

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Rhu and Shandon Community
Council
Wednesday 29th September 2021
Held by Zoom**

Deleted: Draft

In attendance:

Rhu & Shandon CC:

Jim Duncan Chairman JD
Andrew Nicholson AN
Linda Duncan LD
Jean Cook JC
Fiona Baker FB
Tim Lamb TL
John Clark JCI
Kate Williams KW

Councillors/Guests/Public:

Cllr George Freeman GF
Alastair Moore AM
Laura Freeland LF
Ross Hanvidge RH

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1. Apologies:	Apologies were received from: CC members Derek Hall, Olivia Birch, and Linda Black, Mark Fitzsimmons from HMNB Clyde and from John McGall(JMcG), a member of the public.	
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2. Declaration of Interest	None	
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3. Guest speakers:	3a. Police Scotland No report was provided by Police Scotland.	
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3b. HMNB Clyde
The report from HMNB Clyde has been supplied by Mark Fitzsimmons and is posted on the website in Appendix 2. It was noted that Mark had answered all the questions asked. Several projects had not made the progress that was expected.

4. Minutes of previous meeting	There was no consideration of the minutes of the last meeting	
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5.Planning Matters	a. Invergare: 21/01248/PP and 21/01404/PP At the PPSLC meeting on 22 nd September, 21/0128/PP for building work was approved and 21/01404/PP for a Change of use from Residential to Short Term Rental was rejected. The unsuitability of Pier Road and the loss of amenity for the neighbourhood featured in the RoH.	
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In the meantime the property is still being used for short term lets. The day after the decision, the house was let for a long weekend with 11 cars present. The only way forward is for residents to make complaints to the Council and to alert the police if the disruption warrants it.

The Convener reported that Fergus Murray indicated that it now comes down to enforcement action. Since A& B does not have an enforcement officer it is unclear what this actually means.

b: Duneira, Pier Road Planning Ref: 19/01573/PP

A recent enquiry to planners has confirmed that since the conditions

Action :
affected
residents

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attached to the planning approval for change of use have never been met then the property continues to be designated as a “residential dwelling house” in planning terms. Therefore it is not authorised for its current commercial activities. The chairman expressed the view that this was another Invergare in the making. Again the only route for neighbouring residents is to put in complaints to the Council and alert the police if the disruption warrants it.

Action :
affected
residents

c:Lagarie Planning Application 20/01382/PP

The CC has supported local residents in their objection to the above planning application which is for a proposed house in grounds between Lagarie House and Lagarie Cottage off Torwoodhill Rd. As a Statutory Consultee the CC submitted a formal objection to the plan. The status of the application is recorded in the planning website as “ awaiting decision”

d: 21/01540/PP: Erection of 2 dwelling houses on Land South West Of Tigh Geal, Station Road, Rhu

It was agreed that this would have little impact on the traffic on Station Road and that access to the sites is unlikely to cause a problem. It was pointed out that a 120 year old perfectly healthy beech tree was taken down last year, and the property had received money for tree planting in a woodland grant scheme some 15 years ago. Since this is a recent application, it is not clear whether there will be any objections from neighbours.

Concern was expressed that the documents describing the trees to be removed was not clear and it was agreed to ask the Planning Officer for more details on this

Action JC

6:Other Matters

a.Forestry Report: from Fiona Baker

The Convener announced that a special zoom meeting will be held on Friday evening with the Pier Road Group (JMcG, LF, AM) who have been pursuing the issue of forestry traffic on Pier and Station Roads. In the light of this forthcoming meeting, these matters will not be discussed tonight. He thanked Fiona for her efforts on all matters forestry and recognised the vast amount of time that has been devoted to this matter.

