

Isle of Arran Community Council  
Minutes – Annual General Meeting  
Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Those present: Bill Calderwood (Chair), Jim Henderson, Neil Arthur, Frances Westwood, Liz Evans, Julie Graham, Bob Haddow,

Also Present

Sgt. Douglas Robertson, Gus Macleod, Jim Nichols, Hugh Boag and one member of the Public.

**1. Welcome / Apologies**

Chair welcomed the member of the Public.

Apologies: Marilyn Woods, John Lamont, Ricky McMaster, Cllr Billings, Colin Mackenzie, Peter Mullen

**2. Minutes from Previous Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

AGM Minutes had been previously circulated.

Proposed by Jim Henderson, seconded by Julie Graham

**3. Matters Arising:**

No matters arising.

**4. Chairs Report**

A full report from Bill Calderwood was received.

‘This has been a busy year for the ACC and also a difficult one for the membership.

We have lost the services of Barry Mochan who has decided to follow up an opportunity which utilises his professional skills and experience to help progress a key priority challenge for the island. We also lost the services of Peter Randell who had taken on the Treasurer’s role at the last AGM but for personal reasons felt it appropriate to let someone else pick up the representation for Whiting Bay. This had been Peter’s second term of service and his contribution was much appreciated.

I want to say **Thank You** to both Barry and Peter for their contribution and support during their term of service and wish them both well.

I am very pleased to welcome Frances Westwood and Bob Haddow who have been nominated to represent Corrie / Sannox and Whiting Bay respectively. It is good that we are back at full strength again

I also need to recognise Ricky McMaster and Jim Henderson for their continued support during the year as Vice Chair and Secretary with Jim also doubling up as Treasurer following Peter’s decision to step down. In his absence I also want to say thanks to Peter McMullen for the work he puts in to the significant number of planning applications we are asked to review. Peter’s knowledge and professionalism are a great asset to the CC’s work.

Jim Nichols has continued to provide his usual professional approach to fulfilling the Minutes Secretary’s role. This is a key role that Jim does with the ongoing support from ACVS who I also need to recognise for the various jobs they assist with over the year as required.

Thanks also needs to be recorded from some groups / individuals who support the CC on a regular basis and most often with their own personal time so a thanks to (Sgt) Dougie Robertson and his officers who attend in his absence, Gus Macleod, our local manager, for his attendance and guidance and support and Hugh Boag who reflects our various concerns as appropriate in the local press.

Cllr Billings has been a regular and supportive attendee when his other duties allow, and I want to say thanks to him for his time and contributions.

**We support various local organisations around the island such as:**

Elderly Forum

Ferry Committee

Arran Economic Group

Arran Sustainable Island initiative

COAST

As I review the past 11 months we have contributed to and discussed a surprisingly wide range of topics including:

Local Development plans, Ferry related issues, forest extraction plans, road maintenance plans and budget decisions impacting features which are considered important to our island as a “place to live” and also destination for a growing number of visitors.

Our website has attracted approx. 3500 hits in the year.

**Matters covered over the year include:**

Addressing NAC cost cutting decisions such as –

Assisting the completing of the asset transfers on – Toilets, Play Areas and the Flower tubs around the island taken over by village groups and a special note of thanks to Eleanor ‘s Flowers for their work and support to facilitate this transition. Challenging the decision to withdraw Citizens advice services to the island

Road plans – discussing and influencing the annual repair plans the recent land slip at Brodick

Various marine items including salmon farms and creel fishing consultations the NAC Shoreline management plan discussions.

Forestry – Extraction and management plans and also the NTS revisions to Glen Rosa planting etc

**More general topics** covered include

Scottish Water Planning for the future.

SSE cable plans

Cemetery maintenance at Shiskine and Lamlash

Mobile Phone service development with Community mast at Kilmory with support from MP.

**And:**

Dog Fouling with Marilyn and John L leading generating pamphlets and signage

GDPR changes

Advice for relatives looking to install memorial benches

Requests to help trace long lost relatives from America, Canada, New Zealand.

Responding to messages regards chemical disposal points for camper vans general feedback on roads and forestry work which our visitors have contacted us to voice their views.

**Over the past year we have also been contacted by various local groups looking to update the CC and seek support from us including:**

Arran Youth Group

Eco Savvy

Think about Plastic

School swimming costs have been questioned to encourage a comparable arrangement for Arran  
Arran “No Cold Calling” island  
“Dementia friendly” Arran

Unfortunately, as we weren't directly included in the recent Transport workshop (which was identified as one of the three top priorities from the Locality Partnership discussion last year) this was frustrating given the history of the CC's work which we have supported.

**It is not only local groups whom we have interacted with, and we have been contacted by external groups for assistance or comment eg.**

Fairlie Community Council, Kinlochbervie Community Council and East Kintyre Community Council  
North Ayrshire and Arran Scouting District Commissioner

Glasgow University

Strathclyde University

McMillan Cancer Support

Media: BBC.

Glasgow Herald.

