

Islay Community Council

Draft Minute of meeting held on 17th November 2022, at 6.30pm, Service Point, Bowmore

1. **Present** - Community Councillors: Islay McEachern (IM) - Convener; Garry MacLean (GM)- Vice Convener; Jim Porteous(JP) - Secretary; Scott Currie (SC)- Minute Secretary; Billy Sinclair(BS); Chris Abell(CA); Sandy Taylor(ST); Frazer Campbell(FWC);

Argyll & Bute Councillors: Dougie McFadzean

Police: Sergeant Wendy Maginnis

BBC Alba: Andreas Wolff

Apologies: Robin Currie; Colin Fraser;

2. **Declarations of interest:** None

3. Inaugural Meeting and Sub-group Appointments

The minutes of the inaugural meeting on 26th October along with the Constitution, Standing Orders, Best Practice Agreement had all been circulated and adopted.

New members were welcomed and returning ones thanked.

The following subgroups and lead appointments were discussed and approved

Ferry Committee – the constitution was circulated and up to 4 ICC members can be on it. The meeting agreed the constitution was fit for purpose, unanimously. Chair Islay McEachern proposed by JP, seconded by ST due to his ongoing expertise, vice chair nomination Garry MacLean nominated by IM, seconded by JP chosen by acclaim; Secretary – nominated Jim Porteous by GM, seconded by BS. Fourth member is Frazer Campbell nominated by GM seconded by CA.

Community Action Plan (CAP) – There was discussion about whether or not this should be a formal subgroup. SCDC Consultants have been appointed for a year – they did the SID plan. It was agreed that this is a very big and important bit of work. CA said the emphasis should be on practical achievable outcomes, plus how to get people’s opinions. Funds have been promised. First step to meet with consultants and decide if a subgroup of ICC is to be steering group, at which point we can decide if it needs to be a formal subgroup.

Action – CA and ST to take this forward.

Islay & Jura Transport Group – This used to exist but came to halt during Covid. It covers public transport and airport – Loganair, local buses, Citylink, Patient travel etc. Meetings were difficult as they were held during the day to fit with Loganair. It was noted that Citylink are not accepting any bookings for 2023 as yet and Cllr McFadzean agreed to take this up with them.

Action – Cllr McFadzean to contact Citylink

Action - JP to circulate its constitution and all to consider if it should be revived.

MAKI Planning meeting – It was agreed to make CA and ST the formal representatives on this.

Roads – CA appointed as lead representative

Carbon Neutral Islands – BS is the lead on this – GM is also on the working party.

Planning – BS is the lead.

Social Media – FWC is the lead.

4. Police Report: Sergeant Maginnis asked what the ICC wants from the police report - she will get some old reports for reference. Main cause of complaints is the theft of diesel and home heating oil, plus young drivers, though these do not tend to be reported formally to the police. A few ASBOs have been handed down to drivers. Some speeding lorry drivers to be brought to attention of hauliers. Reduction of speed limits from 30 to 20 is being looked at by A & B Council – also flashing speed signs. **Action - Cllr McFadzean** will take this forward. Roadside littering and rural crime on farms also an issue.

5. Councillor Currie report: Not in attendance, no report

6. Councillor McFadzean report: – There have been a large number of urgent issues causing a very high workload for all councillors. These include street lighting, with many fixes completed (lot of re-cabling) and more to do; the ongoing Royal Mail disruption; roads are a massive issue; patient transport; not getting air source heating fitted in time for winter; ferries; healthcare and social care issues (the island has only 0.6 social workers now); Gortonvogie are having problems recruiting and are losing staff. The council's Budget gap next year is £7.2M. There is a health initiative underway with Jean MacLellan doing research into current practice and requirements.

7. Councillor Redman report: Not in attendance as thought it would be a hybrid meeting, but sent a report by e-mail (appended). The major issue has been Royal Mail where he has pointed out the serious effects this is having and received a couple of unsatisfactory responses from senior management; the issue of guaranteed refrigerated transport for culled deer has been taken up with Calmac; BT Openreach work has caused disruption to phone lines, cash machines and card readers in shops; roads and street lighting have also been tackled.

