

Isle of Arran Community Council

MINUTES

Of meeting held at Brodick Hall on, 31st July 2012

Those present:

John Inglis Chair, Harry Davidson Treasurer, William Calderwood Secretary, John Lamont , Liz Evans, Brenda Stewart, Richard McMasters Jim Henderson, Willie Kelso, Cllr John Bruce, Cllr A. Gurney.

Also present were: Mr Fergus Tickell and Mr Rod Potts from Northern Energy Developments Ltd, Mr Rob Soutar and Mr Cameron Maxwell from the Forestry Commission, Mr J Miller and Mr J Michel from NAC planning, Jenny Lyons - Arran Banner, 2 PC's from Strathclyde Police, Jim Nichols - Arran CVS. And 89 members of the public.

Apologies for absence

Steph Hill, Gus Macleod – NAC, K. Clark MP, K.Gibson MSP, Cllr John Hunter, Sgt Mackay, Strathclyde Police.

The Chair opened the meeting by explaining that this was the Regular Meeting of the Community Council, but, as the proposed Biomass Plant would be discussed, the meeting had been moved to Brodick Hall in anticipation of considerable public interest. He added that new Recycling arrangements would also be part of the agenda.

These 2 items were taken before the remainder of the agenda.

12/7/1 Recycling

John McCauley, NAC Waste Services gave a short presentation outlining the main changes to the recycling arrangements on Arran. In the short term, these were mainly around arrangements for glass, mixed plastics and mirrors. A leaflet was distributed highlighting the main components.

It was expected that consultation would take place in the future as part of the 'Zero Waste – Scotland strategy to test the feasibility of recycling waste on Arran.

12/7/2 Proposed Biomass Plant.

A précis of questions and responses in respect of the information given to the CC is [appended](#) to this Minute as a continuation to Minute 12/7/2

Thanks extended to Jon Hollingworth for providing PA and his support for the evening.

12/7/3 Minutes of meeting – 26th June 2012:

The Minutes of the meeting held 30th May 2012 were adopted as a true record

And can be viewed at <http://www.arrancommunitycouncil.org.uk/records.php>

Proposed Willie Kelso

Seconded

Harry Davidson

12/7/4 Matters Arising

12/7/4/1 Corrie Public Toilets

It was reported that no further reply had been received.

12/7/4/2 Phone mast - Lamlash

Secretary had received information from Kenneth Gibson MSP that he had contacted the UK Government regarding the mobile phone coverage and also its impact on the emergency services. The response indicated the UK Gov't are working with operators to create infrastructure maps and needs. The project aims to be delivered starting 2013 and completed by 2015.

Liz Evans noted the poor reception at the North end of Arran

12/7/5 Police matters

There were no matters of concern to report this month.

12/7/6 Correspondence and Communications Report

Bill Calderwood spoke to the Communications report he had previously circulated to members. Key points were:

- Secretary had followed up with CC Liaison officer at NAC regarding EGM and constitution. NAC confirm they have the revised document. Following NAC internal discussion of the proposed changes, it was anticipated that a response would follow in a few weeks, and that the August CC meeting could include a formal acceptance. A Press notice would be arranged, to ensure compliance with the rules. NAC would also publish details of forthcoming elections in local press etc.
- “Contact us” notes:
A message had been received from a Lamlash resident in connection with the potential for a Community Hydro scheme. Further details are still to be discussed.
- Updates had been received from Kenneth Gibson MSP regarding:
Mull 5 Day saver ferry fares. This confirmed details (as published in the press) that this was initially a “Trial scheme”, in support of the local ferry committee request to encourage visitors to stay longer on the island. He had also invited feedback on the “Summer Service” for Arran.
An update to confirm Consulting engineers have been appointed to progress the design and other elements of the new link-span.
- Further follow up with NAC planning dept. had taken place regarding Japanese Knotweed at Springbank. The applicant had now submitted their response, which was available on the NAC website.
- Secretary had received a message from National Network of Community Councils that it was winding up due to lack of support. Secretary had also followed up with Scottish Government regarding the “Short-Life Working Group” who was considering the future of CC’s. They were scheduled to have their last meeting in July but no date has yet been set. CC would be updated when information available.
- A significant update of the CC website was now complete, with some changes to structure to accommodate Archives etc.
- A letter had been received giving notice of ACVS AGM on the 15th August at 7:30pm. To be held at CVS offices in Lamlash.

