

# Isle of Arran Community Council

## MINUTES OF MEETING Held at Ormidale Pavilion on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2015

**Those present:** Ricky McMaster (Chair), Bill Calderwood (Secretary), Jim Henderson (Treasurer), Hazel Gardiner, Daniel Bowles, John Lamont, Neil Arthur, Peter McMullen, and Peter Randell,

Also present were, Arran Banner, Cllr John Bruce, Gus MacLeod (NAC Local officer) and three members of the public.

**15/08/1 Welcome / Apologies:** Colin Mackenzie, Liz Evans, Kenneth Gibson MSP

**15/08/2 Minutes of 28<sup>th</sup> July Meeting –**

**Amendments requested to 3.6 Triathlon:** Suitability of Arran as a venue was meant to reflect with suitable resources.

**7.7 Broadband:** Exchanges to house and correct rate to show 0.5mbs not 5.

And under ferries it should have read EGM not AGM. Public not closed session.

With these changes Minutes of meeting proposed by Neil Arthur and seconded by Peter Randell.

The minutes can be viewed at <http://www.arrancommunitycouncil.org.uk/records.php> following the meeting.

**15/08/3 Matters Arising:**

**15/08/3/1 Boundaries:**

- Chair confirmed if everyone had read draft which had been circulated prior to meeting.
- Statements received to support the approach being suggested for the single ward included following comments

### **Ward Boundaries Proposals - Safeguarding an Arran voice**

- **If Arran does not succeed in gaining single-ward status, I would advocate the retention of the current 4 member Ardrossan and Arran Ward.**
- Fundamentally disagree with the surprising suggestions, emanating from some quarters, that Arran can be adequately represented **exclusively** by 3 mainland councillors if the present Ardrossan and Arran Ward (Ward 5) is reduced from 4 to 3 elected members. (As highlighted in The Banner's last edition.)
- **Remote handling** of issues which directly impact on Arran creates a distinct disadvantage for the island when it comes to council **decision-making**.
- I offer the following scenarios based on the present electoral set-up.
- **On Planning** -
  - The current position exemplifies the need for Arran representation on the Planning Committee and Planning Review Body. These are **decision-making** committees of the council.
  - The 3 mainland Ward councillors do not involve themselves in these committees – consequently they play no significant part in deliberating on planning applications and **crucially** they have no vote.
  - By choosing to participate on the Planning Committee, your current Arran based councillor has been able to specifically support, promote and secure approval for

several Arran planning applications which were otherwise recommended for refusal by planning officers.

- In short, I was able to persuade the committee through deliberation and debate that certain Arran applications should indeed be approved.
- Achieving approval for an Arran planning application can generate jobs in the community and help to secure continued business viability.
- (I am prepared to provide specific examples but ACC should know these already through its own role in providing input to the Planning process.)

- **On Licensing –**

- The Licensing Board and Licensing Committee are also NAC **decision-making** committees, dealing with government legislation on alcohol matters, taxi-licensing and the registration of private landlords.
- Again, the 3 mainland Ward councillors do not involve themselves in these committees.
- The **decision-making** process is similar to that of the Planning committee but with, and perhaps more often, committee members seeking the views of the local member. Opinions on Arran matters are usually courteously deferred to the Arran based councillor whose local knowledge is valued.
- In emphasising the role of an Arran-based councillor on these important council committees, I do so to highlight the strong case for a continued **meaningful** Arran presence within NAC.
- No disrespect to my mainland Ward colleagues is intended.

- As elected members we chose which council committees we would like to be considered to sit on. I fully recognise their ward, community and individual employment commitments and, of course, support a joint approach to trying to resolve many common ward issues.

However, the practicalities of the current 4 member ward arrangement necessarily have had to be considered when an island constitutes part of that ward. Given the travel logistics, it is indeed no surprise, and it is mutually acknowledged that an Arran-based councillor will be concerned with more Arran related matters while his 3 mainland colleagues deal with the bulk of Ardrossan business. This has been the situation and reality for many years.

(Note that Cabinet members\* have additional North Ayrshire-wide responsibilities according to their individual portfolios.)

- With the NAC proposals being submitted to the Scottish LGBC now available for public consultation I am obliged to comment on the challenge being made to Arran's current ward status.
- **If the plan to reduce the Ardrossan and Arran ward from 4 to 3 councillors becomes a fait accompli, I fear Arran will lose its distinctive island-based representative under our STV electoral system.**

Given the way the system operates, in all probability the 3 councillors elected for an Ardrossan and Arran ward in May 2017 will all be mainland based and the island will, given the logistics, and no fault accruing to the mainland councillors, be only **nominally** represented.

**I do not believe that if that situation prevails, local democracy or local empowerment, will be judged a winner.**

- \*Cabinet members
- There are currently 2 Ardrossan and Arran Ward councillors on NAC's Cabinet  
Cllr John Bruce, portfolio holder for Education Attainment and Achievement.  
Cllr Tony Gurney, portfolio holder for Place.

