

**Isle of Arran Community Council**  
**Minutes of Meeting held 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**  
**Due to the current COVID19 restrictions, this meeting was held digitally via ZOOM**

Present: Bill Calderwood (Chair), Jim Henderson, Liz Evans, Frances Westwood, Julie Graham, Peter McMullen, Neil Arthur, John Lamont, Bob Haddow, Ricky McMaster, Cllr Billings,

Also present: Hugh Boag - Arran Banner, Jim Nichols - Minute Secretary

**1. Welcome / Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending this Digital Meeting.

Police and NAC had been invited to submit reports.

The Chair opened thanking all those whose contributions continue to provide essential services to our residents. Arran has been very fortunate to have so many groups, individuals and businesses who have worked to ensure our needs are catered for in the safest way. The work our medical services have provided and are planning to introduce was testament to their professional and positive attitude.

Apologies for absence were recorded from Sgt Douglas Robertson, Brodie Pearcey  
There were no Declarations of Interest.

**2. Minutes from Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 had been previously circulated.

Proposed John Lamont Seconded Frances Westwood

**3. Matters Arising**

- It was noted that the payment of the grant money in respect of the purchase of IT equipment had been received, and the equipment purchased. It is now in use.

**4. Police Report**

No report available.

**5. Correspondence**

Bill Calderwood reported correspondence including:

Messages received via "Contact-us" –

- Approach from mainland CC chair asking for ferry info. Provided and offered to meet.
- Individual asking for adult education classes, replied and direct them to various sources.

- NHS messages which were suspicious. It was confirmed a “phishing” attempt had been made to both Arran and Bute cc email addresses. Issue had been blocked.
- Message from Scottish Power to advise of a scoping notice for additional wind turbines at Tarbert. CC will be advised of further work if it proceeds.

Other correspondence:

- Various messages circulated covering Arran Recovery group questionnaire and results.
- Health updates circulated.
- Road closures notices circulated.
- Grant funding opportunity had been circulated, with disappointing response. Several members (W’Bay, Lochranza and Brodick) were willing to represent villages but no organisation had expressed an interest to take on the project for the Island. This may be a lost opportunity. ACVS will work with village groups.
- Message circulated to ask for support for Arran Youth Foundation grant application. The CC were pleased to hear the application was successful.
- Offer of Summer bedding plants from NAC circulated and many villages had now benefitted from this.
- Participative Budgeting opportunity related to Alcohol and Drugs programme had been circulated.
- Contact had been made by an NTS staff member with regards to potential laying off of staff by NTS. A letter of support to the retention jobs will be sent to NTS.

## **6. Reports from Sub-Committees**

### **6a Ferry Committee**

Bill Calderwood reported

- June meeting held via Zoom and minutes published. 2 further meetings had been held to discuss options and agree conditions being proposed for the resumption of travel in line with government regulations. Approved minutes had also been published.
- AFC have worked with their member groups representing, community, business, tourism, health leaders and third sector views, with the independent traveller representative and NAC elected member. This provided a complete cross section of the community, which was perhaps considered to be more comprehensive than social media or a single website.
- AFC participated in Arran Recovery groups discussions to form one voice for Arran.
- Priorities were agreed by all groups that essential services and supplies, infrastructure capacity, residents, non-essential supplies and non-resident demand in that order.
- Various meetings had taken place with CalMac management, Transport Scotland, North Ayrshire Council and Government Ministers responsible for economy and transport.
- Communications to community published on social media and local press.
- Timetables have been published to cover period up to 15<sup>th</sup> July.
- Booking had opened today covering a rolling 14 day period which will extend daily.

- This procedure had been agreed to allow residents an opportunity to book short term travel. The process will be monitored to check volumes booked and build background to ensure essential services and supplies are being assured.
- Due to capacity restrictions to comply with government rules for social distancing this will now require advance booking for foot passengers. Not all capacity will be released to pre-booking which was also requested to allow residents the ability to turn up on the day and travel.
- Next phase of timetable extension will be published 2<sup>nd</sup> July starting on 15<sup>th</sup> and will include additional vessel on Ardrossan service and introduction of Claonaig service which will not be bookable at present. Calmac did not feel Claonaig service could be bookable, due to the access by road to the ferry slipway.
- Discussions continue at senior levels in CalMac, Transport Scotland and Ministerial level to resolve outstanding issues associated to capacity, booking conditions and procedures.