12/7/7 Treasurers Report

Harry Davidson reported that he had submitted the grant request to NAC for a Community Development grant as suggested by Cllr Bruce, but the Area Committee had not yet met to consider the application.

Councillors were reminded to submit their expenses claims before the end of September.

12/7/8 Roads

A meeting had been held between the Chairman, Steph Hills, Bill Calderwood and Mr Bodie and Mr Campbell from NAC Infrastructure and design to discuss progress on the Roads programme. A joint strategy to support the NAC funding applications (which are expected to be presented to the Scottish Government Minister responsible for Infrastructure) was agreed. Several areas were identified where the CC had information which would complement the application, and this had now been provided to NAC. It was expected that the draft plan would be available for NAC review mid-July. An update is awaited.

Willie Kelso expressed concern relating to the standard of work by contractors engaged on cutting the roadside verges.

It was agreed the Secretary would write to Gus Macleod regarding the quality of hedge and grass cutting.

A note had also been received from a resident of Corriegills, raising safety concerns related to the lack of hedge maintenance. The local NAC manager had advised route was on schedule for work to be completed. The stretch of road had since been partially attended too.

12/7/9 AOCB

12/7/9/1 Brodick – Corrie Multi User Trail

Harry Davidson reported on a recent meeting he had attended giving an update on the feasibility study conducted in relation to a Multi User Trail between Brodick and Corrie.

12/7/9/2 Machrie Moor Road

The Secretary was requested to write to NAC regarding provision of signage for coaches relating to Machrie Moor Road. He was also requested to enquire of Stagecoach if their operations used this route.

12/7/9/3 Wind farm

Brenda Stewart advised that she had spoken to Mr Bone to ascertain the current plan regarding wind turbines. This followed receipt of information that funding had been agreed for a Sub-Sea Cable from Kintyre to Hunterston.

It was expected that an application will be made late 2012/ early 2013 for 3 or 4 turbines.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 28th August 2012.

12/7/2 continuation Précis of questions and responses at Arran Community Council Meeting held 31st July 2012 relating to the Biomass Proposal.

John Inglis explained the purpose of the meeting was to find out more information relating to the proposed plant, and to provide the opportunity to ask questions.

A document had been previously circulated that referred to discussions that took place in the Community Council circa 2006/7, when, at that time, the CC had looked favourably towards the proposal that had been presented.

John introduced Fergus Tickell (FT) Northern Energy and Rob Soutar (RS) (Forestry Commission) with colleague Cameron Maxwell (CM) Forestry Commission.

The document, containing an aerial view of the proposed location had been distributed.

FT explained the technology and the source of fuel. The earlier (2006/7) CC discussions had deemed the choice of site suitable at that time.

Biomass was widely used worldwide. (21% Sweden, 18%Finland and 60% of renewables in the EU were biomass.

Efficiency 23%. (C/F Drax 35%, Long Gannet less than this). There would be a high load factor, generating electricity 90% of the time (C/F 30% from a wind farm).

3 similar projects were on-going in Scotland. Killin- Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, Sandbank and Lochgilphead.

The Arran project would involve the use of sustainable forestry and create a local market for the wood. The Statutory consultees (SNH and SEPA) had not objected so far. NAC had concluded no Environmental Impact Assessment was necessary.

FT proposed that he request the NAC Planning Department to defer determination of the proposal for a few months to allow for more discussion in the community. This discussion could be facilitated by the Community Council.

He added that Arran was a brilliant location for a project of this type, and it was essential to assess the views of all parties.

Rob Soutar offered to return to the CC to talk about the Forestry Commission strategy.

He outlined how the Forestry Commission were hoping to revolutionise the economics of forestry on Arran. The FC policy was to facilitate renewable energy and reduce timber traffic on public roads.

The timber on Arran was good quality, with 50-60% of the timber going for sawn logs and construction timber. In addition, pulp wood was sent to Irvine for paper, Chips to Cumnock for kitchens and Fuel Wood to UPH Irvine for combined heat and power (CHP). However, there was a high cost to transport the timber off the Island by barge, and for smaller timber, the costs were punitive.

