

Helensburgh Advertiser: Steve McElroy

Apologies: Catriona Malan, David Sinclair, Gordon Tran, Findlay McQuarrie, Councillor Dance, Councillor Reay

1. Welcome: The Chair welcomed those present. Chair extended sympathy to Catriona Malan whose father died last night. Chair congratulated Ronnie Finnigan on his recent engagement to be married.

2. Public Session: No members of the public present.

- Chair presented the idea of a "Buy Local" Campaign which would tie in with the work of the Helensburgh Partnership. Most appropriate time would be end November / beginning December. [Members agreed suggestion.](#)
- Chair reported that Partnership Bid for just over £7million had been approved by Area Committee. [A&BC's decision on which area to receive ABC funds set for 27 November.](#)
- [Area Committee to decide on 6 November](#) whether or not to accept Local Plan Recommendations made by Scottish Government Reporters.

One important part of this is regard to the designation of the Helensburgh Pierhead area. If it was designated along with the Town Centre, the site could then be used for retail, residential and recreation - the 3Rs.

Helensburgh Partnership is holding a consultation exercise with stakeholders on 31 October on the 3 Rs with includes 3 representatives of HCC attending. This will be followed in about a month with consultation sessions with the people of the town.

Partnership had accepted that the "3E's" should be part of their philosophy - Excellence in Architectural Design, Site Landscape and Local Landscape.

3. Dominic Swann, ABC Environmental Warden made a presentation about ABC Food Recycling Waste Scheme.

- Helensburgh to pilot scheme in ABC.
- Each household to be offered a small green bin with a lockable lid and an internal caddy to collect all food waste including meat and fish bones, vegetable and fruit peel etc.
- Contents of small green bin to be collected weekly by ABC.
- Households to be regularly supplied with biodegradable bags for inside caddies.
- Remaining household waste and contents of blue recycling bins to be collected at 2 weekly intervals.

Environmental Warden answered questions and was thanked for his helpful presentation.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting & Matters Arising: The Minutes of the Meeting on 25 September were approved with the following amendments:

(a) Para 5 - Public Session, final bullet point. JDH have a period of 5 years to begin development of site. Making a start would give them unlimited time to complete work.

(b) Appendix 2, para 6. Planning permission was refused at Site Inspection.

- Councillor Nisbet reported that a programme of gardening work had started at the Cardross Crematorium. Mr and Mrs Chalmers are satisfied with the improving situation.
- KS expressed disappointment at the lack of follow-up letters in the Helensburgh Advertiser after the article of 2 weeks ago

describing David Williams' plan to convert the Old Hermitage Academy Sports Hall into a Leisure Centre. David has now contacted a [qualified structural engineer who is keen to make an assessment of the existing Sports Hall.](#)

- SN brought us up-to-date with the Publicly Available Toilets scheme which has both merits and drawbacks. [ABC would need to be involved with organising and funding the scheme.](#)

5. Local Issues:

- JG suggested Helensburgh should be recognised as a Gateway Town (to the National Park). He suggested HCC should organise a meeting with representatives of the Partnership, the Tourist Association, and ABC. [Chair said he already had a meeting arranged with Martin Varley, the new Head of Friends of Loch Lomond and would raise the matter at the meeting.](#)

6. HCC Design Statement (Draft):

- Copies had been distributed to members along with the Minutes of the last Meeting.
- Chair / KS comments included:
 - (a) the design legacy of the excellent architects of the past continue to define Helensburgh today,
 - (b) this is a practical statement for use by anyone involved in the planning process,
 - (c) excellent design attracts people to the town - to visit and to live here and to spend their money here.
- Discussion and suggestions included (a) architectural design should be varied, perhaps drawing inspiration from different countries not just with a West of Scotland flavour, (b) modern economics make it more difficult for developers to produce different designs in the same estate, (c) the Design Statement should dovetail with the emerging Landscape Statement and bring the two documents together.

Members were thanked for their suggestions which would be incorporated into the final agreed version.

7. Planning Group Report:

- IF said that John Dickie Homes were trying to vary Condition 16. He believes JDH are now trying to get out of their obligation to

build affordable homes. IF will continue to update us on this situation.

- ABC are considering a number of options to make the old Hermitage Academy building more safe from intruders before it is demolished.
- KS presented the Planning Group Report (See Appendix 1). KS was asked to go ahead with meeting with ABC, Scottish Water and Neighbours if the East Bay Esplanade Area.

8. Statutory Plans Group Report: Presented by AM. See Appendix 2.

9. Treasurer's Report: Presented by SN. No change since last month.

10. DONM: 27 November at 19.00 in the Jubilee Room, Victoria Halls.

APPENDIX 1 - PLANNING GROUP REPORT - OCTOBER '08

1. **16 Millig Street - Update.** The application to demolish all but the front face of the existing building and erect 8 flatted dwellings was the subject of a PAN 41 Hearing on 7 October '08. The application was approved.

2. **3 Campbell Drive - Update.** The application to build 2 detached dwelling houses on this site is going before the Area Committee at their meeting on 4 November. HCC supported surrounding residents who opposed this application on the grounds that the ratio of the proposed houses in relation to their gardens would be significantly larger than the neighbouring houses.