Letrault and Stuckenduff plans were approved by the Council including use of Station and Pier Road. The consultation was extremely poor and the Council and Forestry Scotland paid scant attention to representations. The plans were revised to have more native planting and to open up the riparian sections and soften the visual impact of the blocks of conifer. However, monoculture conifer is still too close to Whistler’s Glen/Aldonwick and Aldonaig designated ancient woodlands and there is likely to be an impact on the ancient woodlands over time. Sitka Spruce is now banned in

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Norway as it is so invasive and damages native woods. The Scottish Woodlands proposal for creating a track across to the Blackhill, which would have removed the whole timber lorries through Rhu issues, has disappeared from the proposals and any questions about it have been unanswered. Our suggestion for a designated walking, horse riding and mountain biking trail that linked native woodlands and provided a wildlife corridor as well as community and economic benefit to the area has been completely ignored. It appears that Forestry Scotland and the forestry industry is self-policing and can apparently do what they like and A&B C look at the economic picture above any concerns about the natural and historic environment, landscape impact, impact of logging on community safety, or long term carbon capture. Landscape designations and SF and A&B C reports and guidelines on preferences for where commercial conifer can and cannot be planted appear to be pretty worthless. Minor Improvements have been made in that the planting has been opened up, although SF still denies that there are otters in the burns! Scottish Forestry confirmed in July that the Woodland Creation does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment. This does NOT cover any proposed road or infrastructure in the scheme. There is currently insufficient information for a determination on these. Requests for roads will be sent to Scottish Forestry at a future date.

Highlandman and Torr Forests

In response to a request for information, the new Forest Manager has agreed to send a revised map and new schedule when these are finalised. It is likely that Phase 2 will be felled in 2023.

The Chairman expressed the frustration of the Community Council that their concerns and those of the residents have been essentially ignored. The excuse for the lack of consultation was that it was too difficult to contact all the houses. It should be noted that the Community Council did just that earlier this year.

The Pier Road Group will report on information received from Roland Striven on Scottish Forestry on the road across Luss Estate Land; at the zoom meeting on Friday evening.

b. Aldonaig

The report and the various activities at Aldonaig make distressing reading.

The tenant Mr Waheed Totakhyl had a ten year lease on the land from the owner Mr Al Taghi who lives in Canada.

The SSPCA made several visits regarding the welfare of the abandoned feral ponies and chickens and issued notices SSPCA Horse Rescue Scotland reached a grazing agreement with the tenant. This agreement included a clause that the rubbish and litter was removed from the site. The fees for grazing were contributed by local residents. Hundreds of volunteer hours were put in by local residents supporting Horse Rescue Scotland and the Community Payback Team assisted with the final removal of derelict

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caravans and horse boxes that were too big and difficult for the local volunteers to cut up and remove. Rhu resident Brian Murdoch also assisted with moving large items.

After the death of one pony due to the consumption of unsecured chicken feed, the other four have been removed for their own safety due to the unstinting efforts (and at personal expense) of local people working with Horse Rescue Scotland.

Following the long running noise nuisance, litter and environmental damage, fires, and animal welfare concerns, the land owner Mr Al Taghi was contacted by the CC. Mr Taghi required Mr Totakhyl to answer these allegations with a letter signed by ten witnesses stating that nothing untoward would happen in the future or he would be evicted. Mr Totakhyl sent a letter claiming essentially that all of the burning, litter etc were all lies and he was a model tenant. A response to this letter to be sent to the landowner Mr Taghi and Mr Totakhyl was drafted that made clear the CC knew the reality of the situation but hoped better relations etc could be established going forward and the CC would wish to assist with this. It was not sent and Mr Totakhyl was permitted to deny all his misdemeanours to the landowner. The environmental pollution continues but the noise issue does appear to have been reduced to an acceptable / occasional occurrence.

The recent Sky News Reports on the tenant's connection with the Taliban is an added concern. Claims made by the tenant that he has planning permission for static caravans on the site. This has not appeared on the A&B Planning Portal. He still claims to have plans to farm the land and have an off road driving facility. Certainly the site is still being used for large gatherings.

Current situation – the ponies have been removed to safety; a massive environmental clean-up has been completed with tons of rubbish removed from the site by local volunteers and the Community Payback Team. There is local interest in a community buy-out of Aldonaig and forming a Community Development Trust to acquire Aldonaig for community benefit.