The proposed project would give a local market on Arran, with little travel from the forest roadside to the plant. Timber production was increasing by 20% more than now.

The site was in the densest part of the forest, and transport would be by forest roads, not public roads. The site would maximise the efficiency of haulage.

The FC was mandated to develop the National Forest Estate.

Cameron Maxwell spoke of the policy to increase renewable energy by 100% by 2030. The Scottish Government policy prefers biomass where the Demand = Supply for CHP or heat.

A SG decision on the policy for wider renewables (wind-farms or biomass) is expected within the next 6 weeks.

Questions (Précis of Q and A's (Some were in the form of statements))

1. Would there be an environmental impact assessment. ? Scope of same
FT Would wish to draw together the issues- transport, environment, ecological and tourism. Scope could be developed by the CC.
2. Emissions – ash and particles?
FT Clean wood goes in (not contaminated wood). Scotland has stricter emission controls to England or Europe. It is not the case that chemicals would be emitted.
3. Community payments / Benefits
FT In the other projects, the communities have been more interested in developing the sustainable use of peat rather than direct payments to the community. Job creation had been felt more important. Community payments / Benefits could be discussed, but this had not been done on the other projects.
4. What size of particles? Particle size PM10 and PM 2.5 are both linked to health damage. Given concerns for Lamlash School, and Lamlash and Whiting Bay Primary Schools, Electrostatic Precipitation Filters should be fitted rather than those proposed.
FT Aware that PM10 and PM 2.5 levels are very important, and have modelled this. No levels would exceed air quality standards. Proposal includes a Multicyclone Filter, but prepared to discuss an ESP.
5. How do 1993 air standards compare with 2012 Swedish standards?
(No response)
6. Where does highly toxic waste go?
FT There is no highly toxic waste. In Finland and Sweden, waste is used as an agricultural fertiliser. It is non-toxic.
7. Heard waste was not suitable for agricultural use?
FT Crops like wheat and maize respond well to biomass ash.
8. Captured Radio Active Waste?
FT No evidence use of ash leads to toxicity in the food chain. A study in Sweden revealed no evidence of timber gathering particles. (It was in the soil – not the vegetation).
9. What about our burning timber in our chimneys?
FT This is an inefficient way. Pollution from power stations is controlled through ESP's.
10. Where are the other projects?
FT Sandbank (2008), Lochgilphead (2008) and Killin (2011). New grid connections are not available until 2014.
11. How close are they to Schools?
FT Range 300m – 800m.
12. Would you live 300m away?
FT Yes. Have done so in Sweden.
13. Will CC employ experts to form objective analysis? Will experts be hired by CC?
JI No.
FT SEPA have a remit to interpret and audit.
14. Will we get a discount on our electricity on Arran?

- FT No
15. The chimney stack will be ugly. Invisibility?
FT Hidden from all views by topography. Forest will screen. The chimney is 25m tall, and will be painted the same colour as the building.
16. Have you considered other sites? Proximity to village?
FT We did look at other sites. This one has the most benefits.
17. What will happen to the heat if not needed?
FT It would be dissipated into the air, but would prefer to use it productively.
18. Effect of heat on climate?
FT None at all. No different to going through a poly-tunnel.
19. Tourism. What response have you had from Visit Arran?
FT Haven't discussed with Visit Arran.
20. How does it benefit me and the kids?
FT Provision of jobs. Wider economic benefits through diversification.
21. Height of Plume?
FT Plumes are water vapour. Depends on conditions.
22. How will project be funded?
FT From investors. (No grants, no public money)
23. Noise levels. Will it be heard from houses?
FT There is a detailed Noise Level report available.
24. I'm a visitor. Who is your employer?
FT Northern Energy.
25. Who will operate the plant?
FT Our preference is to seek investors to fund the project.
26. Is it open to local investors?
FT Yes.

Conclusion,

FT thanked everyone, and spoke of the need for more engagement to discuss issues.

John Inglis thanked everyone for their attendance this evening.

A response had been received from K. Clark MP regarding the Biomass proposal apologising for absence tonight, but offering assistance if we required support following the meeting.

The Community Council discussion later agreed to establish a sub group to explore all aspects of the application.

It was further agreed to respond to NAC requesting an extension of time to allow this activity.