8. Treasurer's report: Not present, but an E-mail report – a couple of cheques signed – for £48 and £12 to ICCI. **Amount in bank to be confirmed.**

9. ICC Ferry Committee report : Jim Porteous circulated the draft minutes of the informal ferry committee meeting plus a report highlighting the major current issues (appended). By far the biggest issue is the loss of space due to non take-up of block booked commercial traffic, or very late cancellations and Calmac have been constantly pushed on this. It was felt that the timetable for winter is not fit for purpose. There is no contingency if either of

the old boats break down in Feb/March. Crew hours limit Finlaggan to 3 sailings per day on the single boat service. Calmac's old computer system is now 30 years old.

There was a lengthy discussion and explanation of the historic "how we got here" – a fundamental problem is that Calmac's contract with Transport Scotland is very poor, recording and reporting on the wrong measures. JP stated that the new Island Connectivity Plan will have a community

Jenni Minto MSP has already been approached to set up a "summit" meeting with Calmac, Transport Scotland, the Transport Minister and the ferry committee. This is proving difficult due to crowded diaries.

David MacBrayne are looking for non exec Directors – A & B councillors would be compromised, but ferry committee people would be most suitable. Deadline is 2nd December.

10. Planning reports:

Gearach Farm (ili Distillery) decision is next Wednesday – A&BC has reported that approval is being recommended. Glenegeedale brewery/distillery approved (Islay Ales). It was noted that a possible future maltings in Whinn Park is on the cards.

11. Roads

Noted that Convenor IM is now a road contractor for A & B (declaration of interest). Cllr McFadzean stated that the Airport runway replacement would be done in 2023. The old surface will be given to the council and the machines can be used to work on the roads when finished with the runway. Several years ago, A&BC reported that £17M would be needed to bring Islay roads up to standard – funding allocation is population based with no allowance for being on an island, or for industry, except for major logging operations, which may take place to supply Bunnahabhain. The levelling up bid for Islay for road improvement is still pending.

Action : Cllr McFadzean to check with A&BC what is the minimum logging requirement to qualify for extra funding.

Littering – more signage and bins required but A & B not obliging.

Action Cllr McFadzean to chase this up.

12. Carbon Neutral Islands:

Notes of the meeting of 7th November have been circulated.

13. Royal Mail Delivery Service

It was noted that Royal Mail have applied to stop Saturday deliveries and that no casual staff are being recruited for Christmas (UK wide). All of the elected reps have been inundated and are hassling hard – parachuted posties are struggling to find places. Amazon parcels

get delivered as Royal Mail have to refund Amazon for non deliveries. No fix probable in the next few months as it is a very difficult problem. IM expressed ICC's thanks to our elected representatives for their efforts and it was recommended that everyone experiencing problems should complain as strongly as possible.

14. Correspondence:

Request to take action about litter – handled under roads report above.

Port Ellen road closure for up to 5 days from 18th November due to Scottish Water emergency involving raw sewerage. Port Charlotte Steet to remain open for ferries etc,

15. AOCB:

Andreas wishes to be added to the list of national media.

16. Date/Venue for next meeting

15th December 6:30. This will be a hybrid meeting to allow people to join remotely.

Action : GM to set up zoom etc.

APPENDED REPORTS

ICC Ferry Committee – Report from Jim Porteous

ICCFC - last regular meetings 28th Sep (formal) + 3rd Nov (informal), minutes circulated and on website. Next meeting TBA, after re-constitution.

Operational - 9th/10th Oct - Finlaggan breakdown. 11th Oct - Heb Isles breakdown

Timetables/Capacity - 'Short Life Working Group' meeting attended with Calmac and TS by IM/JP 2nd Nov. (MSP Jenni Minto's office represented). CV block booking meters increased by 31% since previous winter, with no extra vessel capacity, whilst hauliers' actual utilisation of block booked space down by 11% - loss of 1000's of car spaces. Winter timetable, particularly single vessel periods, not fit for purpose with unprecedented number of travellers unable to obtain bookings. Only one Saturday sailing ex Islay. Discussions to continue - see also ICCFC comments in current/recent Oban Times and in 22 Oct Ileach.

At the recent ICCFC meeting, DM agreed to speak with MSP JM re IM's proposal for a 'round table' discussion on Islay involving all key players and decision makers.