It had been agreed that the Ferry Committee would lead on Ferries, and the priorities for Arran should be:

- 1 Health and essential travel and supplies
- 2 Arran residents travel
- 3 Tourism and economy.

CalMac were looking at the possibility of expanding capacity by utilising external seating on the vessels.

John Lamont expressed concern that CalMac should have made their communications clearer in respect of bookings. It was not currently possible to book return sailings.

Bill Calderwood felt this was due to the current booked cars from before the earlier changes.

In respect of Claonaig Ferry, it was felt that the capacity on the vessel would cover both vehicles and foot passengers.

## **7. NAC Councillors report**

Cllr Billings spoke to a written report he had submitted in advance of the meeting. This follows below:

North Ayrshire has resumed some of its official committees. Meetings are conducted online and if the meeting would normally be open to the public it is recorded and can be viewed on the Council's website once the meeting is over.

Meetings so far are:

**\*Planning** – Wednesday 24th June. No planning issues relating to Arran were discussed. 2 large housing developments on the mainland, along with several legal changes to previous planning decisions.

**\*Audit and Performance (Joint Integration Board)** - Thursday 25th June. Not a public meeting. Agreed the draft end of year accounts for the IJB so that they can go forward to the public auditors.

**Cabinet** – Tuesday 30th June. Main issues are around the Council's financial position. There is a report that sets out the Council's financial status and forecast for 2020/21 due to its response to the Covid crisis. There is a large gap between the additional costs and the funding available (either from Scottish government or reserves)

There are also reports on the way forward for Education within North Ayrshire, and a report on the recommendations for a trial of a Basic Universal Income.

(\* Timothy Billings is a member of the committee)

**Council departments** are starting to get back to normal.

Staff who had taken on 'emergency' roles are beginning to get back to their substantive posts.

**Opening of Licensed Premises** – The Council will issue its guidance on the use of outdoor spaces for licensed and unlicensed premises once the Scottish government has issues its guidelines. The current thinking is that licensed premises could be able to apply for 'Occasional Licences' for outdoor spaces where they don't have them at the moment. These can be for 14 days at a time. Details will follow in due course.

**Business grants** – if there are any businesses who are still looking for support for the lock down period but are unsure of what they can apply for, NAC business department are still able to offer help.

**Boundaries Commission Consultation** There will be a period of consultation on proposals to change the constituency boundaries for local authority elections. The consultation has not yet been published so there are no details yet. Due to run from end of July to end September 2020. This will be of interest to Arran as there is a possibility that proposals could include making Arran its own constituency.

**Other activities include:**

Membership of the Arran Recovery Group meetings

Ferry – support the major efforts of others by corresponding with Scottish government and liaising with North Ayrshire Council

Constituent issues including infestations, housing, business support, licensing, waste.

In response to questions raised by the CC, Cllr Billings stated it was expected that toilets would be open in licensed premises when outdoor gardens were in use.

## **8. NAC Local Managers report (This had been provided in advance in a e-mail from Brodie Pearce)**

- Council services are being resumed as resources and regulations allow. Verge trimming is being expanded to cover more areas. Restricted operation have only allowed safety and emergency areas to be covered.
- Gabions at Pirnmill being considered and work to address erosion also being reviewed.
- Other repairs which have been listed will be included when skills and materials can be provided.

Neil Arthur reported that verge trimming at Blackwaterfoot had not been carried out. He also requested that the Recycling Centre be opened to its full potential. Cllr Billings agreed to raise this.

## **9. A.O.C.B**

1. Bill Calderwood gave a report from a recent meeting of the CalMac Community Board of which he is a member.
  - Board met on 29<sup>th</sup> May via digital link. Agenda was restricted due to digital limitations.
  - Topics covered include updates on open projects such as Communications, fleet resilience, rural port amenities and project to establish socio economic study covering the network.
  - Still progressing fare equity for School buses, Free travel for young as proposed for bus to be introduced next year.
  - Meeting held with CalMac and Transport Scotland to review communications and progress for future services in line with government route map. Papers circulated and follow up meeting arranged.
2. Julie Graham raised questions raised from a Lochranza resident (Mr R Cumming) in relation to Chair's role in consultations carried out on behalf of Arran in terms of Ferry service provision and discussions at the CalMac Community Board and the Arran Ferry Committee.