For members of the public it should be noted that this work is handled by our members who all provide their services voluntarily.

As we work through the various topics and challenges, we very rarely get consistent direct engagement with our communities unless where we are considered not to support an individuals views or local issues which should be addressed by the individuals impacted or neighbours. Then we learn the views in either letters to the press or in emails to a very wide distribution with often personal attacks and inaccurate reflections of either our role or our position. These usually reflect a refusal by the instigators to accept that as volunteers we do not have unlimited time and resources to support often very personal views or that we should automatically agree with their views regardless, and as a “Statutory” body we have no direct powers to change local authority or government policy.

It is often folks who hadn't interpreted the issues fully and then realised there is a personal impact for them and criticise the CC for not engaging with the community. It is hard to explain we cannot be expected to interact with every individual on the island on every topic.

I am sure many members feel we are often viewed as an easy target for criticism and even when we do reflect the community view the majority see it is considered as “our job”! The hours that the members put in to understand and analyse topics and consult with our local groups is accepted as normal.

One area of frustration which many of the members and residents have voiced and has not been resolved centres around the relationship and roles between the CC and the NAC “Locality Partnership” structure which we have representation to. The CC have had 10 meetings since our last AGM and the process which NAC introduced as their view of “Community Engagement”, Locality Planning has only met twice. With the first taking place a couple of weeks after our Nov'17 AGM and the latest being a few weeks ago. We have no direct input in to the Community Planning Partnership structure but the “locality” feeds directly in. We have no direct fiscal responsibility but the LPP is the forum for all public funding decisions and will administer the Community Investment fund for Arran which stands at £104K.

We get minimal funding and our request for secretarial resources was refused this year whilst the LPP have dedicated resources and a significant amount of NAC officer time and resources allocated.

The LPP agendas are prepared in exclusion to the other members. There is no consultation with community representatives prior to the meeting and any funding applications are notified to the LPP with NAC's recommendations predetermined. The LPP is a top down authoritative driven structure - not the ground up representative forum our communities expected.

At this time, when there is an emphasis on "Democracy Matters", the question is still unanswered as to what role the Community Councils fulfil as a statutory body? This is a topic which we need to consider again based on a response received in reply to a letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government. "As statutory responsibility for community councils rests with the relevant local authority it is for North Ayrshire Council to take forward any concerns regarding Community Councils on Arran. There are no current plans to change these statutory responsibilities."

If we are to fulfil the service which our community expects the current dysfunctional "Locality" approach needs to change or our efforts are side lined and demeaned by the continued determination of the Local Authority not to address the obvious disparity in the operation of the two bodies and accept that, as identified by the recently introduced "Islands Bill", island communities have the right to a democratic and functionally representative process. They also should reconsider the future of CC's as the **statutory body** who handle a wide range of topics, many based on financial constraints implemented by NAC as above, with the performance against their perceived preferred format of "Locality Partnership" which has been empowered to distribute funds and does not demonstrate any level of community involvement in agenda setting, meeting format or inclusive dialogue with CC's etc.

I want to conclude with a positive outlook as we enter into more planning challenges, forestry proposals and discussions for further improvements to roads and island infrastructure going into 2019 and recognise the work we have achieved and pass on a big "Thank You" to all members and hope that our communities continue to view our work in a positive and informed manner.

Bill was thanked for his report.

#### **5. Treasurers Report:**

The financial report to the end of September has been approved by the NAC auditor. The project account which is ACC funds remains the same, with a closing balance of £314.23. This is after the inclusion of the invoice for £1200 for flowers and the return of the same amount from the Islands respective Improvement Committees and a grant from the Arran Trust.

The Administration account had an opening balance of 05p and closing balance of £61.50p.

After expenses for travel, transport, insurance etc, the bank account has £375.73p

The NAC allowance for 2018/19 will be (net) £1138.50

This report was proposed by Neil Arthur, and unanimously approved.

#### **6. Election of: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer**

Election of Chair: Bill Calderwood

Proposed Neil Arthur, Seconded Liz Evans

Election of Vice Chair: Ricky McMaster

Proposed Bill Calderwood, Seconded Neil Arthur

Election of Secretary: Jim Henderson  
Proposed Bill Calderwood, Seconded Neil Arthur  
Election of Treasurer: Julie Graham  
Proposed Bill Calderwood, Seconded Jim Henderson  
Approved unanimously

**7. Sub-Group Representatives**

Bill Calderwood proposed existing incumbents were prepared to continue and in the absence of alternative candidates proposed for all to be re-elected.

These are:

Locality Planning Partnership	Ricky McMaster
Health	Liz Evans/Julie Graham
Planning	Peter McMullen
Ferry	Bill Calderwood and Jim Henderson
Forestry /Environment	Ricky McMaster
Marine/Environment	Jim Henderson
Elderly Forum	To be agreed

**8. AOB**

No other business

**9. Chairs Closing Remarks**

Chair closed thanking the members for their support. Meeting closed 6.45pm.