

Islay Community Council

Draft Minute of meeting held on 20 April 2022, via Zoom video conferencing, 6.30pm

1. Present

Community Councillors: Islay McEachern - Chair; Garry MacLean - Vice Chair; Jim Porteous - Secretary; Calum Murray - Minute Secretary; Colin Fraser - Treasurer; Niall Colthart; Billy Sinclair.

Argyll & Bute Councillors: Robin Currie; Alastair Redman.

Public: Alyson MacGillivray, Sandy Neil (Oban Times)

Apologies: Frazer Campbell; Ann Horn; Mike Senior; Larah MacKay.

2. Declarations of interest

None

3. Minutes and matters arising

These were adopted with no amendments.

Proposed: Garry MacLean; Seconded: Jim Porteous

Matters arising:

Alastair Redman that though his report last month stated that he had no correspondence in support of A&B's headship proposals, a constituent contacted him to say one letter of support had been sent to him. He was happy to correct the record.

It was agreed that all other matters arising would be dealt with at the appropriate agenda item.

4. Police report

None

5. Councillor Currie report:

Cllr Currie outlined his Council activities, relevant to Islay since the last meeting.

Individual issues, including planning advice; levelling up bid meetings on Islay and Jura.

6. Councillor Horn report:

None

7. Councillor Redman's report:

Cllr Redman outlined his Council activities, relevant to Islay, over the last month.

His time has been spent on a number of issues related to Royal Mail deliveries on the island: staffing; housing for new staff; late delivery of mail which caused missed hospital appointments and VAT problems for fishermen; special delivery timetables not being adhered to.

Flooding problem in Port Wemyss; street lighting; gates and fences; inflation/ red diesel costs for farmers etc.

8. Treasurer's report:

Colin Fraser reported that the balance was the same as last month, having had no invoices to pay.

Colin asked whether Garry MacLean should be invoicing for his Zoom costs but Garry said he didn't think this necessary.

9. ICC Ferry Committee:

Jim Porteous reported on the work of the ferry committee:

Timetables - 'short life working group' meeting attended by Islay McEachern and Jim Porteous 30 March to discuss a range of options to improve capacity via the timetable and other measures. Most suggestions put forward by the FC have been rejected but a few are still on the table, eg incentivise unpopular sailings, change vessels' deployment between PE and PA, add extra sailing legs. Attendees include Calmac and Transport Scotland management who have acknowledged that there is an issue. Compared with 2021, 45% more lorry block bookings have been accepted by Calmac and we are aware of an overall increase in demand of at least 25%. Simply offering us the same timetables as in 2021 for Summer and Winter 2022 will not suffice.

New Ferries - news of contract signing welcome. Islay McEachern and Jim Porteous still have concerns regarding the readiness of port modification work. CMAL has recently advised that completion of marshalling space works at PE may not be until 2026. Islay McEachern and Jim Porteous are seeking an urgent meeting to insist that the full capacity of the new ships can be handled at the ports when delivered - otherwise a 3rd vessel may need to be retained until all the necessary work is complete.

We are awaiting an update from A&BC regarding the options and timelines for shoreside work at PA to enable handling of the full capacity of the new ships.

At the meeting Mull Community Council's notion that Islay's two new ferries should be replaced by four smaller ones was dismissed.

10. Planning reports:

Calum Murray informed the meeting about planning applications made since the last meeting: amendment to planning application reducing size of dwelling house at Bunnahabhain; roof renovation at West End Cottage, Port Charlotte - listed building consent required; erection of 20 metre telecommunication mast at Kildalton; upgrade of existing telecommunication mast at Lossit Farm.

Port Ellen playing fields plans have been approved.

Niall Colthart sought information about a rumoured fish farm on Gigha. Robin Currie was able to tell him that there were exploratory talks but not even at a pre-planning stage.

11. Education:

Garry MacLean has written to A&B on behalf of the community council endorsing the views of Islay's Parent Councils.

He has had a formal acknowledgment of his letter.

Alyson MacGillivray said that Parent Councils were still campaigning and would be approaching the new intake of councillors after the election.

12. Roads:

Garry MacLean outlined the progress being made with various projects on the island: Imeravale surfacing finished; work continuing in Bowmore - patience required; new signage soon.

Traffic congestion in Bowmore is creating problems; Robin Currie has made a funding bid for additional parking in Port Ellen and Bowmore.

Colin Fraser raised the issue of how the road material funding allocation adversely affects Islay. The additional cost of transporting materials to Islay are taken directly from the island's budget. Cllr Currie pointed out that the MAKI allocation, unlike all other areas of A&B, is divided into three, the islands having to cover their own transportation costs.

There was general agreement that the allocation formula is unfair and needs to be changed, possibly

using the Islands regulations.

ACTION POINT: Write to Cllr Currie (copy to Cllr Redman) supporting his efforts to change the funding allocation formula.

Niall Colthart advised the meeting that the runways at the airport are to be resurfaced, the aggregate being brought in by freight.

He suggested that this could provide an opportunity for A&B to share the plant and workforce thus reducing road making costs.

13. Islay Community Action Plan

It was agreed to hold a meeting, exclusively about this on 3 May 2022.

ACTION POINT: Islay McEachern to inform absent members.

14. Correspondence

Correspondence had been received re: levelling up workshop; Jubilee beacons; campervan parking; road markings; MAKI planning.

Niall Colthart will attend the MAKI meeting if he can rearrange a work meeting.

15. AOCB:

A. Billy Sinclair advised the meeting that work on the water improvements in Broomhill, Bowmore had been halted. It is alleged that a landowner has refused permission for pipes to cross some land.

ACTION POINT: Cllrs Currie and Redman to be contacted to clarify.

B. Sandy Neil (Oban Times) sought views about proposals to close and sell some of Islay's churches. Members expressed their disapproval of this potential loss of important community assets.

ACTION POINT: Church of Scotland and members of the community to be contacted to clarify.

16. Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 18 May at 6.30 via Zoom.