- Note, for obvious reasons, that an Arran-based elected member if appointed could be expected to fulfil attendance at the following external bodies (allowing for no clashes in council diaries).

Arran Access Trust

Brodick Country Park Joint Committee

Brodick Pier Redevelopment Group – now replaced by the Arran Economic Group

Clyde Ferry Users Group

Isle of Arran Ferry Committee,

Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)

Ayrshire Joint Planning Services Steering Group

### **Comments from the meeting attendees:**

- PR – We rely heavily on local councillor. Councillors are advertised as being here on regular basis. One has not been here for over a year. Without local we would lose local democratic process.
- NA – The future process doesn't work for Arran. There is no right for Arran to have a Councillor as stated in article from MSP in Banner. At meeting with Elma Murray stated an understanding with Arran CC member's position.
- 30/07 Meeting Action – Arran should seek to be a single island based councillor but disagreed that should go with Arran / West Kilbride / Fairlie.
- JL – Concerned regarding Kenny Gibson MSP stance and statement made in public without consultation. Need to determine where KG stands in the issue of Arrans requirements.
- WC was surprised re KG's position. NA would still like to see Arran going with West Kilbride. Our position is we will go back to NAC. Legislation has been set but time to amend words. Regulations state that rurality can be a reason to amend in exceptional circumstances.
- WC – Mr Mackay Islands MSP should be invited to Arran before the October deadline.
- DB – Need guarantee of an island representative. Population would have no representation 4000 for 1 representative. Only guarantee is to be a single ward. Not unreasonable to ask for 2. When compared with Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles they have ratios of 800:1. 3 would be 1300:1, in line with other island areas.
- The Rule may be departed from in areas of Geographical circumstances. Legislation can be changed. We should go for a single ward. Options of going with someone else should not even be considered at this stage.
- HG – In her community almost unanimously her constituents wanted a single Councillor. We must put argument that we have at least one representative living on Arran.
- RMcC – 2 Options, go to government to have one or more Councillors or go to Boundaries Commission to get this
- WC – There is a good argument for Arran to be a single ward. The current 4 or 3 member wards does not work.
- JL – Arran is a locality.
- RMcM – Should Arran be a single ward? Vote – AGREED unanimously.
- RMcM – who do we approach Boundaries Commission for 3 Councillors or S.G. for single Councillor.
- NA – MSP said that decision has already been made.
- WC – Next step: We would send to Director of Place and Chief Executive with Draft Paper. Then for SG Islands Minister deadlines 11/10 B Commission, 12/10 Minister.
- Boundaries Commission could grant a General Enquiry.
- DB – Would help to round Islands Minister re talking to SG Change the Legislation.
- ACC would submit to B Commission and NAC would submit to B Commission. We will not be submitting one response

- DB – We should ask NAC only to request single Councillor Ward.
- JL – boundaries Commission is logical 1<sup>st</sup> place to go to.
- Member of Public (Robert) – Needs letters from member of the public to write re: disenfranchisement as an electorate.
- NA – If we were to ask that then we need a summary of no more than A4 for people to support.
- WC – Banner could possibly run on-line survey after NAC meeting.
- R.McM – Write to Boundaries Commission with what we want.
- HG – Seek representation must be before 12/10/15.
- Members of Public Suggested that a letter goes in Banner.
- We should encourage individuals and village committees to write to B Commission. 2 stage letter now, petition later.
- HG – Our responsibility is to demystify what is going on.
- JL – We need 10 or 12 bullet points – you do 2 or 3 I'll do 5 or 6.
- PR – Is there intention to hold public meetings?
- Councillor Bruce – Derek M responsible for delivering the islands Bill. Could he be invited to Arran for a meeting? WC to invite – AGREED.
- NA – We have agreed to ask for a Single Ward (we don't need to discuss whether we have 1, 2 or 3 members). By our next meeting on 29/9 we will have more clarity and a possible draft to consider which consolidates the ACC position.
- WC – Legislation allows us to ask for 3. Does not allow us to ask for 2. Those in favour to simply request a Multi Member Ward. AGREED – unanimous for Multi Member Single Ward.
- WC re draft to be prepared. AGREED (WC to send to Chief Executive)

15/08/3/2 Resilience:

- Invite circulate to approx. 20 local participants from previous sessions to attend on the 27<sup>th</sup> and only one formal response has been received to indicate a low level of interest from their area. Due to the lack of support it was agreed to cancel the training. We are not sure where this leaves the local village activities as we had also requested that the local plans be made available to the ACVS as a central point of contact for emergency services in case of need. Again nothing has been submitted. It was agreed to contact ACCT for further direction.