No mention of the level of carbon emissions appear in the plans. However, Argyll and Bute Planning Department recommend that the application be approved.

3. **Woodland to the east of Cumberland Avenue and Castle Woods - Update.** The ABC Access Officer is actively engaged in progressing access issues with both of these woodland areas. It seems that slow progress is down to a mixture of the necessary bureaucratic process and also delaying tactics on behalf of the owners of the woodlands.

4. **9 West Lennox Drive - Update.** ABC has arranged a site meeting has for the afternoon of 4 November to discuss the proposed alteration and extension at this address. As reported at the HCC September meeting, the architect and developer have matched both the style and the materials of the existing house in the proposed development. No neighbouring residents have been in touch with HCC with views of support or opposition to the proposal but HCC Planning Group wrote a letter of concern regarding the fact that no mention of carbon emissions appear in the plans.

5. **Old Hermitage Academy Site - Update.** David Williams and HCC were disappointed when there was no follow-up to the article about the young architect's plans for the Leisure Centre on this site in the Helensburgh Advertiser of 2 weeks ago. David has now made contact with a qualified structural engineer who is interested in his ideas and has offered to make an assessment of the existing Sports Hall.

6. Trees at Colgrain Railway Embankment. A group of residents contacted HCC about the cutting down of trees on the railway embankment at Colgrain. Network Rail explained that this necessary work is being carried out across Scotland. Trees can obscure signals and leaves on the line can cause "run ons". The current work is going as far as Upper Helensburgh Railway Station. HCC pointed out that Helensburgh is proud of its green town credentials and trees make a huge contribution to this. In the interests of good public relations in the future, the town in general should be informed of such plans and a much wider neighbour notification should be carried out. The PR Manager for Network Rail agreed.

7. 3 Duchess Drive. Proposal to erect a single storey extension to the side of this dwelling house. HCC made a site visit and looked at the plans in the library. An effort is being made to match both the style of the existing house and the materials used in the proposed extension (roof tiles, dry dash render and UPVC windows painted white). HCC decision is to get involved with this application only if contacted by neighbours.

8. Scottish Water - Update.

(a) Craigendoran Pierhead Area. Work progressing well in spite of poor weather conditions. A neighbour has been in touch with HCC to ask how the site itself and the sea wall would be left by Scottish Water. Enquiries produced a great deal of information including that the pierhead area would be levelled and surfaced with level 1 hard core. The seawall will be reinstated as it was before the Scottish Water project and it will also be strengthened. According to the resident, the wall has never complied with the original planning permission. HCC will investigate this further.

(b) East Clyde Street Area. Road had to be closed, as after work started it was discovered that bigger pipes than expected needed to be laid. Bigger machinery was therefore necessary and this encroaches on both sides of the road. Scottish Water has tried to plan this work with the minimum disturbance to road users and the neighbouring businesses. They held a meeting with the business owners and are limiting road closures to 40m stretches. The work might not be completed until January '09.

9. Proposed Vodafone Base Station. Vodafone, through their agent Mono, has consulted with HCC regarding a proposed radio base station outside the County Hotel on East Clyde Street. HCC sought opinions from the 3 Community Groups in the area and also from the Manager of the

County Hotel. HCC has written to Mono reflecting the gathered opinions which included (a) the need to see the proposed design before making a decision, (b) "if it had to go somewhere then this is probably the least intrusive option", (c) there are already 3 mobile telephone masts in this area and that's enough and (d) no concern.

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

HCC Statutory Plans Group – Report to HCC 30.10.08

The Statutory Plans Group has not had reason to meet since the September HCC since most matters are in hand. They are :

LOCAL PLAN

1. The A&B Council's main decision-making on the draft Local Plan will be 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 will be substantially determinant.

2. The proposals to the Council by the Planning Officers will be posted on the A&BC website on 31st October:

:<http://www.argyllbute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListMeetings.asp?CId=257&Year=2008>

The Statutory Plans Group will then assess key proposals affecting Helensburgh.

3. Following the A&B Council's decisions, a Bulletin will be prepared by the four local community groups, led by HCC. As you know, an Editorial Committee has already had that task delegated to it and a preliminary outline of the 2-page Bulletin's structure has been prepared. NFM represents the HCC on the Editorial Committee.

4. The Bulletin will be circulated to all Helensburgh households as an insert to the Community Advertiser Magazine. Funding for that has already been earmarked by the four groups.

ALSO . . .

5. The Helensburgh Landscape Statement has gone through extensive preparatory work, including assessment by the Scottish Landscape Forum and Scottish Natural Heritage. It will be the first of its kind in Scotland.

6. Since two key statements about landscape are proposed for the new A&B Council Local Plan, the Helensburgh Landscape Statement can be completed quickly after the Local Plan has been approved.

AND . . .

7 An important Scottish Government Planning Advice Note (number 83) has recently been released. This is on Master Planning. It has immediate relevance to Helensburgh. The Statutory Plans Group will assess it.

Alastair Macbeth