A shortfall in Finlaggan's ability to accommodate whisky tankers has developed and is currently under discussion between the SWA, Hauliers and Calmac - the FC are hopeful of a positive outcome.

A variety of measures proposed by ICCFC over many months to improve overall capacity have not been actioned. Calmac/TS say they are still looking at possibility of obtaining

'Pentalina' to add to the fleet and provide a freight service. CalMac has committed to providing an update on this within one month. For the Summer timetable, CalMac has agreed to discuss block bookings with ICCFC before acceptance - expected to be late Jan/early Feb.

We have repeatedly stressed that the application of existing block booking rules must be addressed, given that scope is provided for tighter management. It is not acceptable to continue to sustain a loss of 1000's of car spaces at peak travel times, costing the community £m's. We have also asked for the 24 hours' notice of cancellation rule to be reviewed to help allow the freed-up space to have a realistic chance of being used.

DM has been asked by a local resident to consider a petition highlighting the very poor ferry service being received by Islay and Jura.

New Ferries - IM, FC and JP attended a 'Reference Group' meeting chaired by CMAL on 18th Oct, primarily to discuss Port Ellen Terminal Development. Refinements were presented of the favoured options. A 4-5 months delay to the program has been predicted to further develop these options - likely start time for construction is mid-2025, meaning that the port is unlikely to be able to handle full vessel vehicle capacities when the new ships are delivered. ICCFC will continue to monitor closely and if necessary, will argue for extra measures.

Regarding Port Askaig, A&BC's head of infrastructure, Jim Smith, said that discussions with hauliers are taking place and A&BC is confident that capacity will be met and they will have a solution in place for new vessel entering service.

Next Reference Group meeting is likely to be on Thu 12th Jan with a Public Stake Holder meeting following on Thu 19th Jan at PE Ramsay Hall.

Ferries Community Board - Next full meeting 2nd December at Port Glasgow. Will discuss: Project Neptune, Islands Connectivity Plan (including Community Needs Assessment), Progress re new ferries and also the 2 Ferguson's ferries, Resilience, Communications, Timetables, Dry docking, Search for new tonnage, Ar Turas, Calmac T&C's, CHFS and other matters. Presentations from Calmac, CMAL and TS.

REPORT FROM CHRIS ABELL

MAKI COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP MEETING 02 11 2022

The agenda and all the reports considered by the meeting can be found at <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=430&MIId=14878&Ver=4>

Brief comments on 4 items which I felt were of particular interest

Agenda item 4(a) Police Scotland Update (report pack pages 13 – 14)

Police Scotland in Association with the Alzheimer Society are launching a **dementia safeguarding tag** at the end of November. The tag is a small round disk like a keyfob which can be worn by vulnerable people. This disk contains a chip which when held next to a mobile phone transfers a

message to the phone giving the wearer's name, address and contact details of carers. This is intended to help with the not uncommon scenario of confused vulnerable patients found wandering who cannot give their details and will allow carers to be swiftly contacted. *This seems like a simple and very good idea. A short and very clear report.*

Agenda item 5 CEBR – The socio-economic impact of Calmac Ferries (report pack pages 27 – 100)

A report by the Centre for Economic and Business Research commissioned by CALMAC and the Ferries Community Board. This is phase 2 of the full report and is quantitative economic analysis. Phase 1 of the report is available on the CalMac website and is qualitative analysis. Strikingly, both phase 1 and phase 2 reports acknowledge that the specific needs of island residents are different from those of freight and tourist and both acknowledge the specific difficulties experienced by island residents in meeting these needs because the current operating arrangements places them in direct competition for places on the ferries with other users. However there is no economic analysis whatsoever to quantify the economic cost to island residents of the present arrangements or acknowledgement that island residents are significantly disadvantaged by them compared to mainland residents. *I asked why there was no discussion of this within the report and the answer was that “no economic modelling was carried out on these circumstances” – which I presume means that it was not commissioned or thought important. I asked for what reason the reports had been commissioned and whether the specific difficulties for island residents that it acknowledged would be addressed. The answer was that they would be used as part of the ongoing planning process for future development of the service. The representative from CalMac specifically commented that operating arrangements including changing the operating system to give priority to island residents was a matter for Transport Scotland and that CalMac were not able to make any changes in operating practices to give island residents any priority. These are very long and complex reports and I ended up thinking that they are very uncritical of the present arrangements and hardly likely to provoke or promote any changes which will benefit island residents. The bottom line is, as always, the supposed total positive benefits of the ferry system – since the actual proportion of the total journeys undertaken by islanders is very small their specific needs and difficulties are simply not taken into consideration. A ferry card for island residents giving priority booking over a small proportion of total journeys is simple in concept and not beyond the wit of man to organise. Why is it consistently excluded even from consideration?*

Agenda item 9 – ALIENERGY presentation by Dr. Linda Mitchell, Manager (this presentation is promised to be available on the MAKI Community Planning Group website pages – address above).