15/08/3/3 Shoreline Protection:

- This was discussed at the meeting with NAC's Chief Exec and Director of Place. Their approach was confirmed as we understood that they cannot spend on land which is not in their ownership. NAC confirmed that they were prepared to support Lamlash village Association to develop plans in a similar manner to what has been provided to Brodick. Discussion on alternative approaches highlighted that if the Lamlash green were to be under the ownership of NAC then they would reconsider the situation. It was agreed that the village association should agree their preferred action and initially approach the current land owner to discuss options. The CC could support the local association in whichever approach they agree. A further visit from NAC manager took place at which an inspection of the "at risk area" was more than initially perceived by the local association. Action is back with the Association to advise their plans and any support they may request.
- DB – Lamlash Improvements have requested Arran Estates for a meeting. This has been agreed and no date fixed yet.
- WC – Brodick Improvements have had similar contact.

15/08/3/4 Broadband Roll-out.

- Message sent to HIE contact and follow up call with the project leader who will be in touch. We highlighted that many agencies involved were not all carrying consistent information and that we would appreciate a single point of contact. It was also mentioned that local businesses and residents had questions and the project leader accepts that we need to get a complete picture and will consider attending a meeting to explain the project deliverables. Update circulated to group and any questions to be forward to secretary r consolidation and respond to HIE.

15/08/3/5 Triathlon Event

- PR – Needs to be better coverage next year.
- NA – Would wish that all responsible bodies had been approached and procedures followed.

Cllr Bruce – NAC are consulting with applicant re: next year.

15/08/4 **Police Report:**

- No Report received. Officers had been called to attend emergency.

15/08/5 **Correspondence:**

- R McM – Lamlash PO closing at end of September – looking for other premises.
- WC to attend a Digital Engagement Session to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

15/08/6 **Reports from Sub-Committees**

15/08/6/1 **Ferries:**

- Jim Henderson had circulated his notes in advance of the meeting and the following were highlighted.
- ACC questions submitted to meeting and the responses were noted. These covered a range of topics including:
  - why no change to constitution had been discussed
  - Demand management for foot passengers as well as vehicles
  - General communications for disruptions etc.
  - Why were revised arrangements for handling cancelled sailing not more widely advertised?
  - Introduction of “Smart Ticketing”
  - An Advert had been placed at the Brodick ferry office and on the Community Noticeboard on the CI inviting applications from regular travellers for the position of the IT representative to the ferry Committee.
  - NA – This was considered insufficient notice for people to respond and asked why it had not been advertised in Press. This holds in contempt views expressed at the AGM.
  - Chair drew discussion to close as this was considered an FC matter.
  - Member of public unhappy at approach.

15/08/6/2 **Forestry:**

- NA spoke about paper circulated 11.08.15.
- Cllr Bruce confirmed slip at Machrie would require planning permission.

- HG – Noted that residents of Lochranza have private sewage arrangement and repairs to pipes from damage by inappropriate vehicle use could cost £50,000 per household. This would be 49 weeks a year for every year. HG was very concerned re: the amount of walking and cycling that goes on in Lochranza. Felt there should be a Lochranza resident on the committee.
- Liz E – had written to say concerns had been voiced that up to 22 timber lorries per week could be travelling through Pirnmill.
- JL – Queried if emergency slip roads would be created on the String Road.
- WC – the scope of the Work Group has increased since it started. We need to think about the whole island not just the slipway.
- The ACC should look at what is the best for the island in the long term.
- NA – Confirmed that request for C Cllr from all villages through which timber lorries would travel be invited to the meeting on Thursday.
- Gus McLeod – How sections of the route from Brodick and Lochranza would be covered in terms of finance.
- David Price – Working Group has acknowledged that this is an Island wide issue. We need to be able to say to FC that the right information is needed for the working group to make decisions.
- Meeting at Machrie Hall at 6pm on the 27th.
- NA – There is the need to open it up to Cllrs in other parts of the island where slips are planned.
- JL – If there is to be an Island Wide Timber extraction, North Ayrshire should be aware of the plan and its implications. This must involve the local authority.
- NA – Proposed a representative from each area.

#### **15/08/6/3 Elderly Forum**

- No meeting had taken place since last CC meeting.

#### **15/08/6/4 Community Engagement meeting:**

- Presentations received from LGBT group representative
- Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
- CPP Reports

#### **15/08/7 NAC Councillors report:**

- SPT subway system will be closed next year for subway work for 1 month.

#### **15/08/8 A.O.C.B**

- HG – Coast – Would Coast come to talk to CC to advise to their work. Agreed – November 24<sup>th</sup> meeting .
- JH – Coast have employed a new administrator who starts tomorrow.
- Gus McLeod – Road works at Claddach – proposal to be agreed for work to be carried out beginning of October through November. Meeting to be scheduled to discuss details.

**Date of the next meeting: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**Note: This meeting will follow the AGM.**