Knotweed along the railway line is being disturbed by bottle digging activities at the old coup. No action has been taken on this, but the situation will be monitored.

Other woodland issues

Helensburgh Mountain Bike Meet Up group reached an agreement with Scottish Woodlands about building and using mountain bike trails in Highlandman's Wood. This has included erection of fencing to divert the bikers from walking paths / areas of forestry operation. The bike trails have been vandalised on more than one occasion.

Planted ancient woodland (PAWS) on Torr Farm

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This was subjected to felling earlier this year that far exceeded the permitted felling allowed and was done without a licence. Forestry Scotland inspected the site and said they would be issuing a replanting order to the landowner. Anne Ferguson from near Stirling, niece of Nan and Janey Colquhoun of Torr Farm. SF also asked A&BC to issue emergency TPOs to protect the remaining ancient woodland and PAWS including Aldonaig,

FB asked if it could be extended to include Aldonwick / Smugglers Glen below the railway line. There has been no further response from A&BC or FS on this. No replanting has so far taken place. Emma Jane at A&B C was dealing with it. Recommend the CC write to A&B C requesting this TPO is implemented. Proposed FB, seconded JCI

Action JC

GF noted that any designation of Aldonaig as a local Nature Conservation site will be recorded in the Local Plan. LDP2 is about to go to local Reporters.

c. Future of Bowling Club site

With the demise of the Rhu Bowling Club, the site has somehow become the personal legal ownership of two former Trustees of the Club, Mr Leonard Prow and Mr Joe Carr. The CC made several attempts to engage with them with the objective of having the site returned to community ownership without success. More recently The CC has been working closely with the Helensburgh Men's Shed organisation on a plan for the former Rhu bowling green site.

That plan being for the Men's Shed to purchase the site, and subject to planning permission a community garden, allotments and a facility for the Men's Shed organisation would be created on the site..

Negotiations with the two private owners have been very protracted and sadly now appear to have come to an end. It would appear that the owners have no plans for using the site for community benefit.

It was pointed out that the site is an Open Space Protected Area. It is still unexplained how the ownership of the site could reside with two former trustees of the Bowling Club.

d. Marina and RNCYC

The RNCYC has provided an update on developments regarding their proposed relocation to Rhu Marina.

The proposal is for the Club to sell its existing site to a developer and build a new RNCYC clubhouse at Rhu Marina on land roughly to the west of Pier Rd. The club has recently gained control of that land through its acquisition of Rhu Marina Developments Ltd., which owns the land.

The club is working with a developer and has advanced design plans for a new clubhouse at the marina.

The whole marina site is designated as a Potential Development Area (PDA) in planning terms and requires a Masterplan to be approved prior to submission of any formal planning application. The CC has had asked for and received assurances from RNCYC and Quay Marinas, the marina operators, that the CC and the local

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7. Consultations	<p>To consider whether the Community Council should respond to any of these.</p>	
	<p>a. Helensburgh to Garelochhead Cycle path. Closes: 10th October The Engineer present at the consultation event which took place on September 9th favoured the view that from the outskirts of Rhu to Garelochhead, the cycle path would run on the hill side of the current A814 in a dedicated cycleway through the existing verge. Past the church he suggested that negotiations were ongoing to have access through the grounds of RNCYC. He did not seem to have a proposal of for the stretch from Ferry Road to the Offsite Centre. He accepted that the route had to be as direct as possible to persuade cyclists to use it and agreed that was one of the problems with the current route. This was reiterated by the CC Members pointed out at the consultation events that shared paths are not safe. It was agreed that the CC should make a simple submission highlighting these points by the deadline Post meeting note by JC. The deadline was missed.</p>	Action JC
	<p>b. SEPA Flood Risk Closes: 31st Oct You will recall that there was a consultation on this earlier. The documents are too large to post on our website but this LINK gives you all the information you need. TL pointed out the houses in the area flagged would not be able to get flood risk insurance. He agreed to look into this and submit a response on behalf of the CC.</p>	Action TL
	<p>c Event Engagement Survey: Closes 31st March 2022 Police Scotland we want to hear from those who attend or experience events in Scotland. There is clearly no urgency for a response on this but it would be useful, if, over the next 6 months, residents collate information about events which have affected them so that they can give feedback. I have not checked whether multiple submissions to the survey are possible are possible, but it is probably best to assume not.</p>	
	<p>d Licensing of short-term lets: Closes 29th October The Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee will be laying draft laws before the Scottish Parliament requiring local authorities to introduce a licensing system for short-term let accommodation. JC suggested Visit Scotland have a system in place which could be extended to cover all short term let property. TL suggested that it should be modelled on the current Landlord system which is Scotland wide but operated by LA. JC and LD will prepare a response</p>	Action JC & LD