A sobering, clear and very helpful presentation. Alienergy operates a comprehensive advice and referral system for Argyll residents. There are a whole number of practical and helpful things which they can do to help residents in fuel poverty and financial difficulties – including access to financial help for some residents. *I was really impressed by what they can offer and their organisation. I thoroughly recommend having a look at this presentation assuming that it appears on the website. Meanwhile the Alienergy Website is <https://www.alienergy.org.uk/>. This is a more corporate introduction to what they do. Although it does contain information on their advice and support services for residents in financial difficulties it is not as clear and urgent as the presentation. It struck me that the advice and support services are what folk are really going to need in the coming winter.*

Agenda item 10 (b) MAYDS – Mid Argyll Youth Development Services (report pack pages 115 – 122)

An organisation about which I knew nothing and which is doing a lot of work on Islay. A clear and concise report which I recommend reading for anyone who is as ignorant as myself of the work being done

Report from Cllr Redman

I have written to Royal Mail's management about the shocking delays in our postal service on the Island of Islay and Jura. I have also spoken on the phone to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transportation at Argyll and Bute Council about this matter and I was told there would be a united response from the council. I have attached Royal Mail's management's response.

I have been inundated with emails, phone calls and social media messages from my justifiable concerned constituents. I personally have not had any deliveries to my house in over two to three weeks and there are some households that have been waiting close to a month for letters and parcels.

Local residents that I have spoken to feel that unfair pressure is being put on them to pick up parcels from the Royal Mail sorting office on Islay in Port Ellen. For many this is a long and expensive drive and they are also being asked to pick up other people's post. There are supposed to be strict rules about who is allowed to handle the post and in my opinion standards are slipping across the board.

Hospital appointments are hard to come by right now and I have heard from local residents who have missed appointments due to late deliveries of appointment notification letters. Royal Mail's central management should not be allowed to hide behind the recent strikes as cover for local disruptions to our post. Postmen on the Island need proper support and training. There are far too few postmen and there is a huge turnover of staff as the work load for the small number of staff is just too much.

Royal Mail is supposed to be a universal service but they are not fit for purpose right now. It's more comparable to the level of service that you would receive in a Third World country.

I'm calling on the central management of Royal Mail to get their act together and fix the post problems on Islay and Jura now. Royal Mail will only get busier as we head towards Christmas.

Our local front line postal workers work hard and deliver our post in all weathers but they can only work with the tools they have. Unfortunately their out of touch central management have let them down and are not giving our posties the means they need to do their job properly.

I support our local postmen and women 100% it's their off-Island management that I have concerns about

I have written a letter to Cal Mac regarding a previous arrangement that Highland Game Dealers had on the Islay-Kennacraig ferry. Previously, the company had a guaranteed weekly slot on the ferry to remove deer that have been culled – it is of utmost importance that this is done in a timely manner due to strict rules that are in place regarding how long the carcasses can be stored in a refrigerated van.

Following the introduction of the winter timetable they have been told that they can no longer have a weekly booking on the ferry. This is extremely detrimental to the economy on the island and I would strongly urge you to rectify this situation without delay.

I have also written a letter to BT Openreach who have been carrying out works on Islay for the past 2 weeks and during this time there has been major disruption to the island. Along

with a number of households being left without broadband there has been an issue with card payment machines in local shops for the duration of the works. Due to this some shops can only accept cash which is causing the local ATMs to run out of money. This is having a detrimental effect on local businesses.

I have asked to be advised as to when this fault is likely to be fixed? I have urged them to find a solution as soon as possible.