Chair introduced this by stating that it is very unfortunate that these questions are raised to the Community Council as these items are not directly associated with CC business they should perhaps be handled in direct exchange with Chair in his personal position not in such a forum.

However, given previous disruptive interjections from this resident and as the resident indicated that if they are not discussed and minuted he will pursue them via press. Hence, to avoid bringing the CC into any unnecessary adverse coverage, the Chair asked if the groups were prepared to include the questions. Recognising the risk presented it was

agreed by the council members that on this occasion it would be incorporated with the understanding that any future AOB items not directly referring to the CC duties would be refused.

Bill Calderwood gave a full response to the Community Council in regard to the issues raised as follows:

As a concerned resident, I wonder if on my behalf you could under AOCB ask your chair the following questions.

Point 1.

In his position as our representative on the CalMac Communities Board who did he consult before agreeing that the island was comfortable with the proposed level of service as documented in their publication?

First let me clarify my position on the CalMac Community Board (CCB)

- It is entirely unrelated to my position as Chair or member of the Community Council
- 2) It is entirely unrelated to my membership of the Arran Ferry Committee.
- 3) My appointment to the CCB followed an advertisement for the posts in 2016. I along with others were selected following an interview process.
- 4) Two Arran residents were selected on that occasion. One has since resigned.
- 5) Residence on Arran was not a criteria for selection and neither was membership of the ACC or the AFC. None of the CCB members were considered to be sole representatives of specific geographic locations. It is not the way the Board functions. Naturally residing on an island brings that lifestyle experience which is useful when discussing network wide issues. My role On the CCB therefore is not to speak specifically only for Arran. The positions are voluntary with no remuneration.
- 6) The functions of the CCB can be found at <https://www.calmac.co.uk/calmac-community-board>. Further posts were advertised recently and to my knowledge no Arran residents applied.
- 7) It is part of the role to collect and feedback to our communities and as the functions or actions of the Board may have an interest to the Arran Community I provide feedback to the CC and AFC and other committees and bodies I interact with and from which I gather views and suggestions for network related improvements. My contact details are available on the CalMac website if individuals wish to contact me directly. I have had no contact from other members of the public voicing the views expressed by this individual.
- 8) The published papers referred to were not the output from a meeting but prepared by CalMac as a discussion paper in advance of the meeting with the Community Board and many aspects were challenged. I delayed circulation to try and get clarification on several points. Other representatives however chose to publish earlier. A follow up meeting took place with CalMac to discuss their communications etc. I hope that clarifies the matters raised on this matter.

Point 2:

When he and the AFC chairman jointly agreed the much publicised arrangements a few weeks ago on behalf of the island with CalMac with whom had they consulted?

I believe this is recorded in the minutes from AFC meetings and again is an AFC matter which is more appropriate to be covered from that committee and I would suggest the resident should submit any further questions direct to the AFC chair on this matter.

Point 3:

Many I talk to, believe your chairman is acting on his own volition believing he knows best and not reflecting the voices of the island as he should.

The accusation in this submission has not been raised in any other forums and if this view is supported it may be more appropriate to contact me directly rather than to submit as an unsubstantiated view which is not directly related to CC business. I believe that I represent the views of the majority of the island residents and accept that there is not a unanimous view on these topics. I would suggest that constructive engagement as matters arise would perhaps be more appropriate than using public forums to voice what may simply be personal views.

I trust this answers the points raised and concludes the matter from the CC's position.

Members of the Community Council spoke of support to Bill Calderwood's response and requested that it should be minuted in full.

General:

In discussion it was asked if members of the public could join digital meetings: As CC meetings are open to the Public, the CC will check the technology in relation to the ability to extend the meeting using Zoom. Bill will also establish with NAC how other mainland Community Councils are operating.

**10. Next Meeting: Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 6pm. This meeting will be held digitally in the same format, utilising ZOOM technology**