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8. TREASURER'S REPORT	<p>Cash in Bank £5545.30 (with a £200.00 withdrawal pending)</p> <p>Made up of</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Community Council Funds</td> <td>£4465.67</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Remainder of Covid Grant.</td> <td>£ 229.63</td> <td>(£254.27 spent)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Well Being Grant</td> <td>£ 850.00</td> <td>(Zero spent)</td> </tr> </table>	Community Council Funds	£4465.67		Remainder of Covid Grant.	£ 229.63	(£254.27 spent)	Well Being Grant	£ 850.00	(Zero spent)	
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9. CORRESPONDENCE	<p>In addition to the regular correspondence which is circulated as it arrives, there have been three requests from residents.</p> <p>From the Scouts for advice on the erection of a sign for their newly acquired defibrillator,</p> <p>From a childminder asking when the swing would be returned to the play park.</p> <p>From a resident who wished to adopt a bench in memory of her son. Initial enquiries on the latter took on a circular nature with both ACHA and A&B denying ownership of the bench. At one point it was intimated that the bench in question belonged to the Community Council. In mid September all three were logged using the online contact form on the Argyll and Bute website. Responses have been received on the last two. Parts are on order for the swing, and a plaque cannot be placed on a bench, a new bench will have to be purchased.</p> <p>George Freeman may have more information on the sign for the defibrillator.</p> <p>Destination Helensburgh is a recipient of funding from the Destination & Sector Marketing Fund administered by Visit Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. The funding is aimed at promoting responsible and sustainable staycations, and Destination Helensburgh will be using the award to publicise Helensburgh and Lomond as a winter destination. They can offer support to any organisation or business in the Tourism area. https://destinationhelensburgh.org/join-our-winter-destination-campaign/</p>	JC to consult GF on this									
10. Councillors' Reports	NONE										
11. Member's Reports	<p>FB: Gillian Mathie asked if the CC would write to ask if official Dog fowling signs could be erected in the play park. This was agreed and FB will liaise with Gillian to see if she still wishes to pursue this,</p> <p>KW: Two beach cleans were arranged on Friday 24th September by Babcock and RN. (26 at Kidston Park And 15 at Garelochhead, the latter included 13 primary children). Babcock wants to build on this and will avoid September weekend in future. There will be no monthly beach cleans until March</p> <p>JD thanks KW and AM for the help they had given to the community during Lockdown. Thanks should also go to Fiona Hughes who organised help for Shandon residents Post meeting note. I understand that some of the arrangements put in place to help the older members of our community at that time are still in place.</p>	Action JC If required.									

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	<p>From LB. She has been nominated for Locality Planning Group. Linda's view is that they are looking for someone with a more medical background. She also reported that the Well Being grant has been extended until the end of the year.</p> <p>AN: Rhu is still associated with Helensburgh Parish Church and services are continuing weekly.</p>	
12.AOB	<p>If anyone would like to join the Zoom meeting on Friday at 7.30pm to discuss forestry matters, please contact JD.</p>	
16. DONM:	<p>The next meeting will take place on Wednesday December 1st 2021 at 7.30pm. This will again be a zoom meeting.</p>	

DRAFT