I have been in contact with our roads and street lighting department about getting the street lighting fixed in Port Ellen, Bowmore and Portnahven. I have also made a complaint to the roads management about the very long wait my constituents have had to endure to get the faulty lights sorted. To add to the confusion many of my constituent were getting emails stating lights had been fixed even though they had not actually been fixed.

I have delt with quite a few benefits inquires and directed many constituents to the appropriate departments.

I have also been dealing with association housing problems that have been brought to my attention by my constituents. These include outside lights, guttering, gates, windows and damp issues.

Kind regards Cllr Alastair Redman - Kintyre and the Island ward

(reposes from Royal Mail appended below)

2 November 2022



Cllr Alastair Redman
Argyll and Bute Council
Kilmory
Lochgilphead
Argyll
PA31 8RT

Royal Mail Headquarters
185 Farringdon Road
London
EC1A 1AA

Dear Cllr Redman

I am writing to update you in relation to mail deliveries on the Isle of Islay which is located in your Kintyre and the Islands Ward. Delivering a reliable service is our top priority, and I am very sorry that your constituents have cause for concern.

Following receipt of your concerns, I contacted the Port Ellen Customer Operations Manager. He confirmed Port Ellen Delivery Office has recently been experiencing resourcing issues which are much higher than we would normally expect. In addition, the current industrial action being taken by members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) has led to some disruption to mail deliveries to addresses on the Isle of Islay, which I fully appreciate is incredibly frustrating. I apologise for the inconvenience this has caused your constituent.

The Port Ellen Delivery Office management team have been attempting to secure new employees; however, this has proven very difficult with the strong employment situation on the Isle of Islay. The Manager would be grateful if you are able to assist in any manner with promoting the positions available. Further details can be found on jobs.royalmailgroup.com.

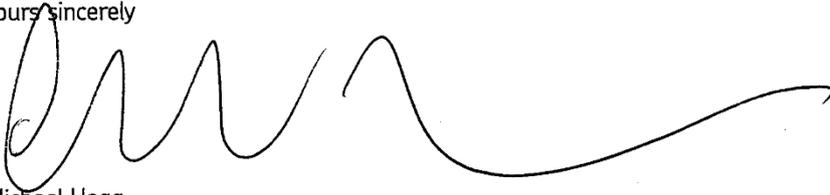
The Customer Operations Manager has confirmed that mail deliveries to addresses on Islay are being rotated to maximise their frequency; however, further planned industrial action will affect this. Staff from other delivery offices are being transferred when necessary to provide support and additional support has been requested through our flexible resourcing partners.

I would like to reassure you that the local team are focused on returning to a six day a week service on the Isle of Islay. This remains their priority. The Manager has advised me that we have not asked your constituents to collect their mail; however, during any period of disruption to services, your constituents can temporarily collect mail should they be expecting an urgent mail item; however, the appropriate identification will be necessary to do so.

Cont...

I hope my reply is helpful. As always if I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large initial 'M' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke ending in a small flourish.

Michael Hogg
Senior Public Affairs Manager

3 November 2022



Your reference:
Our reference: 1-8642272101

Cllr Alastair Redman
Argyll and Bute Council
Kilmory
LOCHGILPHEAD
PA31 8RT

Royal Mail Headquarters
185 Farringdon Road
London
EC1A 1AA

Dear Cllr Redman

Further to my letter dated 2 November, the Port Ellen Delivery Office management have advised me that they would be happy to consider part-time applications for the available positions, including from those who have applied in the past.

As previously mentioned, further details can be found on jobs.royalmailgroup.com or details of applicants can be sent directly to me at public.affairs@royalmail.com and I will forward their details to our recruitment department.

I hope my reply is helpful. As always if I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Hogg', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Hogg
Senior Public Affairs Manager

4 November 2022



Cllr Alastair Redman
Argyll and Bute Council
Kilmory
LOCHGILPHEAD
PA31 8RT

Royal Mail Headquarters
185 Farringdon Road
London
EC1A 1AA

Dear Cllr Redman

Further to my letter dated 3 November I am writing to advise that the advert for roles in Port Ellen Delivery Office has been updated and now includes a welcome bonus. More details can be found on www.royalmail.com.

Your help advertising these roles will be appreciated.

I hope this update is helpful.

Yours sincerely



David Gold
Director of External Affairs and Policy